

The Council of the EU adopted a legislative proposal to protect essential oil producers

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On the last day of the Swedish Presidency of the Council of the EU, the Member States, at the level of the Committee of Permanent Representatives – COREPER I, approved a legislative proposal that preserves the current approach to the classification of essential oils, the Ministry of Agriculture and Food reports.

In connection with the Regulation proposed by the European Commission for amending the legislation on the classification, labelling and packaging of substances and mixtures, the Council accepted the arguments of Bulgaria and seven other Member States regarding the difficulties in adopting the proposed approach and included a review clause requiring new analyses by the Commission, to be presented after 4 years.

The position of Bulgaria in defence of the producers of essential oil crops was presented by the Minister of Agriculture and Food Kiril Vatev at the meeting of the Agriculture and Fisheries Council, held on 26 and 27 June in Luxembourg. At that time he stated that Bulgaria insists on maintaining the current approach to the classification of essential oils, so that the traditional cultivation in the EU of the crops from which they are obtained can continue, and so that the incomes of the farmers and seasonal workers employed in the sector can be preserved. Minister Vatev insisted that essential oils be excluded from the concept of complex substances so that they continue to be classified under the current rules as substances and not as mixtures.

Overall, the Regulation under discussion aims to clarify the rules for the classification and labelling of chemical substances and the required information for chemicals sold online.

The decision of the Council of the EU is a positive step forward for producers of natural ingredients for perfumery and cosmetics. Negotiations with the European Parliament to agree on the final text of the Regulation are still forthcoming.

Minister Vatev commented that the decision achieved is an accomplishment of the entire government and personally of the Prime Minister, Acad. Nikolay Denkov. The Prime Minister firmly defended Bulgarian rose oil and other natural essential oils at the meeting of the European Council. During the debate on the topic “Economy” he pointed out a substantial omission in the draft Regulation on the classification, labelling and packaging of chemicals (CLP), which places essential oils in the category of hazardous chemical mixtures. “When we discuss whether something is harmful, we must look not only at what the substance is, but also at what its concentration is. It is precisely the concentration that determines whether the substance is hazardous or not. In the text of the Regulation that is being presented, the word ‘concentration’ is missing,” explained to journalists in Brussels Acad. Nikolay Denkov, who is a world-renowned scientist in the field of chemistry and physico-chemistry.

To the other leaders, the Bulgarian Prime Minister described the European Regulation under preparation as an abuse of science. He explicitly requested the President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen that the text be refined, because “it is not scientific, as it ought to be”, and received understanding on her part.