

## **Call for harmonised EU botanicals identification and risk assessment system**

By Sara Lewis, *Agra Facts*, March 3<sup>rd</sup>

Consumer group Safe Food Advocacy Europe (SAFE) is calling on the European Commission to develop a harmonised EU identification and risk assessment system for botanicals to prevent people being duped by unauthorised health claims.

In a campaign launched earlier this month, SAFE notes that Europe's botanical market is expanding and that 18.8% of Europeans are estimated to take at least one botanical food supplement a day. Yet as a report, press release and [campaign video](#) explain, there is currently no harmonised EU system governing botanicals assessment nor health claims, leaving regulation to differing national systems. In some countries botanicals are regulated as supplements, in others as pharmaceuticals, and labelling can currently promise the contents can prevent, ease or boost a whole range of health effects.

"One of the primary goals set out in the EU's Farm to Fork Strategy is the creation of favourable food environments which allow consumers to make healthy and informed dietary choices thanks to the delivery of clear food information. Nutritional composition, health claims, and front-of-pack labelling are therefore at the cornerstone of the Strategy," writes SAFE, pointing out that shortcomings within the current regulatory framework hamper consumer comprehension and consumption habits.

"The EU should ensure a harmonised system providing equal and substantial information to all consumers around Europe," argues SAFE. The Brussels-based organisation also wants the EU to "reconsider the current assessment applied to botanical food supplements, permitting consumers increased access to information through labelling."