

THE EUROPEAN UNION AND HOW IT HAS AFFECTED ESSENTIAL OILS AND HERBS.

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This article is mainly for British readers as we have now voted to leave the European Union. I have been following how European regulations have affected the herbal and essential oils trade since the time we joined the EU.

So for younger readers here are some facts.

1. The UK used to host large companies in the essential oils and natural extracts trades. Over the years - as it became apparent how EU regulations would increase their costs - they shut down and moved operations to mainly India and China. Similar closures happened to some of our herb importers with companies that had been in the UK for generations.
2. Unelected committees in the EU started to produce advisory regulations based on the most appallingly inaccurate science. When this was pointed out to them they simply ignored advice from the real experts in the trades that these regulations covered. Most of these so-called "expert" committees **did not have any experts from the trades their advice would affect**. Instead they consisted of mostly university professors and members from government agencies.
3. The advice from the above committees was submitted to the European parliament via the EU commission (**unelected**). Most of their advice became EU law because our MEPs were and still are incompetent. They simply accepted that the commission must know what was best for Europe's population and rubber-stamped their submissions.
4. Here in the UK our civil servants mainly put these laws into place via the mechanism of 'ministerial orders' submitted by the speaker late on a Friday afternoon with just half a dozen half-asleep members in the house to vote the orders through **without democratic debate**.
5. So what happened in other European countries? In France not a lot, some of their essential oil sellers continue to this day making illegal medicinal claims on their websites years after the EU laws came into force. Likewise in Italy and Spain most of the laws on "medicinal substances" were widely ignored. It has always been the case that different EU countries pick and choose which laws to enact. The EU churned out millions of pieces of legislation but very little was enacted in every country **but it costs the UK budget Billions for this gross waste of resources**.
6. A few years ago there were several debates in the EU hosted by green party MEPs over the proposed new regulations on the registration of chemical substances which included essential oils and herbs. Members of the European medicines agency accepted that the rules were not fit for purpose when applied to natural extracts. However, they stated they could not change them without Parliament approving changes to their setup which was never done. The result was the REACH regulations which when applied to complex mixtures of chemicals in plants are ridiculous.

I could go on for pages but this should be enough to show you that the EU is an antidemocratic Institution. They do not care about small traditional industries despite declarations in their founding treaties of supporting them, only big business gets a look in by paying millions for lobbying.

See more articles, some are old but still relevant.

<http://www.herbal-practitioners.co.uk>

<http://www.saveourherbs.org.uk>

<http://www.energygrid.com/health/2008/11/m-eutolls.html>

http://www.eu-referendum.org/english/petitions/natural_remedies_info.html