**Press release **

*European Industrial Hemp Association ([www.eiha.org](http://www.eiha.org))*

*Hürth,13 July 2017*

**The largest conference on industrial hemp of all time and worldwide, 7 and 8 June in Cologne – 330 participants from 44 countries**

**191 signatories signed “The Cologne Declaration on Industrial Hemp” to support the hemp food sector with a reasonable and harmonised legislation**

Industrial hemp shows an impressive worldwide growth. Main cultivation areas are China, Canada and the European Union – the USA is starting commercial cultivation of industrial hemp this year. In Europe, the cultivation area increased from 8,000 ha in 2011 to more than 33,000 ha in 2016. This development is mainly driven by the growing demand from the health and super food market as well as from the demand for active plant ingredients as food supplements.

For the 14th time, the international hemp industry met in Cologne (Germany). The participant number of the “International Conference of the European Industrial Hemp Association” has grown from 50 in 2003 to impressive 330 in 2017 with participants from 44 countries. It was the largest conference on industrial hemp of all time and worldwide. 37 international speakers discussed the latest technological developments, new products, market volumes and strategies. More than a hundred face-to-face meetings between farmers, processors, producers, scientists and investors were organized. Several workshops for regular members of the “European Industrial Hemp Association (EIHA)” and scientific experts took place the day before the conference.

In “The Cologne Declaration on Industrial Hemp”, signed by 191 participants of the conference, the hemp food industry points out the most burning issues of the sector. *“The signatories urge policy makers to develop a reasonable and harmonised legislation on non-psychotropic cannabinoids such as CBD and hemp extracts as food supplement ingredients as well as pharmaceuticals in Europe and in all member states, to make sure that consumers are protected, to sustain the industry’s current double-digit growth rate, to attract new investors, create jobs and to boost development of safe products.”*

Reasonable and harmonised legislation on THC guidance values for hemp food in all member states of the European Union is requested as well, especially in competition to producers from countries with more favourable framework regulations like Canada, USA and China, who are already penetrating the European market.

Two other issues from the Cologne Declaration are important for the entire hemp industry: In contrast to the rest of the world, the only hemp varieties certified for cultivation in the European Union are the ones which contain less than 0.2% THC in the upper third of the crop. *“The signatories urge policy makers to create European legislation allowing for industrial hemp to possess a THC content below 0.3% in harmonisation with the rest of the world to create a level playing field especially with Canada and the USA.”*

And finally, the signatories urged to end the ban of the cultivation of industrial hemp in the UN Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs, which so far makes no differentiation between marihuana, medical hemp and industrial hemp without any misuse potential. Despite the exemptions as per paragraph 2 of Article 28, the signatories refer in particular to the implementation of Article 22 of the Single Convention. This article creates provisions for national governments not only to limit the production of illicit cannabis, but also to ban the cultivation of industrial and medicinal hemp. EIHA and the signatories appeal to the UN to revise and update Article 22 of the Single Convention by excepting industrial and medicinal hemp.

The worldwide hemp food and food supplement industry is developing from a niche market to mainstream markets. Many regulations and legislation must be updated based on the latest scientific evidence to sustain the industry’s current double-digit growth rate, to attract new investors, create jobs and to enhance the development of consumer safe products. A big chance Europe should not miss.

**Supporting The Cologne Declaration on Industrial Hemp**

The Cologne Declaration on Industrial Hemp can still be. The full text of the declaration is available at: [www.eiha.org/CologneDeclaration](http://www.eiha.org/CologneDeclaration)

**European Industrial Hemp Association (EIHA)**

[www.eiha.org](http://www.eiha.org)

**Responsible under press legislation (V.i.S.d.P.):**

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The European Industrial Hemp Association (EIHA) is a consortium of the hemp-processing industry. It represents the common interest of industrial hemp farmers and producers, both nationally and on a European level. EIHA is the only European consortium in the industrial hemp sector. This sector includes, amongst other things, the use of hemp fibres, shavings, seeds and cannabinoids. Originally founded as an association for the European hemp industry, a quarter of the 130 EIHA members are based in countries outside the EU.