

Brussels, 10 September 1999

Commission has no objection to the conditions for participation at the International Dental Exhibition in Cologne, Germany

In an administrative letter the European Commission has informed the Society for the Promotion of the Dental Industry (GFDI - Gesellschaft zur Förderung der Dentalindustrie mbH) that it has no objections under competition law to the conditions for participation at the International Dental Exhibition (IDE). The IDE is held by the GFDI in collaboration with the local trade fair association every two years in Cologne and is at present the largest exhibition in the world of products for dentists and dental technicians. Participants may not take part in any other exhibition of this kind in Germany for a period of eight weeks before and four weeks after the exhibition (period of restraint). The Commission takes the view that this restriction is justified in particular because of the rationalisation effect desired and the objective of exhibiting as complete as possible a range of products for use by dentists and dental technicians.

The declaration of no objection in accordance with Article 81(3) of the EC Treaty was made by an administrative letter sent by the Directorate-General for Competition (DG IV) and follows on from an earlier, similar declaration. The decisive point is that while the period of restraint imposed on the participants does restrict competition, it makes economic sense and is not disproportionate. It relates solely to a period of twelve weeks every two years (the frequency with which exhibitions are held) and provides for certain exceptions, e.g. for "open days" or exhibitions held in conjunction with congresses. Compared to the past, the GFDI's list of exceptions to the restraining rules larger and comprises, for example, exhibitions related to or in conjunction with congresses devoted to further training for dentists or dental technicians. The conditions for participation at the IDE were published in the Official Journal of the European Communities of 9th January 1999.