Issue no 12 of Food & Function (a monthly peer-reviewed on line journal which publishes work at the interface of the chemistry, physics and biology of food) contains a scientific Supplement relating to PlantLIBRA foreground.
The Supplement is available at the following link:
http://pubs.rsc.org/en/journals/journalissues/fo#!issueid=fo002012&type=current&issnprint=2042-6496

The publication is dedicated to a detailed analysis of regulatory, scientific and technical issues concerning safety, quality and efficacy of plant food supplements (PFS), i.e. foodstuffs, marketed namely in dose forms such as capsules, pastilles, tablets, pills and other similar forms, sachets of powder, ampoules of liquids, drop dispensing bottles, and other similar forms of liquids and powders. Plant Food Supplements (PFS) consist of botanical preparations obtained by subjecting botanical parts to a variety of treatments such as extraction, expression, distillation, fractionation or concentration. These very heterogeneous products are often in use since long time to supplement the normal diet with additional natural nutrients or other natural substances with desirable physiological functions.
Upon inception of the EU Research PlantLIBRA Project , it was considered particularly useful to undertake a review of the status of knowledge in the many above-mentioned relevant sectors in order to benchmark the level of current understanding and clearly indicate main future knowledge needs.
To this end, the publication has been structured into 8 papers, starting from that on the "Regulations applicable to plant food supplements (PFS) and related products in the European Union". Botanical species being more widely used for manufacturing PFS and related products are addressed in the second paper, whereas market's structures in Member States and consumer's attitudes and beliefs about PFS are dealt with in papers 3 and 4, respectively. Moreover, quality, efficacy and safety aspects associated with PFS are the main subjects of papers 5, 6 and 7.

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Liliana Vargas-Murga, Alicia Garcia-Alvarez, Blanca Roman-Viñas, Joy Ngo, Lourdes Ribas-Barba, Suzanne J. P. L. van den Berg, Gary Williamson and Lluis Serra-Majem
The aim of this paper is to examine the PFS market structures in European Community (EC) Member States as well as to examine issues addressing methodologies and consumption data relating to PFS use in Europe. A revision of recent reports on market data, trends and main distribution channels

4) Consumer attitudes and beliefs about plant food supplements

Bernadette Egan, Charo Hodgkins, Richard Shepherd, Lada Timotijevic, and Monique Raats
The aim of this paper is to provide an overview of current knowledge about the users and the determinants of usage of plant food supplements. A variety of factors may be influencing consumption including the increasing number of older people in society, mistrust in conventional medicine and the perception that natural is healthy.

5) Quality control of plant food supplements

Elisabetta Sanzini, Mihaela Badea, Ariana Dos Santos, Patrizia Restani and Hartwig Sievers
Accurate data concerning the finished products and the plant used as the starting point are of major importance if risks and safety are to be properly assessed, but in addition standardized criteria for herbal preparation must be laid down and respected by researchers and manufacturers.

6) Review of the efficacy of green tea, isoflavones and aloe vera supplements based on randomised controlled trials

Gary Williamson, Patrick Coppens, Lluís Serra-Majem and Tristan Dew
We assess the evidence for health benefits of three commonly consumed plant food supplements (PFS), green tea, isoflavone and aloe vera, based on published systematic reviews of randomised controlled trials (RCTs).

7) Safety assessment of plant food supplements (PFS)

Suzanne J. P. L. van den Berg, Lluis Serra-Majem, Patrick Coppens and Ivonne M. C. M. Rietjens
Some examples of botanical compounds in PFS that may be of concern are discussed. Altogether, it is clear that "natural" does not equal "safe" and that PFS may contain compounds of concern at levels far above those found in the regular diet.

8) The PlantLIBRA project: how we intend to innovate the science of botanicals

Luca Bucchini, Alejandro Rodarte and Patrizia Restani
The EC-funded PlantLIBRA consortium presents its plan for improving the science of botanicals and risk and benefit assessment methodologies for plant food supplements.