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In reply please
refer to: CSF/HS/15/158

Your reference:

Ms Kristalina Georgieva
Vice-president for Budget
and Human Resources

Mr Vytenis Andriukaitis
Member of the European Commission
Health and Food Safety

European Commission
Rue de la Loi 200
1049 Bruxelles
Belgique

02 December 2015

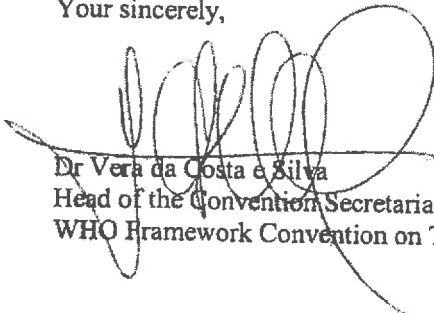
Dear Ms. Georgieva and Mr Andriukaitis,

**Protocol to Eliminate Illicit Trade in Tobacco Products
(WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control)**

I refer to the discussions I had with Mr. Andriukaitis and yourself on efforts to bring into force the Protocol to Eliminate Illicit Trade, on the occasion of my visit to Brussels in May of this year. I very much appreciated your interest in this matter and your support for the effort. The ratification by France on 30 November 2015 brings the total number of ratifications to 12 and the number of ratifications by EU Member States to four. I am greatly encouraged to see EU Member States thus assuming a leading role in this important endeavour, and I am very happy to learn the EU Commission is aiming for rapid conclusion of the process of formal approval in 2016.

Since our meeting in Brussels, I have had the opportunity to interact with both OLAF and DG SANTE on matters related to the Protocol, and I am most grateful for their continued interest and support. There have however been developments that raise concerns from a public health perspective, notably the ongoing discussion on a renewal of the EU's illicit trade agreement with Philip Morris International, due to expire in July 2016, and a report to the effect that OLAF may be supportive of the continued use of Codentify in preference to alternative tracking and tracing systems. I have raised concerns regarding these matters with both DG SANTE and OLAF, and I hereby take the liberty of attaching the relevant correspondence for your information and consideration.

Your sincerely,



Dr Vera da Costa e Silva
Head of the Convention Secretariat
WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control

Best wishes!
