The confusion surrounding the issue of tooth whitening could be nearing an end as situations both at home and in Europe see major developments.

In a meeting of the British Dental Bleaching Society, Dental Director’s Sales and Marketing Director Mike Volk read out part of a letter received from Essex Trading Standards by the company over the issue of supplying tooth bleaching products (Dental Tribune Vol 5, No. 15 p 10): “As outlined during our conversation on Friday, this Service has no issue with peroxide-based whiteners > 0.1% supplied to GDC-registered dentists for use in the course of a professional whitening service conducted by a registrar. It is the view of this Service that such treatments would be regulated by the GDC. Provided your business takes reasonable steps to restrict supplies of such whiteners to registrants, the GDC would welcome evidence of your business conducting such procedures.”

At European level, plans are in motion to put proposals forward to amend the regulations surrounding tooth whitening in the European Parliament.

According to Chief Dental Officer for England Dr Barry Cockcroft, there has been a meeting between the Department of Health, the Department of Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) and the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) to look at the situation. This has initiated ‘internal procedures’ to write a proposal to amend the regulations at EU level. According to Dr Cockcroft, this is ‘an opportunity to sort this situation out properly in Europe.’

The timelines for these are short; the proposal is due to be published in a few weeks before going to the European Commission for progression to the European Parliament. Unlike previous unsuccessful attempts to change the law by going through the Cosmetics Directive, this approach is seen to be more favourable as there is support in the Commission for amendments to the regulations.

White at the end of the tunnel

Trading Standards Essex ‘support’ in-surgery tooth whitening; CDO announces regulation amendment proposals to be sent to EU Parliament

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**Perio Tribune**

The brace debate
Deborah Lyle discusses the threat of infection

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**DCPs**

The scape goat
Dave Martin looks at direct access

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**News**

Number of patients seen by NHS dentists increases
According to a new quarterly report looking into NHS dental activity, almost one million extra people have had check-ups compared to the same period five years ago. A total of 29.1 million patients were seen and given a dental examination in the last two years—967,000 more than the baseline figure in March 2006. The figures show that 56.2 per cent of the population is seen by an NHS dentist, exceeding the standard level of 55.8 per cent for the very first time. The report also revealed a 100,000 decrease on the previous year in Courses of Treatment (CoTs) with an estimated 9.4 million in the last quarter; the largest decrease was seen in North East, which saw a provision drop of over five per cent.

Dentsply buys Astra Tech
According to a report from Reuters, US company Dentsply International has bought Astra Zeneca’s dental implants and medical devices unit Astra Tech for £1.1 billion, securing themselves another section of the dental market. Dentsply’s revenue will now increase by approximately a quarter after it offloads dental firms and medical technology, strengthening its position in the dental market. Last year the Swedish-based company Astra Tech had a revenue of $555 million, ranking itself as the world’s third-largest dental implants maker after Straumann and Nobel Biocare. As one report stated, for AstraZeneca, this change reinforces its role as a “pure play” pharmaceuticals company at a time when many rivals are diversifying.

Otzí the Iceman
20 years ago Otzi the Iceman, the 5,300-year-old mummy, was discovered encased in ice in the Italian Alps; but even though he had a full set of teeth reports said that they were in bad shape. Recently at the World Congress on Mum-my Studies in San Diego new findings from CT scans were presented revealing that the man suffered from advanced caries lesions, securing themselves another section of the dental market.

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Contamination threat
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