

Press Release

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Food safety expert takes Nestlé to court after 4-year long abuse for reporting mismanagement in food safety

GENEVA, SWITZERLAND, 15 MAY 2012: A food safety expert and former Assistant Vice President of the multinational giant Nestlé is coming forward to inform the public and Nestlé shareholders that the company has subjected her to undue and severe harassment for her efforts to improve the company's food safety practices.

The court case against Nestlé is now underway in the *Chambre Patrimoniale Cantonale de Lausanne* in Switzerland. In her role as the Corporate Food Safety Manager and Assistant Vice President of Nestlé between 2000 and 2010, she was responsible for food safety management on a global level. In the context of her duties, on multiple occasions, she reported issues of concern regarding food safety and human resource practices to the upper management of the Company. Instead of heeding her warnings, Nestlé's management chose to ignore her concerns and began a long and systematic process of moral and psychological harassment. The attached letter from 4 September 2010 addressed to Mr Peter Brabeck-Lethmathe, the Chairman of the Executive Board of Nestlé, was one of the many official appeals and a final attempt to open discussions for a resolution.

The food safety expert has taken the case to court with the hope of having a fair examination of her case, recognition of her sufferings and blatant mistreatment, and most importantly, to have an explanation as to why the management of Nestlé has chosen to be complacent and has clearly ignored the dysfunctionalities she has reported regarding the company's product safety and reputation.

By bringing this matter to the court, she would also like to raise public awareness regarding flaws in the system of risk management, highlighting the following issues:

- Employees of companies should be legally allowed to make their experiences and observations in areas related to risk management (consumer health, environment, finance, etc.) known to the general public.
- Moral and psychological harassment is not a benign problem but a violation of human rights and should be viewed as a criminal act as much as murder or rape. Labour laws should be adjusted so that companies/organizations can be held accountable for such despicable acts under criminal law.
- National laws and international agreements need to be established to protect whistle-blowers against retaliation.

As a global expert on food safety, she looks at the issue of fear culture and harassment in the management of major multinational companies or organisations not only on a personal level but also as a potential risk for communities across the world, stating, "With globalization and the growth of multinational companies, many risks can take global dimensions; weakness in the laws of one country can have implications for other countries, as demonstrated in the crisis affecting the financial and environmental sectors."

She invites the Shareholders of Nestlé to set up an independent and impartial commission to examine her case, shed light on her allegations and draw the necessary conclusions for better internal management of food safety and human resources practices in Nestlé. "It only takes one ignored warning to cause irreversible effects which could include major outbreaks, leading to many deaths. If Nestlé ignores and abuses the very employees trying to protect their consumers, it is time to question not only Nestlé practices in food safety but also its level of commitment behind its policies."

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