

## China: New agency to undertake AQSIQ's role

China's highest legislative body, the National People's Congress, has approved a sweeping government restructuring plan that will affect phytosanitary watchdog AQSIQ.

This is generally considered to be the most comprehensive government restructuring that China has undertaken in decades, according to global law firm Ropes & Gray.

As part of the new plan approved on March 17, China has established a State Market Regulatory Administration (SMRA), which will merge and undertake the responsibilities previously held by AQSIQ – the General Administration of Quality Supervision, Inspection and Quarantine.

Other entities the new SMRA will cover include the State Administration for Industry and Commerce (SAIC) the Certification and Accreditation Administration (CAC), the Standardization Administration of China (SAC) and the China Food and Drug Administration (CFDA).

Two other agencies that have been created are the National Health Commission (NHC) and the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs (MARA).

Ropes & Gray says that with the change, the Chinese leadership has tapped the SMRA as the single most powerful market regulator to address a range of topics.

“As such, the SMRA will have a broad mandate, overseeing everything from drug safety supervision, quality inspection, fair competition and commercial bribery, issuance of business registrations, certifications and accreditations, management of intellectual property rights and comprehensive supervision and management of the market order,” it said.

Mao Zhang, former director of the State Administration for Industry and Commerce, was appointed as the director for the new SMRA, the National Law Review reported

It said the institutional reshuffle may take several months or longer to complete.

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