

Ms. Stella Kyriakides  
Commissioner for Health and Food  
Safety  
European Commission  
Rue de la Loi 200

B – 1049 Brussels

Ref.: BEUC-X-2020-029/MGO/cm

Brussels, 27 April 2020

**Subject: Joint Letter to the European Commission re: Mandatory Nutri-Score**

Dear Commissioner Kyriakides,

As Europe continues to confront the serious impacts of the Covid-19 crisis, the importance of the health of its citizens has been underlined more than ever. The focus remains for now on combatting the immediate threats posed by the virus. It is nevertheless imperative that, as we look ahead, policymakers address underlying and urgent societal concerns related to unbalanced diets and malnutrition, which will persist in our societies if strong action is not taken. We believe that food plays an important part in maintaining a healthy society, and that we must therefore empower citizens throughout the EU to adopt balanced eating and drinking habits by providing clear nutritional information.

In advance of the forthcoming Farm to Fork Strategy, MEPs Biljana Borzan, Michèle Rivasi and Véronique Trillet-Lenoir and the undersigned civil society organisations, academics and companies from the manufacturing and retail sectors would like to express our support for the mandatory EU-wide adoption of the Nutri-Score front-of-pack nutritional label.

With one in two European adults overweight or obese, it is clear that stronger action is required to help stem the tide of this public health crisis. Nutritional labelling has been identified by both national governments and international health experts as one of the key policy tools which can be used to support consumers to make informed healthier food choices<sup>1</sup>.

The Food Information to Consumers Regulation (1169/2011) introduced an important new obligation on food producers to include nutritional information per 100g/ml for key nutrients. However, this information is usually found on the back of the pack, in very small font and crucially lacks an interpretative element for consumers.

Well-designed, colour-coded front-of-pack nutritional labelling schemes can help busy shoppers to glean useful information at-a-glance. Research<sup>2</sup> conducted in several countries shows Nutri-Score is currently the best-performing scheme in both aiding consumers to compare the nutritional quality of foods across a range of products and to make healthier purchasing choices in the supermarket.

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<sup>1</sup> WHO European Food and Nutrition Action Plan 2015-2020.

<sup>2</sup> Egnell M, Talati Z, Hercberg S, Pettigrew S, et Julia C. [Objective Understanding of Front-of-Package Nutrition Labels : An International Comparative Experimental Study across 12 Countries](#). *Nutrients* 10, no 10 (2018) : 1542

Since France officially endorsed the scheme in 2017, Belgium, Spain, Germany, the Netherlands, Luxembourg and Switzerland have now recognised the effectiveness of Nutri-Score and have also recommended it in their territories. Nevertheless, as current EU food law only permits any such schemes to be voluntary, the full potential of the label to aid consumers remains unfulfilled.

We, the undersigned individuals and organisations, therefore call on the European Commission to adopt Nutri-Score as the basis for harmonization of front-of-pack nutritional labelling in the EU<sup>3</sup>.

Yours Sincerely,

### **MEPs**

MEP Biljana Borzan

MEP Michèle Rivasi

MEP Véronique Trillet-Lenoir

### **Consumer Organisations**

Monique Goyens, Director General, The European Consumer Organisation (BEUC)

Dirk Van Hevel, Country Manager at Test Achats

Alain Bazot, President of UFC-Que Choisir

Alberto Pirrone, Country Manager at Altroconsumo

Olof King, Advocacy Manager, Consumentenbond

Antonio Balhanas, Country Manager at Deco Proteste

Ivo Mechels, CEO Euroconsumers,

Esther Rodriguez, Director, OCU

### **Academics and Public Health Organisations**

Dr Nancy Babio, President of the CODINUCAT (College of Dietitians-Nutritionists of Catalonia) Governing Board, Researcher at Rovira i Virgili University, Spain.

Teodora Handjieva-Darlenska, MD, PhD, President of the Bulgarian Association for Study of Obesity and Related Diseases

Pr Serge Hercberg, MD, PhD, Professor of Nutrition, University Sorbonne Paris Nord

Violeta Moizé President of SEDYN (Scientific Society of Dietetics and Nutrition), Spain.

Dr Marta Planas, President of SCADC (Catalonian of Food and Clinical Dietetics Society)

Pr Jordi Salas-Salvadó, Professor of Nutrition. Human Nutrition Unit (Director), Rovira i Virgili University. Reus, Spain.

Dr Stefanie Vandevijvere, Senior researcher Food & Health, Sciensano, Belgium

Association Française des Diététiciens Nutritionnistes

Société Française de Santé Publique

Irish Heart Foundation

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<sup>3</sup> Where there is evidence to support that this works best in a national context, flexibility should be maintained for another scheme to be used in addition to the mandatory Nutri-Score.

Spanish Patients' Forum

**Food Companies and Retailers**

Danone

Nestlé

Ahold Delhaize, Wouter Kolk (CEO Europe and Indonesia)

Albert Heijn, Marit van Egmond (CEO)

AUCHAN Retail Portugal

Carrefour Belgium, François-Melchior de Polignac, (CEO)

Carretilla

Delhaize, Belgium, Xavier Piesvaux, (CEO)

Eroski

Dutch Food Retail Association, Marc Jansen, (Director)

Fleury Michon

Groupement Les Mousquetaires

Hak, Timo Hoogeboom, (CEO)

Kaufland Stiftung & Co. KG

Lidl Stiftung & Co. KG

McCain

REWE Group