Towards a proposal for EU harmonised mandatory front-of-pack nutrition labelling: state of play and next steps

AREPO online event “EU Geographical Indications and Nutrition Labelling: Can a score provide meaningful information to consumers?”
27 October, 2021

- Food information and composition

DG SANTE
Context
Front-of-pack nutrition labelling in the EU: current situation

Regulation (EU) No 1169/2011 on the provision of food information to consumers

- Mandatory nutrition declaration since December 2016 (often back-of-pack)
- Indication of nutrition information on front-of-pack possible on voluntary basis
- Different formats / public & private schemes
Commission announcements for EU harmonised mandatory FOPNL

• Report on front-of-pack nutrition labelling
  • Building on literature review Joint Research Centre
    https://publications.jrc.ec.europa.eu/repository/handle/JRC113586
  • Concludes that FOP schemes have the potential to help consumers make health-conscious food choices and that it seems appropriate to introduce harmonised mandatory FOP labelling

• Farm to Fork Strategy
  • Proposal for a harmonised mandatory front-of-pack nutrition labelling to enable consumers to make health conscious food choices (Q4 2022)
  • Set nutrient profiles to restrict the promotion - via nutrition and health claims - of foods high in e.g. salt, sugars and/or salt

• Europe’s Beating Cancer Plan (COM(2021) 44 of February 2021)
Objectives

- To **facilitate consumers’ healthier food choices** and at same time **incentivise food producers to place healthier food** on the EU market.

- Harmonised and mandatory FOP nutrition information will **help consumers to see at a glance the essential nutrition information** when purchasing foods, while avoiding confusion and costs linked to different schemes. At the same time, it would stimulate food reformulation.

- Setting nutrient profiles will **avoid a situation where nutrition and health claims would mask** the overall nutritional status of a food. In addition, it would incentivise food producers to produce healthier foods, ensuring a level playing field for food business operators within internal market.

- Develop **comprehensive options exploring in a coherent manner harmonised FOP labelling and setting of nutrient profiles** (interplay)
Policy Options

Current types of FOP labels form basis of different options

<table>
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<th>Nutrient-specific labels - examples</th>
<th>Summary labels - examples</th>
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<td>Numerical (Option 1)</td>
<td>Colour-coded (Option 2)</td>
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<td>![Numerical example]</td>
<td>![Colour-coded example]</td>
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<td>Endorsement logos (Option 3)</td>
<td>Graded indicators (Option 4)</td>
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<td>![Endorsement logos example]</td>
<td>![Graded indicators example]</td>
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The setting of a nutrient profiling model separate from the (non-evaluative) FOP label will be assessed

The nutrient profiling model for restricting claims is based on the nutrient profiling model underpinning the harmonised (evaluative) FOP scheme

Options will cover pre-packed foods required to bear a nutrition declaration.
IIA: public feedback (Dec 2020 – Feb 2021)

- Public authorities: 11 (2%)
- Trade Unions: 3 (1%)
- Academic/research institutions: 16 (3%)
- Non-EU Citizens: 1 (0%)
- Business associations: 124 (26%)
- NGOs: 54 (12%)
- EU Citizens: 129 (27%)
- Environmental organisations: 3 (1%)
- Others: 35 (8%)
- Consumers associations: 19 (4%)
- Company/business organisations: 77 (16%)

European Commission
Reactions on FOP

- **Business associations and companies**
  - Support for harmonisation, but voluntary; portion-based
  - Divergent views between choice for non-evaluative versus evaluative schemes
  - Request to assess combination of options

- **Public health and consumer NGOs**
  - Support for harmonised mandatory FOP; based on 100 g/ml
  - Exemptions on scientific and not commercial grounds
  - Support for evaluative colour-coded schemes

- **Academia - Nutritionists**
  - Generally favour the introduction of harmonised mandatory FOPNL and express preference for evaluative colour-coded schemes

- **Citizens**
  - Support for harmonised mandatory FOP
  - Different views on the type of scheme
Reactions on nutrient profiles (NP)

- **Business associations and companies**
  - Explicit support from only a few; most stress need for specific conditions
  - Farmer associations call not to penalise traditional foods; some call for exemptions
  - Divergent views regarding NP model for FOP & claims: some could agree, while others express opposition/doubts

- **Public health and consumer NGOs**
  - Support for setting of NP; exemptions to be based on science
  - Consistency between NP model for FOP & claims

- **Academia – Nutritionists**
  - Support for setting NP;
  - Consistency between NP model for FOP & claims
Additional input to the Impact Assessment

• JRC FOP literature review
  • Update with scientific publications since March 2018
  • In addition, focus on specific aspects
    • e.g. combined presence FOP & claims, highly processed food & traditional products, impact on lower socio-economic groups...

• EFSA Scientific advice for development of harmonised mandatory front-of-pack nutrition labelling and setting of nutrient profiles for restricting nutrition and health claims on foods
  • EFSA will consult publicly on the draft by the end of 2021
  • Scientific opinion by March 2022
Study to support the Impact Assessment

- **Purpose and scope**
  - Identify and collect evidence and carry-out a detailed and data-driven analysis
  - Gather evidence, views, opinions from all relevant stakeholders and consult them on the various policy options (stakeholder consultations, surveys, case studies)
  - Analyse and compare the economic, social and environmental impacts of the proposed policy options, including on the preservation of cultural heritage
  - Explore the possibility to apply specific conditions to certain categories of food

- **Stakeholder consultations**
  - Public consultation
    - In all EU languages, open for 12 weeks
  - Targeted consultations
    - Stakeholders (workshops, interviews, targeted surveys)
    - Member States’ competent authorities (meetings, targeted surveys)
Overview next steps

- **Study** to support the Impact Assessment
- (In parallel) JRC study and EFSA advice
- Finalisation **impact assessment**
- Drafting **legislative proposal**
- Adoption of the proposal by the Commission
- Adoption by co-legislators
Thank you

SANTE-CONSULT-E1@ec.europa.eu

https://ec.europa.eu/food/safety/labelling-and-nutrition_en

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