Report of the meeting between Commissioner Kyriakides and Jari Leppa, Finnish Minister of Agriculture and Forestry on 21 February 2022
Participants:

Commission: Commissioner Kyriakides, Annukka Ojala (deputy head of Cabinet),

Finland: Minister Jari Leppa,

The Minister underlined the support of FI to improve food labelling as consumers need better information about the origin, nutritional content and environmental impact of food. He mentioned the following points:
– FI agrees with the initiative to harmonise origin labelling and to extend it to new product groups.
– With regard to nutrition labelling, FI agrees that it is important to promote the nutrition labelling on the front of pack. It is however important to take into account the specificities of MSs in matters related to public health and its promotion, such as national labelling initiatives. In FI, consumers are very familiar with the national Heart logo, which is a guarantee of choosing healthy food.
– The forthcoming Commission proposal on nutritional profiles and the restriction of the marketing of high-fat products through them is important. Nutrition profiles can promote the food environment in children in particular and at the same time tackle the obesity epidemic.
– The mandatory labelling of alcoholic beverages is also an important initiative because it is not justified to treat alcoholic beverages differently than other foods with regard to food information.

The Commissioner informed of the on-going work on the preparation of a proposal for a revision of the Regulation on food information to consumers. She mentioned the ongoing impact assessment and invited FI to contribute to the public consultation that is open until 7 March. The Commissioner underlined that any proposed front of pack nutrition labelling (FOPNL) scheme should be science-based, and that is why the Commission has mandated the EFSA to provide scientific advice. We further requested the Joint Research Centre to update the previous scientific literature review. She made it clear that no decision had been made on which scheme would be chosen for FOPNL and encouraged FI to help bridging the gap between the diverging views of MSs. As most FOPNL schemes are based on nutrient profiling criteria, the Commission is looking at both of these topics in a comprehensive manner. As announced in the Farm to Fork Strategy, the Commission will propose the extension of mandatory origin or provenance indications to certain products. There seems to be a large consensus between MSs that the extension should cover milk, and milk and meat as an ingredient, and rabbit and game meat.