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Consumer groups launch petition for EU-wide simplified nutrition label

Today, seven national consumer organisations¹ from the European Consumer Organisation's (BEUC) network are launching a [petition](#) calling for the roll out of Nutri-Score across Europe on food and drink packaging. It is the first time that consumer groups are joining forces to start a [European Citizens' Initiative](#)², coordinated by French consumer group UFC-Que Choisir. BEUC applauds this action, reminding the EU institutions that the time is ripe to make healthy food choices easy for consumers, one of our [priorities](#) for the upcoming EU elections.

Monique Goyens, Director general of BEUC, commented:

"We know obesity rates continue to rise, and that part of the solution is to make it easier for consumers to make sense of nutritional information on food labels. We need strong political will to make it a reality so that consumers across Europe can choose healthier foods more easily.

"A colour-coded label on the front of pack helps busy shoppers compare foodstuffs and to spot instantly the healthier yoghurt or snack. Being a consumer should not be a full-time job. Few of us have the time to decipher complex figures on the back of packages at the supermarket.

"This citizen initiative suggests to the EU a very concrete course of action, by adopting a nutrition label which has proven its effectiveness. There's no more time to waste to make the healthy choice easier for consumers, EU decision makers must urgently heed our call."

The Nutri-Score system gives food and beverages an overall nutritional rating on a scale which goes from 'A' to 'E', with corresponding colours ranging from dark green to red. It takes into account both nutrients to avoid, such as sugar or salt, and those elements to favour, such as fibre, fruit and vegetables.

Evidence³ from research 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. BEUC therefore advocates for the mandatory roll-out of Nutri-Score across Europe. Moreover, where there is evidence to support that this works best in a national context, flexibility should be maintained for another scheme, such as the multiple traffic lights, to be used in addition to the Nutri-Score.

Nutri-Score is currently used on a voluntary basis in France, Belgium and Spain.

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More information:

'Pro Nutri-Score' initiative website: www.pronutriscore.org

[BEUC position on Front-of-pack labelling](#), May 2019.

[BEUC priorities for the EU elections](#), Nov 2018.

Notes:

1. [Consumentenbond](#) (Netherlands), EKPIZO (Greece), Federacja Konsumentów (Poland), OCU (Spain), Test Achats/Test Aankoop (Belgium), [UFC-Que Choisir](#) (France), vzbv (Germany).
2. The EU Commission recently validated this initiative, which now needs 1 million signatures to spur discussions at the EU level.
3. Chantal Julia, Serge Hercberg, '[Development of a new front-of-pack nutrition label in France: the five-colour Nutri-Score](#)', Public Health Panorama, December 2017. Manon Egnell, Zenobia Talati, Serge Hercberg, Simone Pettigrew, and Chantal Julia, '[Objective Understanding of Front-of-Package Nutrition Labels : An International Comparative Experimental Study across 12 Countries](#)', Nutrients, October 2018.

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