



The European Consumers' Organisation

COMMUNIQUE DE PRESSE
PRESS RELEASE

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Food information vote: Defeat for consumers on nutrition labelling

The vote this morning in the Environment Committee of the European Parliament on Food Information to consumers is a major blow for consumers since MEPs rejected proposals for mandatory front of the pack nutrition information.

Monique Goyens, Director General of BEUC, the European Consumers' Organisation said:

"In practical terms, this vote means that shoppers would not be able to easily find and compare crucial information on how much fat, saturated fat, salt and sugar there is in a food product. They will have to look for it, turn the products in all directions. This goes against history and against all of the evidence as to what works best for consumers when trying to make healthy choices, particularly when the fight against obesity becomes a public health priority. We hope MEPs will get it right in plenary."

All has not been lost though as some improvements have been made. This specifically refers to the indication of the country or place of provenance of products which is extended to all meat and poultry products, also when used as an ingredient in processed food. Fresh fruits and vegetables as well as milk and dairy products would also require origin labelling. Also, improvements have been made to legibility requirements with the inclusion of a minimum font size and a call for binding rules in this area.

Note to editors:

Nutrition declaration on how much fat, saturated fat, sugar, salt and calories there is in a food product will not have to be displayed in the front of pack. Information will only be given at the back of the pack indicating the amount of 8 nutrients, including transfat.

Legibility would be ensured since a minimum font size of 1.2 mm – and 0.9 mm in the case of packaging smaller than 80cm² – was adopted.

Traffic Light: The amendment providing for a color-coded scheme on the front of packs of processed food which concisely displays whether the key nutrients of fat, saturated fats, sugars and salt - are high, medium or low with red, amber and green 'traffic lights' was defeated last year in 1st reading. According to legislative procedure, it is not possible to table in 2nd reading an amendment defeated in 1st reading. However, because this is the system of labelling that shoppers find the most useful and easiest to understand, that allows us to make at-a-glance comparisons between various foods, consumers' organisations will continue calling for it. It can fortunately continue to be used on a voluntary basis

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