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**Date:** 06/07/2022  
**Reference:** BEUC-PR-2022-031

## **BEUC calls on EU investigation into anti Nutri-Score lobby groups over suspected breach of transparency obligations**

BEUC has launched a complaint over a concern that the No-Nutriscore Alliance and Brussels-based consultancy Must & Partners breach the EU Code of Conduct on transparency. BEUC argues that while the European Commission is drafting its position about a future EU-wide front-of-pack nutrition label, it is unfair that some authorised representatives (Must & Partners) may access EU decision makers to voice the concerns of an entity they represent secretly (the No-Nutriscore Alliance).

Organisations that try to influence the EU decision-making process must be listed on the EU Transparency Register. However, the accuracy of the information is not verified.

BEUC has strong concerns that the consultancy Must & Partners and the No-Nutriscore Alliance provide misleading and partial information about the reality of their relationships, the interests they represent and the sources of their funding. Some concerning elements on the Register:

- Both Transparency Register entries for [Must & Partners](#) and the [No-Nutriscore Alliance](#) share the same contact person, telephone number, and address. The relationship between these two organisations should be transparent.
- The No-Nutriscore Alliance does not disclose any information about its sponsors and partners. It describes itself as an "informal association created by a group of professionals and citizens" that "does not receive any form of public or private financial support".<sup>1</sup> Yet it lists three full-time lobbyists in the Transparency Register, but zero accreditation.
- While Must & Partners' activities include "Food & Health", the entry no longer indicates clients from the food sector. However, we have strong reasons to believe that Must & Partners still actively works for the food sector (for instance participating in food-related events) and fails to disclose such information properly.

### **Monique Goyens, Director General of BEUC, commented:**

"At a time when the European Union is making up its mind over which front-of-pack label should end up on food products across Europe, it is unfair that vested interests hide behind an obscure messenger to push their opposition to Nutri-Score with decision makers. We have several reasons to believe that the No-Nutriscore Alliance is nothing less than a window dressing entity, with the Must & Partners consultancy defending the interests of their clients in a concealed way.

"Our complaint has nothing to do with discussing the pros and cons of the Nutri-Score label. However, we deem that the important policy discussion on the future EU front-of-pack label must

<sup>1</sup> [www.no-nutriscore.eu/about-us/](http://www.no-nutriscore.eu/about-us/)

take place in a fair manner. BEUC has been on record a staunch supporter of the Nutri-Score for several years, based on sound scientific evidence. We do welcome debate on this topic, provided it is based on science and interests are openly declared. Unfortunately, there are shadows around the No-Nutriscore Alliance which make it in our view a non-transparent player. We expect the EU Transparency Register to lift the veil on the true relationship between these two groups.”

**Next steps:**

BEUC filed the complaint on Friday 1<sup>st</sup> July. The Transparency Register secretariat will assess whether the complaint is admissible within 15 working days.

ENDS

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