

To: Interested Parties

10 October 2008

Reference: LRM/006/097

**European Commission's Proposal for a Food Information Regulation  
Council Working Group meeting – 30 September/1 October 2008**

Dear Interested Party

A Council Working Group meeting took place on 30 September and 1 October 2008 at which general and nutrition labelling aspects of the proposal for a Food Information Regulation were discussed.

**Meeting on 30 September – General Labelling**

This meeting continued the first read through the proposal, picking up from Article 19. Progress was made with discussions focussing on technical amendments to the Commission text and calls for proposed amendments to the text from Member States.

The main points of discussion where:

- Technical amendments to the list of generic terms used in ingredients listings;
- the need for additional text to clarify the situation with regard to ingredients added to products with a EC defined composition e.g. cheese with herbs;
- the omissions from ingredient listing - there were some calls for all alcoholic drinks to be exempt from ingredient listings, but the group felt that there was need for further discussion on whether to exempt such drinks or not;
- Allergen labelling – discussions focused on technical amendments to the text. Meetings did not reach the article on allergen information on loose foods;
- Net quantity discussions – calls to allow the use of numbers/units etc. e.g. 5 sticks of chewing gum, and flexibility on the use of grams/litres for net quantities;
- Date Marking – calls for clearer definitions of 'best before' and 'use by' to aid correct application of these dates; and
- Origin labelling – no consensus, but there was quite a lot of support for the proposal as drafted with some countries wishing extension of mandatory labelling for unprocessed products. There was not much support for a more proportionate approach.

The UK will be hosting a mini group meeting with Member State representatives to discuss ideas on how to address the issue of clarity and facilitate debate in this area. The UK will then report back to the Working Group at its next meeting.

### **Meeting on 1 October – Nutrition Labelling**

Discussions on 1 October were in relation to nutrition labelling aspects of the proposal. The main areas of discussion were:

- the values for significant amounts for labelling vitamins and minerals ;
- the proposed reference intake values;
- appropriate entry into force periods for food businesses;
- nutrients that should form the mandatory nutrition declaration;
- whether alcoholic drinks should carry nutrition information; and
- the basis on which nutrition labelling information should be provided.

There remains general support from Member States for some form of mandatory nutrition declaration, although discussion continues on the exact form and content, and location of nutrition information.

Member States confirmed their preference for mandatory per 100g/ml declarations with additional voluntary per portion and %RIV information and for EFSA to validate the RIV figures contained in the proposal to ensure they have the appropriate scientific basis. Time constraints meant that there was no discussion on national schemes or additional forms of nutrition labelling.

Further discussion is expected to take place on a number of areas including the appropriate levels for significant amounts of vitamins and minerals, entry into force dates for the various provisions of the proposal, the exemption of alcoholic drinks from providing nutrition information.

### **Next Steps**

The next Council Working Group meeting is scheduled for 20 October 2008 and is expected to focus on general labelling provisions.

Yours faithfully

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