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From: General Secretariat of the Council
To: Council

Subject: Scientific Symposium "Sharing experiences and perspectives on front-of-pack nutrition labelling systems" (Brussels, 25 April 2024)
- Information from the Presidency

Delegations will find in the Annex a note from the Presidency on the above-mentioned subject which will be dealt with under "Any other business" at the Council meeting ("Agriculture and Fisheries") on 24 June 2024.

Scientific Symposium “Sharing experiences and perspectives on front-of-pack nutrition labelling systems” (Brussels, 25 April 2024)

Information from the Presidency

On the 25th of April, the Belgian Presidency organised a scientific symposium on different front-of-pack nutrition labelling (FOPNL) systems.

The aim of this symposium was to explore diverse perspectives on the currently existing FOPNL systems already introduced in some EU countries to allow an open dialogue amongst all the stakeholders involved (policy makers, NGO’s, academics, food business operators...). The discussions were held on the backdrop of EU Member States facing growing problems of overweight, obesity and non-communicable diseases directly correlated to unhealthy food habits and physical inactivity. These problems require the acceleration of efforts to develop science-based and cost-effective actions within ambitious sustainable, nutrition and health policies. The European wide introduction of an efficient, harmonised and science-based FOPNL would help to address these issues allowing consumers to become more involved and encouraging them to make balanced and informed food choices. The adoption of a EU wide FOPNL is an important element of the Farm to Fork Strategy and the European Beating Cancer plan.

The scientific symposium was opened by Her Majesty Queen Mathilde and by the Belgian Deputy Prime Minister and Federal Minister of Public Health who both underpinned the importance to reach better understanding of the nutritional content of food by the European citizens in order to make “the healthy choice, the easy choice”.

The agenda was divided into 4 different sessions :

- The first session was dedicated to the logo Nutri-Score with several presentations led by WHO-Europe, Professor Serge Hercberg, the founder of the Nutri-Score, the Joint Research Center of the European Commission and by French and Belgian researchers presenting consumer's studies on perception of the Nutri-Score logo.
- The second session was led by Finland and Portugal, two Member States which are considering the adoption of the Nutri-score logo in the future, and Sweden presenting the Keyhole system.
- The third session was aiming at presenting the new EU Joint Action on cancer and other NCD's prevention and to present the potential use of FOPNL systems such as Nutri-Score as nutrition profiling system tool for screening food marketing.
- The fourth session consisted in a roundtable with different stakeholders involved in FOPNL: DG SANTE, OECD, Scientific Researcher, BEUC, EuroHealthNet, European Dairy Association, EuroCommerce. Each panellist had the opportunity to express his/her opinion on the topic. Even if no consensus has been reached, the dialogue was interesting and constructive.

The Belgian Presidency was very pleased with the level of participation both in-person and online (more than 400 people).

The recording of the scientific symposium is available online:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9JHm_tYpJSM