NOTE

From: General Secretariat of the Council
To: Delegations
Subject: Presidency Conclusions on front-of-pack nutrition labelling, nutrient profiles and origin labelling
– Statement by Czech Republic, Greece and Italy

Delegations will find in annex a statement by the Czech, Greek and Italian delegations presented at the meeting of the "Agriculture and Fisheries" Council on 15-16 December 2020.
Declaration of Czech Republic, Greece and Italy on the Presidency Conclusions on front-of-pack nutrition labelling, nutrient profiles and origin labelling

Czech Republic, Greece and Italy believe that the Presidency Conclusions on front-of-pack nutrition labelling, nutrient profiles and origin labelling fall short of reference to some of the principles that the afore-mentioned countries consider essential for the development of an EU-harmonized FOPNL scheme and that were enshrined in the Non paper co-presented with other Member States to last 21st September Agrifish council.

Czech Republic, Greece and Italy believe that Commission should address the need to encourage EU citizens to adopt a healthier lifestyle through a multidimensional approach, including the urgent launch of effective education campaigns.

In this framework, a EU harmonized FOPNL scheme must be a voluntary instrument to provide factual information on calories and individual nutrients contained in a food product, in full compliance with the requirements set by article 35 of Regulation (EU) 1169/2011. FOPNL are a tool to favour balanced diets, that is to help consumers choose food products according to their particular conditions and state of health, in line with the pledge “to empower consumers to make informed, healthy and sustainable food choices” stated in the Communication from the Commission “A Farm to Fork Strategy for a fair, healthy and environmentally-friendly food system”. In this sense, a FOPNL scheme must neither be a marketing tool nor jeopardize traditional and high-quality productions. In this sense, Protected Designations of Origin, Protected Geographical Indications and Traditional Specialities guaranteed, as well as single ingredient products, will have to be exempted.
A EU harmonized FOPNL scheme has to be understandable and fully transparent. The use of colours is therefore not recommendable, since it would convey a simplistic message without shedding light on the underlying calculation used to attribute them.

A EU-harmonized FOPNL scheme should take into account the actual daily intake of foods and beverages, rather than a generic threshold of 100g/100ml, in order to avoid sending misleading messages, underestimating the contribution of food consumed in larger portions and penalizing those usually eaten in small quantities.

The coexistence between existing schemes and a future harmonized EU FOPNL scheme risks creating confusion and posing an unsustainable burden on industry, to the detriment of the internal market.

The decision on the development of such a scheme will have, over the next years, major implications on public health, the internal market and cultural values. It should therefore not be influenced by already established market-driven solutions.