



Health & Consumers Directorate General

Commission proposal for a Regulation on the provision of food information to consumers

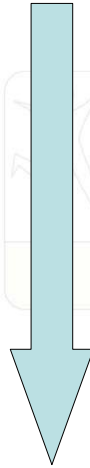
(COM(2008) 40 final)



Context of the review

- Simplification and modernisation
- Informed choices – safe, healthy diet
- Making the labels efficient
 - what information is needed and used?
 - how should it be presented?
- Protection of the internal market

Time line



- Consultation and review of existing rules on general and nutrition labelling (2003 to 2006)
- Food labelling better regulation consultation on all aspects of food labelling (March 06 to June 06)
- Impact Assessment associated with the Commission proposal (Dec. 06 to July 07)
- Commission proposal COM(2008) 40 (Adopted 30 January 08)

Commission proposal - Issues

- Simplification
- General principles
- Legibility of label
- Non-prepacked food
- Distance selling of food
- Origin labelling
- Alcoholic beverages
- Nutrition information





Simplification

- Recast of horizontal labelling provisions in a single Regulation
 - Directive 2000/13/EC on general labelling (plus additional labelling rules for specific categories of foods)
 - Directive 90/496/EEC on nutrition labelling
- Detailed or technical provisions in Annexes that may be adapted by Comitology
- Provision for future use of alternative means of providing information



Scope

- All food delivered to the final consumer, including food
 - prepared and served in catering establishments
 - sold by means of distance selling
- All means of making information available
 - label, accompanying material, modern technology tools, verbal communication



Legibility

- Minimum font size of 3mm
- Significant contrast between print and background
- Voluntary information not to be displayed to the detriment of the space available for mandatory information
- Exemption from minimum font size for packs with a largest surface of $< 10\text{cm}^2$



Origin labelling

- Origin declaration remains voluntary unless its omission could mislead the consumer
- The proposal clarifies and tightens the rules on providing origin declarations to prevent the proliferation of misleading voluntary origin indications

Alcoholic beverages

- Acknowledgement that such products have to provide information to consumers
- Alcoholic drinks, including ready to drink mixtures, to bear full ingredient listing and nutrition information
- Derogations for beer, wine and spirits pending a review by the Commission to determine suitable labelling of these foods after 5 years of the entry into force of the Regulation





Mandatory nutrition labelling

- Proposed to make nutrition labelling mandatory on the majority of processed food
- Consumers are interested and want to have such information
- To encourage healthier dietary choices
- Incentive to the food industry to reformulate products



Mandatory information

On front of pack

- energy (calories)
- fat
- saturated fat
- carbohydrates, with specific reference to sugars
- salt*

(*sodium expressed as salt equivalents)

Form of declaration

- per 100g / per 100ml
- on a per portion basis alone when:
 - prepacked as an individual portion
 - after harmonisation of portion size for categories of foods at the Community level
- indication of the percentage of the reference intake value provided by the food (does not have to be front of pack)

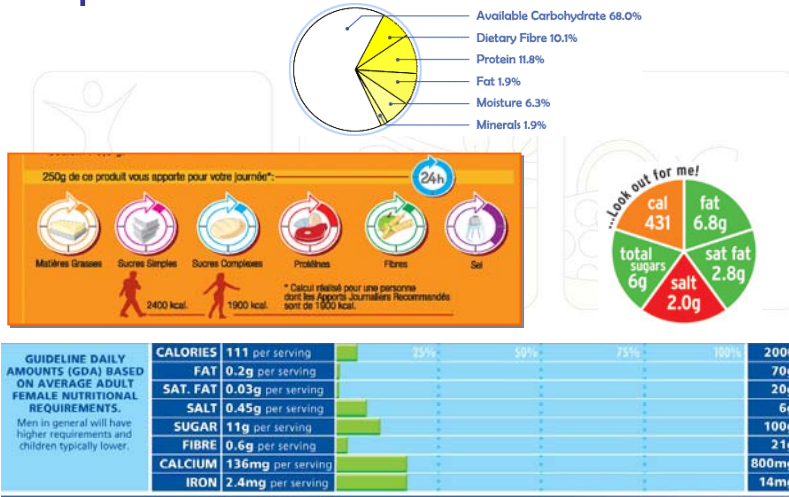
Voluntary declaration

Nutrients that can be labelled on a voluntary basis on either the front or back of pack:

- trans fats
- mono-unsaturates
- polyunsaturates
- polyols
- starch
- fibre
- protein
- certain minerals and vitamins

when a claim is made the declaration becomes mandatory

Expression/Presentation



National schemes

- May be developed for additional forms of expression or presentation of nutrition information
- Only forms complying with national schemes may be used by food businesses
 - Essential requirements in legislation
 - Schemes based on sound consumer research
 - Wide and active involvement of stakeholders in development of scheme
 - Mutual recognition of national schemes
 - Possibility to harmonise through comitology



Next steps

- Codecision procedure - Adoption by European Parliament and the Council (normally 1-2yrs)
- Transition
 - 3 years after the entry into force
 - 5 years for micro businesses to implement nutrition labelling (businesses with fewer than 10 employees plus an annual turnover not exceeding € 2 million)



More information available at:

http://ec.europa.eu/food/food/labellingnutrition/foodlabelling/proposed_legislation_en.htm