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## **Council finalizes its first reading on new food labelling rules**

The Council today adopted<sup>1</sup> its first-reading-position on a draft regulation on food information to consumers ([17602/10](#) + [17602/10 ADD 1](#) + [17602/10 ADD 1 COR 1](#) + [5964/11](#) + [5964/11 ADD 1](#))<sup>2</sup>. This new piece of legislation aims to ensure that food labels carry essential information in a clear and legible way, thereby enabling consumers to make balanced and healthier dietary choices.

One of the key elements of the Council's position is the mandatory nature of the nutrition declaration: the labelling of the energy value and of the quantities of fat, saturates, carbohydrates, protein, sugars and salt would become compulsory.

As a general principle, the energy value and the amounts of these nutrients would have to be expressed per 100g or per 100ml. They could, however, also be indicated as a percentage of reference intakes. Food business operators could also use additional forms of expression or presentation as long as certain conditions are met (e.g. they do not mislead consumers and are supported by evidence of consumer understanding). All elements of the nutrition declaration should appear together in the same field of vision but some of them may be repeated on the “front of pack”.

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- <sup>1</sup> The decision was taken, without debate, at a session of the Agriculture and Fisheries Council in Brussels.
- <sup>2</sup> The Italian delegation voted against.

# **P R E S S**

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Rue de la Loi 175 B - 1048 BRUSSELS Tel.: +32 (0)2 281 6319 Fax: +32 (0)2 281 8026  
[press.office@consilium.europa.eu](mailto:press.office@consilium.europa.eu) <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/Newsroom>

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The Council's position also provides that the labelling of the country of origin would, as at present, be compulsory if the failure to do so would mislead consumers. Moreover, compulsory labelling of the country of origin would be requested for several types of meat (pork, lamb, and poultry<sup>1</sup>), subject to implementing rules. In addition, the Commission should submit within three years after the entry into force of the new regulation a report examining the possible extension of the compulsory labelling of the country of origin to further products (milk, milk used as an ingredient, meat used as an ingredient, unprocessed foods, single-ingredient products, ingredients that represent more than 50% of a food).

Furthermore, the Council's position exempts certain alcoholic beverages (such as wines, products derived from aromatized wines, mead, beer, spirits, but not alcopops) from bearing the nutrition declaration as well as the list of ingredients. The Commission would, however, have to examine within five years after the entry into force of the new regulation whether the exemption was still justified.

Non-prepacked food would also be exempted from nutrition labelling, unless member states decide otherwise at national level. Allergens, however, must always be indicated.

Finally, the Council fixed a minimum font size for the mandatory information on the labelling which, added to other criteria, such as contrast, aims to ensure the legibility of the labels.

The Council's position will now be forwarded to the European Parliament for its second reading. The European Parliament adopted its first-reading position on 16 June 2010 (<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/en/pressroom/content/20100615IPR76127>).

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<sup>1</sup> Beef is already subject to compulsory labelling of the country of origin through a separate piece of legislation.