



“The voice of SMEs in Europe”

Press Statement

FOR IMMEDIATE ISSUE

New rules on health claims: good for consumers, good for SMEs?

- **New article on nutrient profiles is a good compromise**
- **Registration procedures may become overly burdensome for SME producers**

Brussels, 17 May 2006. UEAPME, the European SME employers’ organisation, mildly welcomed the outcomes of the European Parliament’s second reading vote on health claims, which took place in Strasbourg yesterday (Tuesday). It warned, however, that the registration procedures foreseen by the newly introduced legislation might actually go against the very goal of better information for European consumers.

“The European Parliament succeeded in improving the language of the original Commission proposal”, said **Ludger Fischer**, UEAPME Adviser on Food issues and Co-ordinator of the UEAPME Working Group on Foodstuffs. “We are particularly satisfied with the re-wording of the rules on nutritional profiles, whereby a nutrition claim will still be permitted even if one nutrient (salt, sugar or fat) exceeds the limit of the profile. We think this is a good compromise between the needs and expectations of both consumers and producers.”

“European SME producers, however, will now have to deal with additional registration procedures through the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) if they wish to inform consumers on the nutritional benefits of their foodstuffs”, continued Mr Fischer. “This will increase the bureaucratic burden, limit the number of possible claims and ultimately reduce the amount of information that is available for the consumer. SME producers might relinquish the idea of adding health claims to their products, if the required procedure is exceedingly complicated for their limited capacities. The introduction of a ‘register’ of authorised health claims might help in this respect, but its effects will only be manifest years after the entry into force of the Regulation.”

“We hope that the Regulation will not lead to a distinction between ‘good’ and ‘bad’ food, which would be completely unnecessary and unacceptable for SME producers”, concluded Mr Fischer.

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EDITORS’ NOTE: UEAPME is the employer’s organisation representing crafts, trades and SMEs from the EU and accession countries at European level. UEAPME has 78 member organisations, which represent crafts and SMEs across Europe, covering over 11 million enterprises with 50 million employees. UEAPME is a European Social Partner.

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