(English version)

Question for written answer E-002114/24
to the Commission
Biljana Borzan (S&D)
(16 October 2024)

Subject: Ensuring accurate nutritional labelling and sustainable production of plant-based products in the EU

With the growing demand for plant-based products and meat alternatives, driven by their perceived health benefits and lower environmental impact, as well as the need for alternative protein sources, the nutritional profile of these products is becoming increasingly important. However, concerns remain regarding their high levels of sodium and saturated fat.

1. How does the Commission plan to ensure accurate labelling of the nutritional profile of plant-based products, particularly in order to address these concerns?

2. Does the Commission intend to introduce mandatory nutritional labelling across all the Member States? If so, how will it respond to opposition from countries reluctant to adopt such measures?

3. How will the Commission align the production of plant-based products with the EU's sustainability goals, especially concerning the use of ingredients such as palm oil?

Submitted: 16.10.2024

Answer given by Mr Várhelyi on behalf of the European Commission
(6 January 2025)

Regulation (EU) No 1169/2011 ([1]) requires the vast majority of pre-packed foods, including plant-based products, to bear a nutrition declaration which must provide the energy value and the amounts of fat, saturated fat, carbohydrate, sugars, protein and salt of the food.

The mandatory declaration must be presented in a legible tabular or linear format, often provided on the back of the packaging, and must refer to 100 g/ml to facilitate the comparison of products.

The indication of nutrition information on the front-of-pack is not mandatory but could be provided on a voluntary basis. Different formats are possible in the EU ([2]) under Regulation (EU) No 1169/2011 and/or Regulation (EC) No 1924/2006 ([3]). Several Member States are recommending voluntary national front-of-pack nutrition labelling schemes.

The Commission will continue to work with Member States and stakeholders to provide solutions to facilitate healthier food choices.

While communication campaigns at national level can better target consumers, the Commission will support Member States' efforts to improve consumer awareness on food information.

Palm oil is a vegetable oil commonly used in various products, including a wide range of foods, where its presence must be indicated in the list of ingredients. Europe accounts for 45% of total global certified sustainable palm oil (CSPO) use and it is the largest consumer of CSPO ([4]).

([1]) https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A02011R1169-20180101
([2]) COM(2020) 207 final available at https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A52020DC0207
([3]) https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2006/1924/2014-12-13
([4]) EPOA, IDH, RSPO (2022), Sustainable Palm Oil: Europe's Business https://palmoilalliance.eu/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Palm_Oil_Report_161022_amm_final.pdf