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Press Release

Commission recognises EU Trans Fatty Acids maximum limit as way forward

A Commission report issued today confirms that the most efficient option to address Trans Fatty Acids (TFA) in Europe is through an EU legislation setting a maximum limit in food products. "FEDIOL welcomes this outcome, which we have been advocating since 2014. An EU 2% Trans Fatty Acids (TFA) legal limit on fat basis in products sold to the final consumers will address the health concern and ensure a level playing field across Europe", said Henri Rieux, FEDIOL President.

The report acknowledges low TFA levels in the majority of food products, but the need to address remaining hot spots in some food products in several Member States. As stated in the report, TFA are produced industrially, such as partially hydrogenated oils, but can also be naturally present in food products derived from ruminant animals, such as dairy products or meat from cattle, sheep or goat.

The report also confirms the lack of consumers' understanding on TFA, and most particularly on the difference between fully and partially hydrogenated oils. "The report gives a good overview of the situation. By the setting-up of a 2% TFA EU legislation and given the recognized difficulty for consumers to understand the meaning of existing mandatory labelling of fully and partially hydrogenation, it would become clearly redundant and should be deleted", he added.

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Background

- FEDIOL, the EU vegetable oil and proteinmeal industry association, represents the interests of the European seed and bean crushers, meal producers, vegetable oils producers, refiners and bottlers. FEDIOL's members are 12 national associations and associated company members in 5 other EU countries. With about 150 facilities in Europe, the sector provides 20,000 direct employments. Its members process approximately 36 million tonnes of basic products a year, both of EU origin and imported from third country markets. The sector processes notably rapeseed, sunflower seed, soybeans and linseed into oils and meals for food, feed, technical and energy uses essentially on the European market.
- EU Commission report on TFA see here http://ec.europa.eu/food/safety/labelling_nutrition/labelling_legislation/trans-fats_en.htm
- Trans Fatty Acids (TFA) are a category of fatty acids which can originate from animals, from the hydrogenation of vegetable oils and fats and can also arise during the refining process of vegetable oils and fats.
- Annex VII of Regulation 1169/2011 requires that "the expression 'fully hydrogenated' or 'partly hydrogenated', as appropriate, must accompany the indication of a hydrogenated oil or fat."
- EFSA opinions 2004 on the presence of trans fatty acids in foods and the effects on human health of the consumption of trans fatty acids and 2010 on Dietary Reference Values for fats, including saturated fatty acids, polyunsaturated fatty acids, monounsaturated fatty acids, trans fatty acids, and cholesterol. "Evidence from a number of countries indicates that the intake of TFA in the EU has decreased considerably over recent years, owing to reformulation of food products, e.g. fat spreads, sweet bakery products and fast food. More recent reported intakes in some EU Member States are close to 1 to 2 E% (EFSA, 2004). (...)"