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Trans Fatty Acids: FEDIOL advocating legal limit on TFA

As the European Commission prepared for the submission of a report on the presence of trans fats in foods, FEDIOL has been advocating an EU 2% Trans Fatty Acids (TFA) legal limit on fat basis in products sold to the final consumers as the best EU option forward. This would consolidate progresses made on a voluntary basis and ensure a low level of industrial TFA across all EU Member States. The current labelling of full or partial hydrogenation would then become redundant and the obligation to label should hence be deleted.

Following recent US decision to ban partially hydrogenated oils, media and stakeholders have been calling for a TFA "ban" or for TFA "free" food products in Europe.

Considering the confusion such messaging triggers, FEDIOL would like to help clarifying the debate:

- The US banned partially hydrogenated oils, not TFA.
- A TFA ban or complete TFA-free policy would be impossible to implement.
- An EU 2% TFA legal limit on fat basis in the food products sold to the final consumer, which is what is in place in EU countries like Denmark, Austria or Latvia, would respond to consumer health concerns and provide the level playing field that EU players are expecting.
- EU TFA intake has decreased considerably thanks to numerous voluntary industry initiatives. Over the past 15 years, FEDIOL members have reduced TFA in vegetable oils and fats via reformulation, optimisation of refining processes and FEDIOL Code of Practice on refining. This decrease was also recognized by EFSA.
- TFA 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.
- Consumers often do not understand the difference between full or partial hydrogenation. They generally ignore the fact that, contrary to partial hydrogenation, full hydrogenation leads to very low levels of TFA in vegetable oils.

FEDIOL trusts that, as the debate will intensify with the up-coming Commission report, further confusion can be avoided.

END

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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.
- Annex I point 4 of Regulation 1169/2011 defines trans fatty acids as "fatty acids with at least one non-conjugated (namely interrupted by at least one methylene group) carbon-carbon double bond in the trans configuration".
- Article 30 of Regulation 1169/2011 states that "By 13 December 2014, the Commission, taking into account scientific evidence and experience acquired in Member States, shall submit a report on the presence of trans fats in foods and in the overall diet of the Union population. The aim of the report shall be to assess the impact of appropriate means that could enable consumers to make healthier food and overall dietary choices or that could promote the provision of healthier food options to consumers, including, among others, the provision of information on trans fats to consumers or restrictions on their use. The Commission shall accompany this report with a legislative proposal, if appropriate."
- 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). (...)"
- US decision to ban partially hydrogenated oil see [here](#)