

Call from European scientists to implement Nutri-Score in Europe, a simple and transparent front-of-pack food label with rigorous scientific support, intended to guide dietary choices and thus contribute to chronic disease prevention

In May 2020, the European Commission (EC) announced as part of its Farm to Fork Strategy the adoption before the end of 2022 of a harmonised mandatory front-of-pack nutrition labelling to help consumers to make health-conscious food choices.

Scientists and public health actors welcome the announcement of such a public health policy, which, they have been calling for for many years and is also recommended by WHO Europe and strongly supported by major European consumer associations.

The signatories of this call wish to remind that only science should guide policy decision-making in the field of public health and that the choice of the single harmonised front-of-pack nutrition label for Europe must meet this single requirement and not the interests of economic operators (manufacturers, retailers or specific food sectors) or states that defend them.

Nutri-Score has been yet adopted by multiple European countries (France, Belgium, Germany, Spain, Luxembourg, Netherlands) and is currently being discussed as the system that could be adopted at EU level on the basis of its scientific background.

However, since Nutri-Score has entered the heart of European discussions, a number of political bodies, media and social networks have been the theatre of a series of violent attacks and smear campaigns aimed at discrediting and refuting it. These attacks have little to do with constructive criticisms that would aim to propose possible improvements to the existing tool (which is expected), but more often spread false claims without any scientific substratum with the purpose of rejecting Nutri-Score or to divert it from its objectives. In parallel with these attacks, proposals for so-called «neutral» alternatives (such as the NutrInform battery system proposed by Italy and some agro-food lobbies) or the assertion that the information available via the current labelling on back-of-pack nutritional tables is sufficient, aim to block the decision-making process of the establishment of any harmonized front-of-pack nutrition label for Europe and to prevent Nutri-Score from being the chosen model.

The signatories of this call want to remind that Nutri-Score – which was developed by academic researchers without any conflicts of interest - is the only front-of-pack nutritional label in Europe that has been the subject of numerous scientific studies published in peer-reviewed international scientific journals demonstrating its effectiveness and relevance to consumers and public health and its superiority to other labels implemented in other countries or supported by pressure groups. This extensive research body of work is presented in the attached text serving as a support to this statement of scientists from all over Europe asking to the European Union not to yield to pressure groups and to adopt Nutri-Score as a harmonised and mandatory logo for Europe as soon as possible for the interest of consumers and public health.

Group of European scientists supporting the implementation of Nutri-Score in Europe