

EUROPEAN BASIC FOODS PLATFORM

The essentials at a glance



The European Basic Foods Platform is a European association based in Brussels representing companies of the basic food sector, such as dairy products, olive and other vegetable oils.

Why a European Platform for basic foods?

The Platform results from the belief that basic foods have inherent and unique characteristics that make them substantially different from complex, processed foods (such as ready-made meals, jams, snacks, etc.); and that these must be taken into account in EU legislation on food labelling (claims and nutrition labelling). The Platform has no intention to replace existing European associations of the first food transformation sector, but to complement and strengthen their action.

Who set up the European Platform for basic foods?

A leading group of major European companies - Bunge for vegetable oils, Nutrinveste for olive oils, and Lactalis for milk and cheese - launched it in February 2007 for it to become the voice of the basic foods sector.

What are the Platform's objectives?

The Platform aims to:

- enable the basic foods sector to explain and promote its positions;
- provide expertise on priority topics of interest such as food labelling, nutrition and health claims, promotion of a balanced diet, fight against obesity, etc.

- be recognised as a responsible stakeholder in the field of nutrition & health claims and in nutrition labelling in the eyes of the European Institutions;
- to promote the consumers' rights for understandable and friendly information on the nutrient content and nutritive value of basic food products.

Furthermore, the Platform's members share a commitment to promoting the values and way of life attached to basic foods: the taste of good and fresh food, home-cooking and meal-sharing, the diversity of local cooking and eating habits, and the proximity with nature.

Who can become a member of the European Basic Foods Platform?

Members of the European Basic Foods Platform are basic foods manufacturers with manufacturing and/or commercial activities in EU Member states. Associations, federations or NGOs based in the EU and supporting the Association's activities may become its Privileged Partners.

The Platform is a transversal and flexible structure characterised by the direct and personal involvement of its members at corporate level.

What are the current priority topics on the Platform's agenda?

The creation of the Platform has been fuelled by the recent adoption of Regulation (EC) No 1924/2006 on nutrition and health claims made on foods, and by the current review of EU's nutrition labelling rules. There is a growing concern among basic food producers that EU food labelling rules address mainly processed and complex foods.

Concretely, the Platform firmly believes that food labelling rules must recognize the specificities of basic foods and allow them to bear understandable and consumer-friendly information on their nutritional properties and health benefits.

Consequently, the Platform intends to promote the following recommendations to the EU legislator:

- The inherent characteristics of basic foods should be taken into account as regards nutrient profiles, nutrition claims and health claims.
 - Basic foods should not be treated as complex foods when nutrient profiles are discussed;
 - Science-based nutrition claims already used on basic foods should continue to be authorised (e.g. "source of omega-3 fatty acids" on rapeseed oil, "high in monounsaturated fatty acids" on olive oil);
 - Claiming the recognised health benefits of particular nutrients which are present in basic foods in sufficient amounts should be authorised (e.g. the effects of high biological value proteins and calcium of milk and cheese);
- Some flexibility for nutrition labelling of simple foods such as monoingredient foods should be introduced.

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