

8 March 2017

Colour-Coded Nutrition Labelling Scheme

Today six food giants¹ have come out in favour of a prominent on-pack nutrition labelling scheme based on colours.

Since the European Commission adopted its proposal for the food information to consumers regulation in 2008, EHN has advocated for an EU-wide mandatory, simplified front-of-pack nutrition labelling based on the UK traffic-light scheme. Therefore, EHN very much welcomes the joint statement by the six companies to embrace colour-coding.

EHN also welcomes these companies' commitment to act on portion sizes. There is conclusive evidence that reducing the size, availability and appeal of larger-sized portions, packages and tableware has the potential to reduce the quantities of food that people select and consume by meaningful amounts.

However, the question is whether nutrition labelling is the right means to promote smaller portion sizes or, indeed, whether it should be its objective. The UK traffic-light scheme, for example, has as its aim to inform consumers about *nutritional quality* not *quantity*. Moreover, the research that finds conclusive evidence for reducing larger-sized portions, also finds that it is uncertain whether reducing portions at the smaller end of the size range can be as effective in reducing food consumption as reductions at the larger end of the range.

The six companies state that their end goal is to put in place a robust nutrition labelling scheme that helps consumers make balanced and mindful choices. We share that aim. But we have found no evidence that the provision of nutrition information on a per portion basis can reduce consumption; we, therefore, urge caution.

¹ The Coca-Cola Company, Mars, Mondelez, Nestlé, PepsiCo and Unilever