

**E U R O P E A N   E C O N O M I C   A R E A**  
**S T A N D I N G   C O M M I T T E E**  
**O F   T H E   E F T A   S T A T E S**

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**SUBCOMMITTEE I ON THE FREE MOVEMENT OF GOODS**

**EEA EFTA COMMENTS ON**

**THE PROPOSAL FOR A REGULATION ON NUTRITION AND HEALTH CLAIMS  
MADE ON FOODS (COM(2003) 424)**

1. The increasing consumer interest in the relationship between health and the composition of foods has challenged the food industry to provide consumers with better nutritional labelling and to highlight the nutritional value of their products through health claims.
2. The use of claims provides the industry with a marketing tool, which, again, could mislead consumers and, therefore, lead to an increase in the consumption of certain products in conflict with the nutrition recommendations provided by the authorities.
3. Therefore, the EEA EFTA States support the establishment of nutrient profiles (Article 4 of the proposed Regulation) and the fact that claims should be founded on generally accepted scientific data (Articles 5 and 6 of the proposed Regulation).
4. Chronic diseases due to overweight are a general problem among the population. It is particularly important to restrict the use of claims for products that are high in energy, total fat and sugar. This should also apply for other nutritional components such as saturated fat, trans-fatty acids, salt, and products that are low in fibre.
5. Health claims on products such as chocolate, potato chips and other snacks and sweets with added vitamins and minerals should not be permitted. The same should apply, e.g., for biscuits high in fibre, but also high in total fat and in sugar.
6. Furthermore, health claims should not be permitted on so-called sugar-free and fat-free alternatives to such products, when they contain other substances, such as artificial sweeteners and preservatives, whose intake should be restricted.
7. Finally, health claims should not be permitted for foods for infants and children below three years of age for ethical reasons. This is also in accordance with the Codex Guidelines for use of nutrition and health claims, where nutrition and health claims are not permitted for foods for infants and young children unless specifically provided for in relevant Codex standards or national legislation.

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