

### **CULINARIA EUROPE GUIDING PRINCIPLES ON TRUST & TRANSPARENCY**

#### **WHAT IS GUIDING US**

CULINARIA EUROPE is the sector association of the industrial producers of culinary products in Europe which produce e.g. soups and sauces, vinegar, mayonnaise, mustard, ketchup, horseradish, salads and spreads and generate up to 90.000 work places. They have a common interest: to provide consumers all over Europe with tasty, healthy and safe food of high quality.

CULINARIA EUROPE members are committed to produce and sell food that is delicious, fits a healthy diet and is safe. Delivery against the consumers' expectations for these three criteria is a prerequisite to have our consumers choose our products. Moreover, CULINARIA EUROPE and its members want to inform the consumer in a fair and transparent way about what we are doing and to explain why we are doing it that way. We are convinced that such open and transparent communication is key to achieve consumers' trust in our products.

To this end members of CULINARIA EUROPE agree on the following points:

#### **1. PRODUCT FORMULATION**

CULINARIA EUROPE members are continuously creating innovative new products and reformulating existing ones to provide foods that our consumer will prefer on taste and on the fit into a balanced and healthy diet. We are committed to use the most appropriate ingredients, science and the state of the art of formulating a product to achieve this ambition. We underline the view that many of our consumers have a diet that is too high in salt, sugar, fat and saturated fat, and their diet can be too low in fibres and minerals like iodine and potassium. We aim to achieve the highest standards with regards to the contents of nutrients in our products.

Ambitious salt reduction programmes for processed foods took already place at national level in the past (e.g. in Belgium, France, The Netherlands, Spain and United Kingdom), leading to a sodium reduction of about 20% between 2001 and 2011, and a reduction of sugar of 5-15% in our products.

We remain active in further improvements and reformulation. Salt and sugar reduction initiatives are most successful where consumer acceptance is granted, to avoid that salt or sugar is added to the finished dish. Salt in e.g. soups and bouillons as well as sugar in e.g. ketchup are being reduced step by step. Where appropriate, we can achieve larger reductions by replacing table salt with mineral salts containing potassium or replacing sugar with glycosides like stevia, while taking into account and solving technological and regulatory challenges.

## 2. STATEMENTS REFERRING TO THE ABSENCE OF CERTAIN INGREDIENTS

CULINARIA EUROPE members are in frequent dialogue with consumers via different channels, such as care-lines, websites and social media. Our consumers often want to know what is in our products, and they are also looking for reassurance that certain ingredients they are wishing to avoid or consume less are not contained.

Outside the area of Health and Nutrition Claims (Regulation (EC) 1924/2006), producers of culinary products are using statements referring to the absence of certain ingredients in their products to address this consumer need for reassurance. Many consumers appreciate these statements, as they provide relevant information for deciding whether or not to buy a product. Yet these so-called 'negative claims' are sometimes found confusing or even misleading by consumers.

We are committed to provide transparent, understandable and useful information to our consumers. To that end, the producers of culinary products should only use 'negative claims' in line with the following principles:

- **BE POSITIVE**
  - We prefer to talk about food in a positive way by pointing out the good ingredients and other positive aspects.
  - 'Negative claims' should be made in the context of a positive message to support their reassuring nature.
- **BE FAIR**
  - A 'negative claim' should never suggest that a particular food is healthier than other foods.
  - A 'negative claim' should never denigrate other foods of the same category, including foods from competing companies or brands.
  - We will strictly apply the provisions of Article 7 on 'Fair Information Practices' from FIC regulation 1169/2011/EU.
- **BE TRANSPARENT**
  - 'Negative claims' should be truthful and reflect the true nature of the food, and should not create a false impression about the composition of a food.
  - When the wording of a claim suggests the absence of a certain ingredient or group of ingredients (e.g. 'free from ...'), the ingredient or group of ingredients should neither be present naturally, nor carried-over by a sub-ingredient, nor generated during processing.
  - If this is not the case the claim wording should clarify that it only concerns the non-addition of the specific named ingredient or group of ingredients (e.g. 'no added ...').
  - If a 'negative claim' after due consideration of the above might still have the potential to be misinterpreted or misunderstood, a direct link to a qualifying statement should be provided to explain the meaning and scope of the claim.
- **BE CIRCUMSPECT**
  - 'Negative claims' covering ingredients which are subject to emerging consumer trends or changing consumer perception should only be made following due consideration of the potential negative effects on the culinary sector as a whole.