

## JOINT WORKSHOP

Food Products and Information to the Consumers  
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### ABSTRACT

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#### ***“New requirements and answers of Food Industry”***

The Food and Drink Industry is the largest manufacturing sector in Europe with an annual turnover of €56 billion, some 4.2 million employees and 310,000 companies (over 99% of which are SMEs), and represents the second Manufacturing Industry of our Country with a turnover of 124 billion euro (of which 21 in export) and 32,300 companies - of which 6,500 with more than 9 employees and 2,600 with more than 19 employees - with over 410,000 employees. Industry buys and processes 70% of the national agricultural raw materials and is generally recognized as the ambassador of Made in Italy in the world, considering that almost 80% of the Italian agro-food export is represented by high quality industry brands.

The Food and Drink Industry is committed to providing consumers with science-based, clear and non-judgemental information from which they can make informed food choices enabling them to evaluate a product's place in a balanced diet. At this regard it is important to focus on the proposal of revising existing EU labelling rules, which follows in the spirit of better regulation and focuses on simplifying existing legislative measures and cutting administrative red tape; on the provision of mandatory nutrition information on the 'big 8 nutrients' per 100g/ml on the back-of-pack in accordance with current labelling rules, allowing for full comparability between products; on a Regulation which foresees full harmonisation at the EU level, while providing flexibility for manufacturers to include additional, voluntary information as appropriate; on a pragmatic approach on the origin labelling provisions, without adding further legal requirements; on the legibility issue dependant on a number of inter-related factors that extend beyond font size.

Other priorities issues for the Food and Drink Industry are Innovation and Research. The preferences of consumers for quality, convenience, diversity and health, and their justifiable expectations of safety, ethics and sustainable food production serve to highlight the opportunities for innovation. A coherent research strategy for the future must be developed based upon the shared vision of the diverse stakeholders and the Technology Platform “Food for Life” plays a role of paramount importance both at European (European Technology Platform “Food for Life”) and at

national level (National Technology Platform “Italian Food for Life”). A key issue is the important role that diet plays in determining population health outcomes, both adverse and beneficial. The challenges that remain to delineate the relationships between diet and health particularly as they affect susceptibility to the major illnesses associated with ageing are very great. In addition, there is mounting evidence of a relationship between early nutrition and later outcomes in terms of susceptibility to disease. The incidence of obesity and obesity-related disorders is a worldwide problem and shows no sign of abating. Another important issue is represented by the Joint Programming Initiative “A Healthy Diet for a Healthy Life”): a structured strategic process whereby Member States agree a common Vision and a Strategic Research Agenda to address the major societal challenges of: ensuring the healthy choice is the easy choice for consumers, developing high-quality, healthy, safe and sustainable food products and preventing diet-related, chronic diseases and increasing the quality of life - delivering a healthier diet.