

NON-PAPER DOCUMENT

HIGH LEVEL FORUM

“TIME TO TABLE THE EU DOUBLE STANDARDS ON FOODSTUFFS”

30th of April 2018

After the held in Sofia High-level European Forum “The Double Standards in Food Products in the EU: Time to Put the Problem on the Table”, the Bulgarian Presidency of the Council of the European Union and the European Commission:

Recognising the EU’s leading role in the implementation of policies in different sectors that are important for the Member States;

Agreeing that equality and nondiscriminatory treatment of consumers is the guiding principle within the Union and that there should be no second class “consumers” within the EU;

Recalling that all consumers are EU citizens regardless of the EU Member State they reside in and deserve nondiscriminatory treatment;

Agreeing that it is an illegal commercial practice to mislead consumers in respect to the composition or characteristics of food products;

Adopt the following conclusions:

- We join the European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker in his message that “there can be no second class citizens within the EU”;
- We resolutely support the New Deal for Consumers package that was proposed by the European Commission and presented by Ms Věra Jourová, Commissioner for Justice, Consumers and Gender Equality,

as a timely and adequate measure to protect consumer rights within the Union.

- We call on the Council and the European Parliament to swiftly adopt the legislative proposals in the New Deal package while keeping their ambitions of ensuring a fair and equal treatment of consumers;
- We support the determination of European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker and of Commissioner Věra Jourová to bring about an end to misleading marketing practices related to the issue of “double standards on food products”;
- We call on a continued strong EU-level support to the national competent food and consumer authorities for their control of marketing practices related to food products in order to prevent misleading practices related to the issue of “double standards”;
- We call on the Commission’s Joint Research Centre to further refine its harmonized comparative testing approach and to coordinate EU-wide tests.
- Furthermore, we call on all Member States and relevant industry stakeholders to actively cooperate in this pan-European process;
- We stress that the New Deal legislative negotiations should recognise the existence and importance of “taste preferences shaped by national cultures” and make it clear that the objective of the targeted legislative change is to ensure equal treatment of consumers while preserving food diversity, which is one of the biggest cultural asset of the Union.