Press release | 06.07.2011

Food labelling

New food label rules a step forward but clearer, more comprehensive labelling elusive

The European Parliament today endorsed a final agreement on new EU legislation on information on food products. The Greens supported the final agreement, which will include some important concrete improvements for consumers, but the group would have preferred more ambitious rules, notably full front-of-pack health labelling. After the vote, Green MEP and vice-chair of the EP environment and public health committee **Carl Schlyter** said:

"These new rules will clearly represent an important improvement for European consumers. As well as introducing new mandatory origin labelling for meat, it will also clamp down on 'fake foods', liked glued meat. Naturally, the Greens regret that the new rules are not more ambitious, notably in terms of providing clear front of pack health labelling, as there is no good reason to hide this core information on the back of food packaging beyond the marketing interests of the food industry. However, the rules are still a step forward.

"While the Greens would have preferred more extensive origin labelling for all animal products, the new mandatory meat labelling will ensure that consumers know where their meat comes from, as well as when foods involve the long distance transportation of animals, so they can choose to avoid buying them. The Commission has also pledged to come forward with more detailed proposals both on a more extensive origin labelling system for animal products and on trans-fats, where the Greens believe a ban is necessary to address the health risks.

"The new rules will include stronger rules against fake foods and deceptive practices like adding water or gluing meat, ensuring these must be labelled. Misleading labels, such as picturing fruit or other foods on labels even if they are not present in a food product, will also be banned. Consumers will also be informed about presence of nano-particles and the origin of vegetable oils, such as palm oil. Vegans and vegetarians and people with allergies will have an easier time finding what they want. However, we are very unhappy about full exemption for alcoholic beverages especially since many are unaware of the high calorie content of alcoholic drinks."

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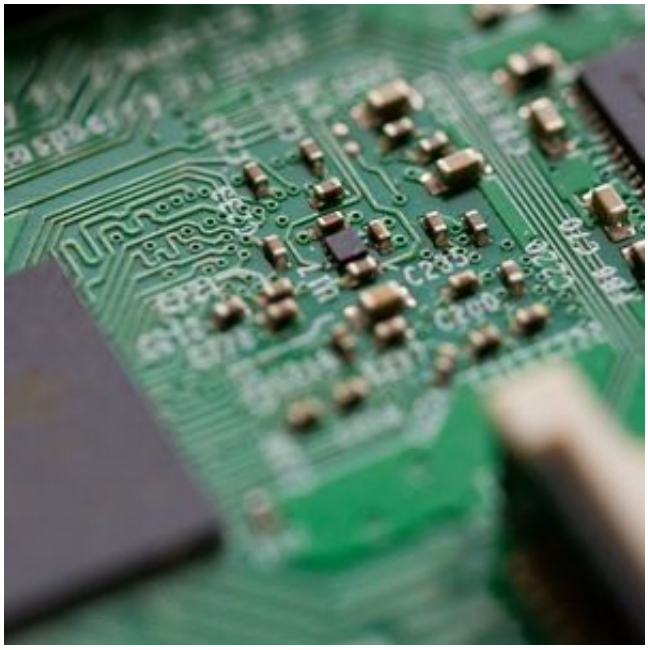


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