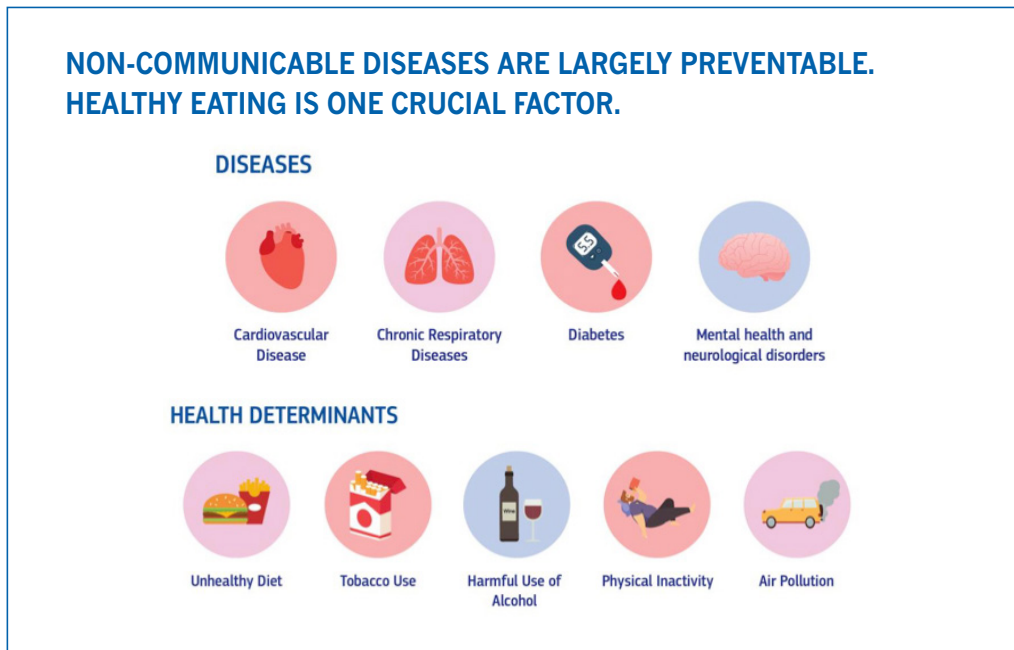


## Nutri-Score: Europe's best chance for a consumer-friendly front-of-pack nutritional label

Unhealthy eating patterns are widespread across Europe. Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) such as type 2 diabetes, cancer, and cardio vascular disease are responsible for 77% of the disease burden in the European region. They cause substantial human suffering and threaten the financial position of households.<sup>1</sup> **NCDs account for the largest part of countries' healthcare expenditures, costing EU economies EUR 115 billion, or 0.8% of GDP, annually.**<sup>2</sup>



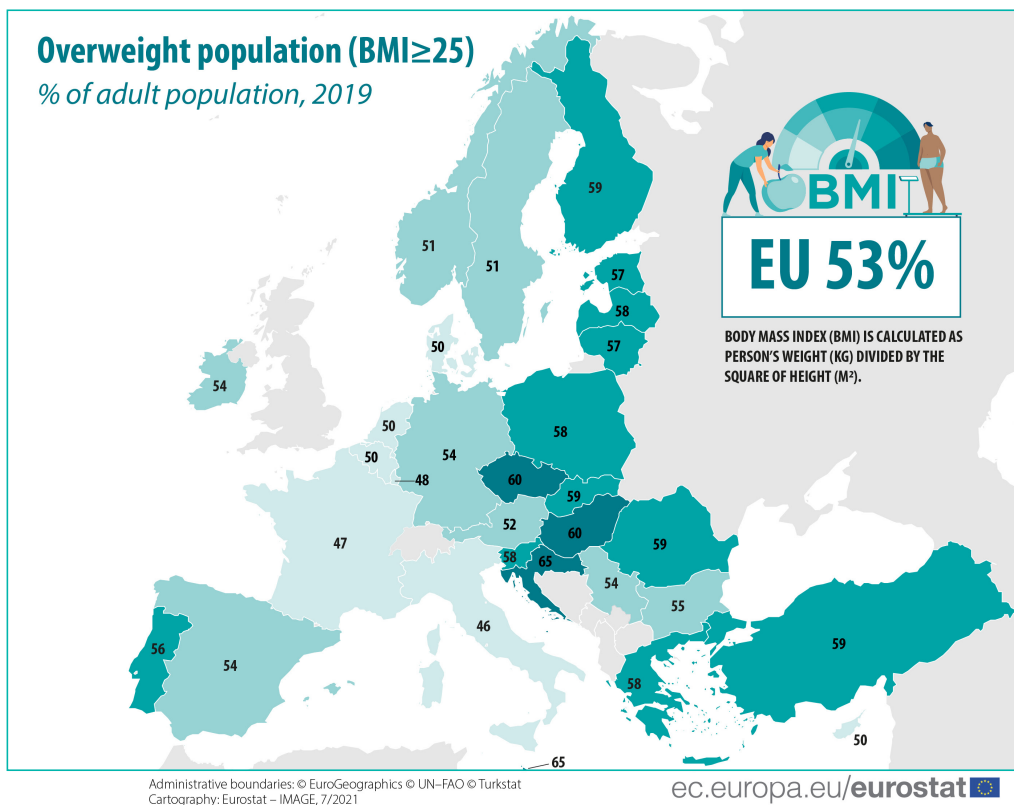
Source: European Commission, 2022, [https://health.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2022-06/eu-ncd-initiative\\_publication\\_en\\_0.pdf](https://health.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2022-06/eu-ncd-initiative_publication_en_0.pdf)

Overweight and obesity are an important risk factor for NCDs. Already 53% of the EU's population is overweight and prevalence rates continue to increase.<sup>3</sup>

For years, health experts, doctors associations and consumer organisations have asked for effective political measures to stop this health crisis. **One important measure for preventing NCDs is a mandatory consumer-friendly front-of-pack nutritional label (FOPNL).** Of course, further measures are also needed e.g. to ban marketing of junk food to children, and ensuring that both the ingredients used and the processing of food are not damaging to human health.

foodwatch is an international consumer organisation with offices based in Austria, France, Germany, the Netherlands and Brussels

In the supermarket, consumers cannot tell at a glance how balanced a food is. For the average customer, the nutritional tables on the back of the packaging are hard to read and complicated to compare. **Consumers need a comprehensive front of pack label that gives the necessary information at one glance and makes healthier food choices easy.**

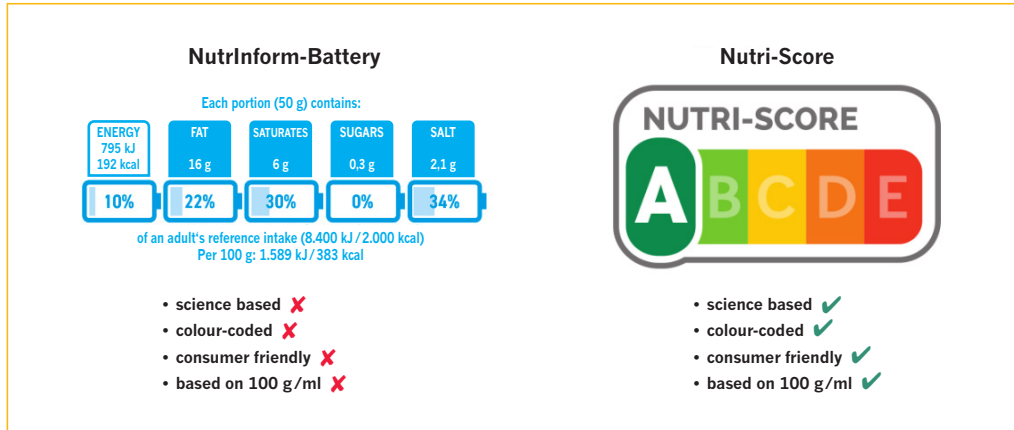


The European Commission's plan to introduce a mandatory and harmonised FOPNL as part of its Farm to Fork strategy provides the opportunity to implement a crucial tool to help mitigate the effects of this health crisis.

**A consumer friendly and effective FOPNL must meet five key criteria for being an efficient public health tool in the European Union:**

- > It must be based on **independent science** (not influenced by industry)
- > It must be **colour coded** (not one colour gradient or in black and white)<sup>4</sup>
- > It must be **based on 100g/ml measures** (not single portions based)
- > It must be **harmonised** across all Member States
- > It must be **mandatory** for all food groups (no exceptions)

foodwatch is an international consumer organisation with offices based in Austria, France, Germany, the Netherlands and Brussels



There are various schemes currently used across Europe, such as the Nordic KeyHole, the Italian NutriInform Battery System, and the Nutri-Score. **Only the Nutri-Score is fulfilling the listed criteria.** Numerous scientific studies show that it is working best for consumers and that it helps consumers make healthier purchasing decisions.<sup>5</sup>

## NUTRI-SCORE FACTS

- > **In 2022, scientists have revised the Nutri-Score algorithm and tackled several of its weaknesses:** It is now stricter on sugar and salt. Vegetable oils, fatty fish, nuts and seeds, as well as whole grain products, are classified better than before, e.g. olive oil now gets a Nutri-Score B after the revision instead of C. These modifications to the algorithm have improved the alignment between Nutri-Score and dietary guidelines.<sup>6</sup> Further steps of the revision are still to come for ‚Beverages‘ (end 2022) and ‚Fruit, Vegetables and Nuts‘ (2023).
- > **79 percent of highly processed foods (Nova 4) get a Nutri-Score yellow, orange or red (C/D/E)** according to an assessment of 220,000 food products in the French market. Only 21 percent get a dark or light green (A/B).<sup>7</sup>
- > **The Mediterranean diet and Nutri-Score are not opposing but reflect the same priorities.** It is important to keep in mind that the Mediterranean diet is not the same as Mediterranean cuisine. The latter might include some dishes high in fat and salt, but according to the Mediterranean dietary pyramid they should only be consumed in smaller quantities. This aligns very well with Nutri-Score.<sup>8</sup>

foodwatch is an international consumer organisation with offices based in Austria, France, Germany, the Netherlands and Brussels



Copyright: [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Piramide\\_Universale\\_Dieta\\_Mediterranea.pdf](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Piramide_Universale_Dieta_Mediterranea.pdf);  
 Dr. Chantal Julia, Equipe de Recherche en Epidémiologie Nutritionnelle (EREN), Université Sorbonne Paris Nord

**The Nutri-Score is already the designated label for six EU-Member States** (France, Germany, The Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg and Spain) and Switzerland and several other EU countries are allowing it in their supermarkets when international companies or retailers are using it on their products (e.g. Austria, Poland and Portugal). Several international food companies and retailers (e.g. Nestlé, Danone, Pepsi and Carrefour, Auchan, Ahold Delhaize, Lidl, Aldi) and many SME food companies have introduced and adopted Nutri-Score since it was introduced in 2017. Since then, the Nutri-Score has proven to be a successful incentive for many food companies to improve the nutritional quality of their products.



**Many independent scientists also favour the Nutri-Score.** In 2021, more than 400 European scientists and 30 medical associations called on the European Commission to introduce it on a mandatory basis in Europe.<sup>9</sup> The WHO International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) says: “The Nutri-Score is the only front-of-pack nutrition label in Europe for which strong scientific evidence has demonstrated its effectiveness and its superiority to other existing labels.”<sup>10</sup>

**European citizens need an independent, scientifically developed, harmonised and mandatory FOPNL that helps them to make healthier purchasing decisions. Nutri-Score is the best option and it is ready for use NOW. We cannot afford to wait another 5 to 10 years to develop a new European FOPNL whilst non-communicable diseases are on the rise with dramatic consequences for public health systems, correlated costs, and the quality of life of EU citizens.**



**CONTACT PERSON:** Suzy Sumner, foodwatch Brussels office, [suzy.sumner@foodwatch.eu](mailto:suzy.sumner@foodwatch.eu)

<sup>1</sup> [https://health.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2022-06/eu-ncd-initiative\\_publication\\_en\\_0.pdf](https://health.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2022-06/eu-ncd-initiative_publication_en_0.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> OECD/EU (2016), Health at a Glance: Europe 2016 – State of Health in the EU Cycle, OECD Publishing, Paris.

<sup>3</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Overweight\\_and\\_obesity\\_-\\_BMI\\_statistics](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Overweight_and_obesity_-_BMI_statistics)

<sup>4</sup> [https://www.foodwatch.org/fileadmin/Themen/Ampelkennzeichnung/pmpreport\\_ger.pdf](https://www.foodwatch.org/fileadmin/Themen/Ampelkennzeichnung/pmpreport_ger.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> <https://solidarites-sante.gouv.fr/prevention-en-sante/preserver-sa-sante/nutrition/nutri-score/etudes-et-rapports-scientifiques/>

<sup>6</sup> [https://solidarites-sante.gouv.fr/IMG/pdf/maj\\_rapport\\_nutri-score\\_rapport\\_algorithme\\_2022\\_.pdf](https://solidarites-sante.gouv.fr/IMG/pdf/maj_rapport_nutri-score_rapport_algorithme_2022_.pdf)

<sup>7</sup> <https://nutriscore.blog/2020/11/07/nutri-score-and-ultra-processing-two-dimensions-complementary-and-not-contradictory/>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.mdpi.com/2072-6643/14/23/5097/html>

<sup>9</sup> <https://nutriscore.blog/2021/03/16/list-of-the-first-signatories-of-the-call-supporting-the-implementation-of-nutri-score-in-europe/>

<sup>10</sup> [https://www.iarc.who.int/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/IARC\\_Evidence\\_Summary\\_Brief\\_2.pdf](https://www.iarc.who.int/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/IARC_Evidence_Summary_Brief_2.pdf)