

Declaration of support for the introduction of a legislative limit on trans fats in Romania

12 September 2017

The European Heart Network (EHN) and European Public Health Alliance (EPHA) are encouraged by the recent introduction of a bill to the Senate of Romania which aims to set a legislative limit on industrially produced trans fats in food. EHN and EPHA urge the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies to vote in favour of the bill, and on the Government of Romania to ensure its effective implementation.

The evidence of a causal relation between the consumption of trans fats and health risks is overwhelming.¹ There is a direct correlation between trans fats consumption and cardiovascular disease, the main cause of death in Europe. Every 2% of energy consumed in the form of trans fats, increases the risk of heart attack or death from heart disease by 25%.²

A comprehensive literature review evaluating the available policy tools to limit trans fats has clearly concluded that mandatory measures, involving legislative restrictions or full bans, are the most effective options.³ Many European countries have already introduced legal limits, including Austria, Denmark, Hungary, Latvia, Switzerland, Iceland, and Norway. Other countries, like Sweden and Lithuania, have adopted or are close to adopting such legislation.

Trans fats restrictions deliver clearly identifiable benefits for health and health systems. Since the introduction of the Danish regulation, intake decreased and is now one tenth of the level that it was at the time when the regulation was adopted; this drop in trans fat consumption partly accounts for the significant decrease in mortality from cardiovascular diseases recently experienced in Denmark.⁴ A recent study from the United States concluded that people living in areas that restricted trans fats had fewer hospitalizations for heart attack and stroke compared to people living in areas without such restrictions.⁵

Experience shows that the removal of industrial trans fats from food is technically and economically feasible, both for larger and smaller producers alike, and in different country settings. Various companies have removed trans fats from their product ranges and have committed to share their experience on this process.⁶

This is why we urge you to vote in favour of this bill to protect the Romanian population from a preventable source of harm. We also want to offer our full cooperation on this subject.

Sincerely yours,

Susanne Løgstrup, Director, European Heart Network (EHN)
Nina Renshaw, Secretary General, European Public Health Alliance (EPHA)

¹ WHO Regional Office for Europe (2015) Eliminating trans fats in Europe. A policy brief.
http://www.euro.who.int/__data/assets/pdf_file/0010/288442/Eliminating-trans-fats-in-Europe-A-policy-brief.pdf?ua=1

² Mozaffarian et al. (2009) Health effects of trans-fatty acids: experimental and observational evidence.
<http://www.nature.com/ejcn/journal/v63/n2s/full/1602973a.html?foxtrotcallback=true>

³ Downs et al. (2013) The effectiveness of policies for reducing dietary trans fat: a systematic review of the evidence.
<http://www.who.int/bulletin/volumes/91/4/12-111468/en/>

⁴ Restrepo et al. (2016) Denmark's Policy on Artificial Trans Fat and Cardiovascular Disease.
[http://www.ajpmonline.org/article/S0749-3797\(15\)00328-1/abstract](http://www.ajpmonline.org/article/S0749-3797(15)00328-1/abstract)

⁵ Brandt et al. (2017) Hospital Admissions for Myocardial Infarction and Stroke Before and After the Trans-Fatty Acid Restrictions in New York. <http://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamacardiology/article-abstract/2618359>

⁶ Open letter : Call for a legislative limit for the amount of industrially produced TFAs in foods
<https://epha.org/open-letter-call-for-a-legislative-limit-for-the-amount-of-industrially-produced-tfas-in-foods/>