

Position Paper

UEAPME¹ comments on additional taxes on foods thought to be “unhealthy”

The UEAPME Food Forum, the European food SME association, supports national members in their opposition to burdensome national measures. Some national authorities have introduced measures which they say are justified by European legislation when that legislation does not exist.

During the last year legislators in some member states thought it was a good idea to combat obesity by putting additional taxes on foods thought to be “unhealthy”, the so called “fat tax”. Already authorities in Denmark, Hungary and Finland have introduced rules and Belgium, France, Ireland, Romania and Sweden are actively considering.

According to recent research there is very little evidence to support the idea that people may be encouraged to change their eating habits through taxation. Taxes are not an appropriate tool to promote healthy eating. They can be seen as no more than an invention to generate additional income for the national budget. They do not prevent obesity.

Conclusion

UEAPME believes that such taxes should be resisted as there is no evidence they stop people eating the foods, they would be felt most by low income families and positive encouragement towards a healthy diet is much more effective.

UEAPME does not support selective taxation of certain foods as it could distort the European market.

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¹ UEAPME subscribes to the European Commission’s Register of Interest Representatives and to the related code of conduct as requested by the European Transparency Initiative. Our ID number is [55820581197-35](#).