



***Position of the European Natural Soyfoods Manufacturers Association on the final report of the Sugar Tax Working Group in Finland***

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ENSA, the European Natural Soyfoods Manufacturers Association, welcomes the report of the Sugar Tax Working Group which aims at establishing a more effective food taxation system and promoting healthy nutrition in compliance with the principles of competition in the EU's single market.

ENSA is pleased to see that the current version of the report specifically mentions that dairy products and soy, oat and rice drinks should be treated equally and that the total sugar content (i.e. natural sugars as well as added sugars) should be taken into consideration for taxation. The report also states that dairy products and soy, oat and rice drinks would qualify for the same tax exemption if they contain less than 5% sugar.

ENSA believes it is essential that these points remain included in the final report to ensure that the taxation model is objective, fair and non-discriminative. As we communicated in our previous position, ENSA would like to take this opportunity to restate the reasons for providing equal treatment:

- Soy drinks, soy alternatives to yogurt and soy desserts have a similar nutritional composition to dairy products. They are used in the same way by consumers and at the same consumption moment and they are sold in the same shelves in the supermarket. Soy products are directly competing with dairy products, while offering a vegetal, lactose-free alternative to consumers. The vegetal and lactose-free characteristics are also true for oat and rice drinks.
- Thanks to their nutritional composition, soyfoods fit perfectly in a healthy diet: they contain high quality protein, unsaturated fats and are low in saturated fats. Most products are also enriched in vitamins and minerals such as calcium. Oat products are not a nutritional substitute of dairy products, however, they are also low in saturated fat and contain unsaturated fats.
- From a nutritional point of view, there is no scientifically justifiable reason to treat differently products which naturally contain sugar and products which contain added sugar when the overall sugar content is the same in both products types. All sugars provide the same energy (kcal) and the body deals with mono and disaccharides in the same way, no matter what the source. Soyfoods are naturally free from lactose, which is the naturally occurring sugar in dairy milk. The amount of added sugar in soyfoods matches the level of sugar which occurs in cow's milk and dairy products.
- Moreover, soy-based products are by nature sustainable food products. They even have a much better record in terms of water use, land use and carbon footprint than dairy products.

By providing equal treatment for dairy products and soy, oat and rice products, the Finnish taxation model will ensure fair competition and meet the objective of promoting healthy products. It will also



communicate to consumers that soyfoods are healthy and sustainable alternatives to similar dairy products as they are nutritionally interchangeable as part of a healthy diet. ENSA strongly believes these provisions must remain in the Finnish taxation model.

#### **About ENSA**

Established in January 2003, ENSA represents the interests of Natural Soyfoods Manufacturers in Europe. ENSA is an association of internationally operating companies, ranging from large corporations to small, family-owned businesses.

ENSA represents:

- 11 companies, operating mainly in the 27 EU countries, but also present around the world, in America, Africa, Asia and, the Middle East.
- Close to 550 M€ in annual turnover
- More than 1500 direct employees, 7500 indirect jobs

For more information on ENSA, please visit [www.ensa-eu.org](http://www.ensa-eu.org) or contact the ENSA Secretariat.

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