National experiences of engaging with the private sector in the food and beverage sector

• “Common objectives for the improvement of the nutritional characteristics of food products with a special focus on children (aged 3-12)”

• “Guidelines regarding commercial communications on food products and beverages for the protection of children and their proper nutrition”
Political declaration of the third high-level meeting of the General Assembly on the prevention and control of non-communicable diseases

44. Invite the private sector to strengthen its commitment and contribution to the implementation of national responses to prevent, control and treat non-communicable diseases to reach health and development objectives by:

(a) Promoting and creating safe and healthy working environments, by implementing occupational health measures, including by establishing tobacco-free workplaces, and through good corporate practices, workplace wellness programmes and health insurance plans, as appropriate;

(b) Encouraging economic operators in the area of alcohol production and trade, as appropriate, to contribute to reducing harmful use of alcohol in their core areas, taking into account national religious and cultural contexts;

(c) Taking concrete steps, where relevant, towards eliminating the marketing, advertising and sale of alcoholic products to minors;

(d) Further producing and promoting food products consistent with a healthy diet, making further efforts to reformulate them in order to provide healthy and nutritious options, reducing the excessive use of salt, sugars and fats, in particular saturated fats and trans-fats, as well as providing appropriate content information of those nutrients, bearing in mind international guidelines on nutrition labelling;

(e) Committing to further reduce the exposure of children to and impact on them of the marketing of foods and beverages high in fats, in particular saturated fats and trans-fats, sugars or salt, consistent with national legislation, where applicable;

(f) Contributing to further improving access to and the affordability of safe, effective and quality medicines and technologies in the prevention and control of non-communicable diseases;
Only 1,7% of Italian agro-food businesses employ more than 50 persons.
“Common objectives for the improvement of the nutritional characteristics of food products with a special focus on children (aged 3-12)” – TARGETED AREAS:

- **Cereals, confectionary products and ice-creams** (Breakfast cereals, cookies, crackers, sweet snacks, ice-creams);
- **Savoury snacks** (Potato crisps and chisps and other savoury snacks);
- **Non-alcoholic beverages** (Soft drinks, nectar/fruit juices and pulp);
- **Dairy** (Soft drinks, nectar/fruit juices and pulp).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Breakfast Cereals</th>
<th>Biscuits</th>
<th>Crackers</th>
<th>Sweet Snacks</th>
<th>Ice-Creams</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2014-2017</td>
<td>(*) average concentration g/100 g</td>
<td><strong>TOTAL FATS</strong></td>
<td><strong>SATURATED FATS</strong></td>
<td><strong>TRANS FATS</strong></td>
<td><strong>ADDED SUGARS</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10.5 g</td>
<td>0.4 g</td>
<td>33 g</td>
<td>3.5 g</td>
<td>1.5 g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4.9 g</td>
<td>0.4 g</td>
<td>25 g</td>
<td>4.9 g</td>
<td>0.9 g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10.5 g</td>
<td>0.5 g</td>
<td>33 g</td>
<td>3.5 g</td>
<td>2.2 g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8.8 g</td>
<td>0.4 g</td>
<td>25 g</td>
<td>6 g</td>
<td>1.8 g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10.5 g</td>
<td>0.2 g</td>
<td>33 g</td>
<td>23 g</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
“Guidelines regarding commercial communications on food products and beverages for the protection of children and their proper nutrition”

3. Principle of Loyalty

Commercial communication of foods meant for children, or likely to be received by them, should be honest, truthful and accurate. It should not contain anything that may be psychologically, morally or physically harmful to them and furthermore should not be exploitative of their natural credulity, inexperience or sense of loyalty.
4. Presentation of food products

Commercial communication of food products intended for children, or likely to be received by them, should also avoid any mention or representation that may be misleading, even by means of omissions, ambiguity or exaggerations that are not overtly hyperbolic, especially as concerns nutritional characteristics and the effects of the product, its price, gratuitousness, sales conditions, distribution, the identity of people represented, prizes or awards. It should not encourage the belief that non possession of the product that is the focus of the commercial communication might imply inferiority, or parental failure to fulfil their roles.

It should not diminish the role of parents or other educators in providing valuable dietary indications.

It should not induce the adoption of unbalanced dietary habits or behaviours or overlook the need to lead a healthy lifestyle. Educational messages aimed at promoting careful use of the product, the adoption of a healthy and balanced diet and more physical exercise are encouraged.
The guidelines are being implemented with the assistance of the «Italian Institute for Advertising Self-Regulation»

In 2017 the Self-regulation bodies reviewed 133 cases concerning the food sector that may be divided as follows:

• **Control Committee >> 129 cases**
  - 32 cases examined prior to their airing or publishing (prior opinion), 10 of which relating to child nutrition.
  - 79 cases dismissed for lack of compliance with the provisions of the Code.
  - 6 cases dismissed for cessation.
  - 2 cases dismissed as a result of corrective action by the advertiser prompted by Committee advice.
  - 10 cases Dismissed on grounds of lack of jurisdiction/decision not to proceed.

• **Jury >> 4 rulings**
Conclusions (Ministry of Health):

- The implementation of policies for correct dietary styles and food that is adequate in terms of energy and balanced in its components from the nutritional standpoint cannot be achieved effectively without the contribution of all the players involved within the overall system, not least the food industries that supply the market.

- The memorandums of understanding: “Shared goals for the improvement of the nutritional characteristics of food products with a special focus on child population (ages 3-12)”, and “Guidelines for commercial communications regarding food products and beverages to protect children and their proper nutrition” are instruments that foster full and concrete implementation of agreed commitments through policy actions aimed at facilitating consumer choice, suited to personal lifestyles, as called for in the documents mentioned above, with the purpose of combating childhood obesity.

- They are a paradigm of collaboration between industry and Central Government that can be extended to other population segments and product types, with a view to following up on the WHO (World Health Organisation) requirement that Member States promote the necessary synergies to fight against chronic degenerative diseases, an endeavour that calls upon the participation of the many different players involved in the integration of “health in all policies”.