



PRESS RELEASE

EUROPEAN FOOD SCP ROUND TABLE ADOPTS GUIDING PRINCIPLES ON VOLUNTARY ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT AND COMMUNICATION

Brussels, 13 July 2010: One year after its launch and following a public consultation, the European Food Sustainable Consumption and Production Round Table announced today that it has formally adopted *Guiding Principles on voluntary environmental assessment and communication of environmental information along the food chain, including to consumers.*

The guiding principles are formulated with the aim to promote a coherent way to assess and communicate on a voluntary basis the environmental performance of food and drink products taking a life cycle approach. To this end, the document identifies 10 Guiding Principles that will underpin the development of a harmonised framework methodology for the environmental assessment of food and drink products, which the Round Table aims to complete by 2011. The Principles also provide a basis for identifying suitable voluntary business-to-business (B2B) and business-to-consumer (B2C) communications tools. The Round Table is also promoting concrete actions for continuous environmental improvement from farm to fork and end-of-life.

The work is being carried out by 23 European organisations from across the food chain, in partnership with the European Commission as Co-Chair and with the support of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the European Environment Agency (EEA). Some NGOs and EU Member States, and the UN Development Programme are providing additional expertise to the Round Table.

Pekka Pesonen, Co-chair of the Plenary and Secretary-General of Copa-Cogeca stated: *“This joint initiative can be seen as an important contribution to the sustainable consumption and production objectives shared by the EU and the food chain members.”*

“We welcome the Round Table’s Guiding Principles, which are an important first step for the food chain to address the challenges set out in the EU’s Sustainable Consumption and Production Action Plan,” said Soledad Blanco, Co-Chair of the Round Table and Director for Industry of DG Environment. *“As the work now enters into a crucial phase, all relevant expertise needs to be pooled together. I therefore encourage representatives from civil society and others actors in the food chain to join the initiative.”*

“The Guiding Principles give us a strong foundation for establishing the food chain as a major contributor towards sustainable consumption and production in Europe and beyond. They are a good starting point for the next stages of our work,” said Aldo Soldi, President of ANCC/COOP in Italy. *“The inclusive and participative approach we have taken in the Round Table should enable us to produce deliverables that are broadly supported and widely applied by operators along the food chain, and that ultimately satisfy consumer expectations.”*

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Notes for editors

About the European Food SCP Round Table: The Round Table aims to establish the European food chain as a major contributor towards sustainable consumption and production (SCP) in Europe. The Round Table is structured around a Steering Committee and four Working Groups, all of which are Co-Chaired by the European Commission and food chain partners. Its activities will not only strengthen the long-term competitiveness of the European food chain, but also support several EU policy objectives, notably those outlined in the European Commission's Action Plan on Sustainable Consumption and Production and Sustainable Industrial Policy. The life-cycle approach requires the involvement of all food value chain members on an equal footing - a fundamental feature of the Round Table. The Round Table is also taking into account the global SCP agenda, including the initiatives facilitated by the UN Environment Programme, the European Environment Agency and other European and global organisations in order to advance resource efficiency, sustainable value chains and social responsibility. See [short presentation](#)

Key objectives: The Round Table is seeking to:

1. identify scientifically reliable and uniform environmental assessment methodologies for food and drink products, including product category specifications where relevant, considering their significant impacts across the entire product life-cycle;
2. identify suitable communication tools to consumers and other stakeholders and develop guidance on their use, looking at all channels and means of communication;
3. promote and report on continuous environmental improvement along the entire food supply chain and engage in an open dialogue with its stakeholders.

Guiding Principles: The 10 Guiding Principles on voluntary environmental assessment and communication of environmental information along the food chain, including to consumers, are as follows:

Lead Principle: Environmental information communicated along the food chain, including to consumers, shall be scientifically reliable and consistent, understandable and not misleading, so as to support informed choice.

I. Principles for the voluntary environmental assessment of food and drink products

1. Identify and analyse the environmental aspects at all life-cycle stages.
2. Assess the significant potential environmental impacts along the life-cycle.
3. Apply recognised scientific methodologies.
4. Periodically review and update the environmental assessment.

II. Principles for the voluntary communication of environmental information

5. Provide information in an easily understandable and comparable way so as to support informed choice.
6. Ensure clarity regarding the scope and meaning of environmental information.

III. Principles for both voluntary environmental assessment and communication.

7. Ensure transparency of information and underlying methodologies and assumptions.
8. Ensure that all food chain actors can apply the assessment methodology and communication tools without disproportionate burden.
9. Support innovation.



10. Safeguard the Single Market and international trade.

Membership: Round Table [member organisations](#) must belong to one of the following ten constituencies:

- Suppliers to the agricultural sector
- Farmers and agri-cooperatives
- Agricultural trade
- Food and drink industries
- Packaging value chain
- Transport & logistics operators
- Retailers
- End-of-life: packaging recovery organisations, waste industry
- Consumer NGOs
- Environmental/nature conservation NGOs

The European Commission participates in the Round Table as a Co-Chairing organisation. Different Commission departments (DG Environment, DG Joint Research Centre, DG Health & Consumers and DG Enterprise) co-chair the Round Table Working Groups and the Steering Committee together with representatives of the food chain constituencies. Other European Commission services (including DG Agriculture and Rural Development, DG Energy and DG Research) also participate actively in the Round Table.

The UN Environment Programme and the European Environment Agency (EEA) participate in the Round Table as Supporting organisations, and the European Environmental Bureau as an Observer organisation. Several Member State experts and other specialists participate in the Round Table Working Groups.

Founding member organisations:

CELCAA	European Liaison Committee of Agricultural and Agro-Food Trade
CIAA	Confederation of the Food and Drink Industries in the EU
COPA-COGECA	European Farmers and European Agri-cooperatives
EUROCOOP	European Community of Consumer Cooperatives
EUROPEN	The European Organization for Packaging and the Environment
FEFAC	European Feed Manufacturers Federation
Fertilizers Europe	European Fertilizer Manufacturers Association
IFAH-Europe	International Federation for Animal Health – Europe
PRO EUROPE	Packaging Recovery Organisation Europe

Other member organisations:

ACE	The Alliance for Beverage Cartons and the Environment
APEAL	European Producers of Steel for Packaging
a.v.e.c.	Association of Poultry Processors and Poultry Trade in the EU
EAA	European Aluminium Association
ECPA	The European Crop Protection Association
Empac	European Metal Packaging
EMRA	European Modern Restaurants Association
EuropaBio	The European Association for Bio-Industries
EuPC	European Plastics Converters



FEFANA	European Feed Additives and Premixtures Association
FEFCO	European Federation of Corrugated Board Manufacturers
FEVE	European Container Glass Association
FPE	Flexible Packaging Europe
PPF	Primary Food Processors of the EU

Observer organisation:

EEB	European Environmental Bureau
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Interested parties wishing to participate actively in the Round Table are kindly invited to contact the Round Table Secretariat (info@food-scp.eu)

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