

TOWARDS A HEALTHIER, FITTER FUTURE

ESSNA's priorities for 2019-2024



ESSNA

European
Specialist
Sports Nutrition
Alliance

Every year, the sports nutrition sector supports more and more Europeans in improving their health; providing them with the right products to complement balanced diets and support active lifestyles.

The European Specialist Sports Nutrition Alliance (ESSNA), together with its 50+ members, look forward to continuing its engagement with the European Institutions in their new mandate. Together we can achieve:

GOOD HEALTH FOR AN AGEING EUROPEAN POPULATION

Promoting good health is an integral part of the work the European institutions are undertaking for smart and inclusive growth. With a projected 45% increase in the number of people aged 65+ in the next 20 years, financing healthcare costs and access to a dignified and independent life for an ageing population will be a central part of the political debate. Keeping people healthy and active for longer has a positive impact on productivity and competitiveness, and benefits society as a whole.

SPORT AND HEALTHY DIETS AT THE CORE OF THE EU

Sport and physical activity contribute to the health and wellbeing of European citizens, but the level of physical activity in Europe is currently stagnating and even declining in some countries. ESSNA has been an active partner of the European Institutions in promoting healthy and active lifestyles, based on a well-informed, balanced diet for all, but much more can be done to achieve this.

SAFE PRODUCTS FOR HEALTHY CONSUMERS

The EU has world-class food legislation that allows consumers to feel confident that what gets on to their plate is safe. With increasing international trade and e-commerce, continuing to provide European citizens with all the information they need to make informed choices about the products they purchase - both in store and online - is more important than ever. This can be also done by promoting better enforcement of legislation across the EU.

A FAIR BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT

The regulatory framework that covers sports nutrition products, under General Food Law, has supported innovation and continuous growth in the sector. Even more can be done to ensure that we continue to serve our consumers and promote innovation in the sector, for instance, by promoting a greater evidence-based recognition of sports people's specific nutritional needs within this framework, and harmonisation of certain provisions across Europe and with Britain post Brexit.

THE OPPORTUNITY IS NOW

The new mandate of the European institutions creates an opportunity to ensure that more European consumers conduct active lifestyles in a healthy and sustainable way. ESSNA will continue to assist the European institutions in this transformation, towards a healthier, fitter future.

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+44 (0)20 7463 0690
info@essna.com

www.essna.com
@ESSNAsports

WHAT SHOULD BE ON THE SHOPPING LIST FOR THE EUROPEAN INSTITUTIONS FOR THE NEXT FIVE YEARS?

ESSNA has selected a few important elements for policymakers to focus on in the upcoming mandate and has expanded on what is needed to complete a transformation. We will continue to partner with the European institutions towards a healthier, fitter future.



1. ACKNOWLEDGING THE DIETARY NEEDS OF SPORTSPEOPLE IN FOOD LAW

The EU has taken effective action in recent years to make food products healthier and safer for consumers. ESSNA fully supports these efforts, particularly in light of increasing rates of obesity and noncommunicable diseases across Europe.

Sports nutrition products can play a key role in supporting these efforts, by complementing balanced diets and promoting active lifestyles. These products are now widely used by - and available to - all groups of the population who wish to remain physically active, including recreational / lifestyle users and health-conscious consumers. Sports foods are specifically formulated to ensure that the composition of the product best addresses the requirements of the body when carrying out sports activity. This may include, for example, higher quantities of protein or carbohydrates.

ESSNA continues to support fully the inclusion of sports food in General Food Law, in line with how the market is moving, but calls on policymakers to recognise the specific dietary needs of sportspeople. This includes, for example, an exemption of sports nutrition products from nutrient profiles should policymakers decide to develop these.

2. FACILITATING CONSUMER CHOICE THROUGH ACCURATE, INFORMATIVE AND HARMONISED LABELLING

A high level of consumer protection through consumer information is key. If applied inaccurately, however, it has the potential to mislead consumers with regards to the content and / or benefits of the foods they consume.

The Nutrition and Health Claims Regulation has increasingly become both the main framework for communicating to consumers the intended and responsible use of sports nutrition products, and the main obstacle to doing this. We need a proportionate, consistent and evidence-based assessment and authorisation of health claims - taking due account of the specific needs of sports people.

Appropriate amendments to protein labelling/definition (Annex 1 of Regulation 1169/2011 on the provision of food information to consumers) are also needed, as the current definition of protein allows less scrupulous companies to declare a higher protein content, whilst their products are in fact formulated using nitrogen containing ingredients of lower cost and lower nutritional value than proteins. This misleads consumers and distorts the market for food business at a time when protein is becoming an increasingly popular ingredient with demonstrated benefits.



3. PROMOTING EFFORTS TO TACKLE DOPING

Sports nutrition products and supplements are still associated with doping and whilst the industry is working to protect consumers and athletes from these substances, the risk of inadvertent doping still exists.

This is why ESSNA has redoubled its efforts and is working on a European wide campaign named #DumpTheDoping, as part of a consumer education campaign to raise awareness and tackle this challenge for the sport community. We are also contributing to setting a European standard on good development and manufacturing practices aimed at preventing the presence of prohibited substances in food intended for sports people and food supplements. Meanwhile, to ensure internal compliance, ESSNA members have been provided with guidance to help them avoid inadvertent doping.

We call for the European Institutions to promote these efforts via initiatives such as the European Week of Sport, of which ESSNA is proud partner.

4. TACKLING FOOD FRAUD & NON-COMPLIANCE ONLINE AND OFFLINE

ESSNA runs an award-winning campaign to improve consumer safety and reduce unfair competition by addressing the issue of non-compliant products, particularly those found online. Through our campaign to tackle non-compliance, we work closely with enforcement authorities at the European and national level to report unscrupulous companies which do not abide by the rules.

EU legislation is put in place to protect consumers and ensure businesses compete fairly across the bloc. This is only effective if these laws are enforced adequately to ensure that everybody complies.

Then new Official Controls Regulation allows Member States to order products online without identifying themselves and impose penalties for non-compliance regardless of the location of the operator. Only a correct enforcement of the Official Controls Regulation can support our efforts to ensure that only safe products are sold to EU consumers.

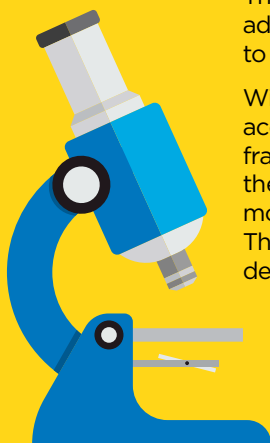


5. SUPPORTING & PROMOTING INNOVATION

The sport nutrition sector is expanding rapidly as more and more consumers look to adopt healthy lifestyles and sports nutrition moves from a specialist athlete product to a mainstream one.

Within this fast-growing market, it is crucial for businesses to innovate to accommodate consumers' evolving needs and interests. This requires a regulatory framework which encourages businesses to invest in extensive research and exploit the latest state of the art of food and nutrition science, to make products safer, more effective, more sustainable and to communicate their benefits to consumers. This evidence-based approach will allow the sports nutrition sector to continue to develop their products with, for example, new ingredients, food additives and health claims, while guaranteeing consumer protection.

ESSNA welcomes the new Regulation on "transparency and sustainability of the EU risk assessment in the food chain", which aims to strike a balance between increasing public access to information and ensuring businesses' competitiveness.



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6. WORKING TOWARDS A FAIR AND FULLY HARMONISED SINGLE MARKET

The Single Market is one of the EU's greatest achievements. The free movement of goods is an essential part of it, and guarantees that business can sell their products freely across the continent. Yet the industry still faces obstacles when trading within the Single Market. These obstacles, whether they are administrative decisions or national legislation, often derive from different interpretations by Member States of EU law, national provisions and a poor application of the mutual recognition principle. They constitute trade barriers which can hinder free-trade and harm the integrity of the EU's Single Market.

ESSNA welcomes the new Mutual Recognition Regulation, which aims to facilitate the marketing of products lawfully sold in one country in other EU markets. ESSNA calls for the correct implementation and enforcement of these provisions.

We also hope to see a positive relationship between the EU and the United Kingdom in the context of the Brexit process.



7. ENSURING A FAIR & WELL-INFORMED ONLINE ENVIRONMENT

E-commerce in the food and food supplement sectors is rapidly expanding in the EU. While this growth represents an opportunity for consumers to access a variety of products from the comfort of their home, it also brings some new challenges for food business operators and regulators. Consumers are faced with a greater choice of products which they can purchase from anywhere and anytime. When shopping online, on platforms and online retailers, consumers should have the same level of information and protection they would get in stores. While this is positive, it also presents challenges because sports nutrition is no longer being bought primarily by bodybuilders and elite athletes who know what to look for.



ESSNA is committed to embracing the full potential of e-commerce in food and sports nutrition, but will work with the institutions to identify solutions to the lack of consistent information online and offline and to unlawful products coming from outside and the role platforms can play in promoting compliance and consumer safety.

8. MOVING TOWARDS A GREENER, SUSTAINABLE SPORTS INDUSTRY

The new European Commission has vowed that the EU will become the world's first climate neutral continent. This will be one of the greatest challenges of our time as it requires decisive action now.

ESSNA is fully supportive of this initiative as the sports nutrition sector has been a champion in raising awareness on food waste and creating educational initiatives to drive behaviours towards a sustainable future.



ABOUT ESSNA

The European Specialist Sports Nutrition Alliance (ESSNA) was founded in 2003 and is the voice of the rapidly growing sports nutrition sector. Our 50 plus members aim to make sure that sports nutrition products sold in the EU are safe, effective and do exactly what they claim.

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