

SNE Position: Industry welcomes global rules for Young Child Formula and encourages timely adoption by the EU

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Today, the global standardization body for food, Codex Alimentarius, has adopted an updated standard on follow-up formula for older infants (6-12 months) and product for young children (12-36 months)¹. Specialised Nutrition Europe (SNE) welcomes the news, as our industry supports clear and strict regulation of these products to ensure healthy growth and development in early childhood.

SNE president Marie-France Pagerey commented: “The strict global standard is good news. We encourage its timely adoption by the EU to ensure the highest standards apply when it comes to protecting vulnerable groups. Older infants and young children are vulnerable groups with different nutritional needs compared to young infants, and very different needs from those of older children and adults. Therefore, the composition of formulas for this group also needs to be specifically adapted for their age and should follow specific requirements. We congratulate Codex Alimentarius and all its member states on their agreement to the updated standard, which is the result of many years of work and expert input.”

SNE secretary general Beat Spath added: “While we welcome that the EU has also engaged intensively to negotiate this updated global standard, we hope that the EU will follow suit and also regulate Young Child Formula for toddlers aged 1 to 3 years.” Currently, the EU only has specific regulations for formula for infants aged 0 to 6 and 6 to 12 months, respectively². Young Child Formula for toddlers aged 1 to 3 years is merely regulated like general foods, without taking into account the specific nutritional needs of this vulnerable population.

SNE president Marie-France Pagerey emphasized: “Young child formula is a useful way to help meet the specific nutritional needs of young children and may even help address some nutritional gaps such as iron. However, there is insufficient regulation in the EU to protect this vulnerable group, when compared to much stricter regulation governing other foods for infants and young children³. The lack of specific regulation causes challenges in the internal and global markets, and it is increasingly inconsistent with the international regulatory framework. More specifically, the current lack of any composition requirements at the European level allows for products with inappropriate composition to potentially be placed on the EU market”.

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Note to the editors: **Specialised Nutrition Europe (SNE)** is the trade association representing the interests of the specialised nutrition industry across Europe. Foods covered by the specialised nutrition sector are tailor-made dietary solutions for populations with very specific nutritional needs including infants & young children, patients under medical supervision, sportspeople, overweight and obese consumers, and those suffering from coeliac disease.

¹ Draft Codex Standard for Follow-Up Formula for Older Infants and Product for Young Children:

<https://www.fao.org/fao-who-codexalimentarius/sh-proxy/en/?lnk=1&url=https%253A%252F%252Fworkspace.fao.org%252Fsites%252Fcodex%252Fmeetings%252FCX-720-43%252FFinal%252520Report%252520NFSDUe.pdf>

² Regulation (EU) No 609/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council on food intended for infants and young children, food for special medical purposes, and total diet replacement for weight control and Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2016/127 supplementing Regulation (EU) No 609/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council as regards the specific compositional and information requirements for infant formula and follow-on formula and as regards requirements on information relating to infant and young child feeding

³ Baby foods and processed cereal-based foods for infants and young children are covered by Regulation (EU) No 609/2013, as well as by Commission Directive 2006/125/EC on processed cereal-based foods and baby foods for infants and young children.