

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

Brussels, 12 February 2024

The global body for food standards, guidelines and codes of practice, Codex Alimentarius, has published an updated standard on follow-up formula for older infants (6-12 months) and product for young children (12-36 months)¹. The standard allows the establishment of strict, specific and science-based composition criteria for Young Child Formula (YCF), a product supporting the nutritional adequacy of young children's diet from 1 to 3 years of age.

Specialised Nutrition Europe (SNE) president Marie-France Pagerey commented: "The global standard is good news and can contribute to healthy growth and development in early childhood. Similar rules are also needed in the EU for Young Child Formula, as, according to the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA), young children in Europe usually consume too much protein and too little iodine, iron, omega-3 fatty acids and vitamin D². Drinking Young Child Formula helps ensure that young children take in these essential nutrients in adequate amounts and can help address certain nutritional gaps. 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."

SNE Secretary General Beat Späth added: "Young children are not mini adults; they have specific nutritional needs. But unlike at the global level, there are no specific rules in the EU for the composition and labelling of young child formula. Products with inappropriate composition (e.g. high sugar content, inadequate levels of added nutrients, etc.) targeting this age group could therefore be legally placed on the EU market." Thus, SNE is calling on European decision-makers to support regulation of Young Child Formula at EU level, by implementing the newly revised international Codex Standard. This is crucial to promote the healthy development of European young children.

For more information: Please read more about the newly revised Codex Alimentarius Standard and the EU regulatory status of Young Child Formula in the SNE position paper "Industry welcomes global rules for Young Child Formula and encourages timely adoption by the EU"⁴.

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.

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¹Codex Standard for Follow-Up Formula for Older Infants and Product for Young Children: [fao.org/fao-who-codexalimentarius/sh-proxy/en/?lnk=1&url=https%253A%252F%252Fworkspace.fao.org%252Fsites%252Fcodex%252Fstandards%252FCXS%2B156-1987%252FCXS_156e.pdf](https://www.fao.org/fao-who-codexalimentarius/sh-proxy/en/?lnk=1&url=https%253A%252F%252Fworkspace.fao.org%252Fsites%252Fcodex%252Fstandards%252FCXS%2B156-1987%252FCXS_156e.pdf)

² Source: EFSA (2013). Scientific Opinion on nutrient requirements and dietary intakes of infants and young children in the European Union, EFSA Journal 2013;11(10):3408

³Baby 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.

⁴Published 28 November 2023: <https://www.specialisednutritioneurope.eu/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/2023-640-SNE-statement-Codex-FUF-standard-28-Nov-2023.pdf>