POSITIVE LOGOS AND COLOUR CODED GDA
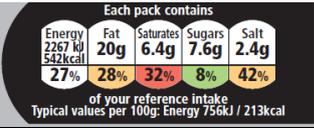
Introduction

The fight against obesity and NCDs demands that all stakeholders contribute *to making the healthy choice the easy choice*. Two actions appear to be effective and successful instruments: reformulation (see Vyth cs, 2010) and consumer friendly labelling. That is why WHO strongly requests the food industry to put these two instruments in practice (WHO Europe Food & Nutrition Action Plan 2015-2020).

Consequently, criteria based labelling schemes have been developed to give consumers not only the nutrition facts, but also to help them interpreting these figures. The two major ones are: positive logos such as Choices, Keyhole and Heart logos, and colour coded GDA ("traffic lights"). Where both systems aim at consumer guidance towards a healthier diet, with less saturated fats, trans fats, sugar and salt, the positive logos are only assigned to products complying all criteria whereas the traffic lights also warns for nutrients not complying with the maximum amount considered as acceptable. Both types of logos interpret the amount of nutrients in a product in relation to health.

To help the discussion on further consumer guidance by interpretive labelling, we provide an overview of the main differences between the two systems below. As the positive logo systems show a high level of similarity being based on the same principles including the use of product group specific criteria for the same nutrients, they have been grouped together.

As this comparison is on interpretive front-of-pack information tools, the single coloured GDA panel is not included. This panel gives a 'non-directive' overview of nutritional data of the main macronutrients in relation to recommended intake. This GDA panel could be combined with the nutrient panel (all nutrition data) and a positive interpretive logo.

Aspect	Positive logos	Colour-coded GDA
Specificity of the criteria	Product group specific criteria	One set of criteria for drinks, one for solid foods
Criteria for fibre	Yes	No
Driver for reformulation	Yes, substantiated in scientific study Vyth (2010)	Criteria too general
Complexity	Low for consumers (yes/no tick)	High for consumers (5 nutrients, 3 levels)
Nutrient specific guidance	No	Yes
Tone of voice	Positive	Mixed positive and negative
Figures on nutrients	In nutrition panel and GDA	In GDA and nutrition panel
Number of European countries implemented	12 (Choices in the Netherlands, Czech Republic, Poland, Belgium. Keyhole in Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Iceland, Lithuania, Macedonia. Heart Logo in Finland, Slovenia).	1 (UK)
EU recognition	Yes	No; opposition by 17 member states as seen as a possible trade barrier, EU legal inquiry