

4TH BIENNIAL
SAVOURY SNACK
SUMMIT 2012



How Responsible Are We?

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EUROPEAN SNACKS INDUSTRY DISCUSSES WITH STAKEHOLDERS LATEST DEVELOPMENTS ON KEY INDUSTRY TOPICS

BRUSSELS, 20 JUNE 2012:

Over 100 key stakeholders including representatives from the European Commission, the European Parliament, Permanent Representations, academics, NGOs and industry gathered in Brussels on 19 June 2012 invited by ESA, the European Snacks Association, to discuss recent developments impacting industry and consumers alike. They included the Food Information to Consumers Regulation, promotion of foods to children, and managing the communication of food safety issues.

Dr Josephine Wills, Director General at the European Food Information Council, highlighted that research in recent years showed that there is a big discrepancy between how consumers say they use labels and how they actually use them in real-life shopping.

With regards to the Food Information to Consumers Regulation two industry representatives expressed their anticipation for a clearer guidance by the Commission; and the speech by Christophe Didion, Policy Officer at DG SANCO, made it clear that the Commission understands the industry issues and will work on them in the future.

Swedish MEP Corazza Bildt challenged industry to communicate more openly and actively in the debate about food advertising to children and its success in reformulation. "If you don't talk about it – your voice will not be heard", she emphasised.

This call was reflected by Despina Spanou, Principal Advisor at DG SANCO, who underlined that although the EU Pledge is working currently, there is no guarantee that regulation can be avoided if signatories do not follow enhanced future commitments.

Communication experts, Dr. Wim Verbeke from the University of Ghent and Adrian Moss, highlighted how increased connectivity, interactivity and real-time information shape the perceptions of consumers

with a focus on recent food safety crises. Moss stressed that social media is “out there - you cannot avoid it anymore, but you have to understand it, before you enter the game”.

Summing up the event, ESA’s Director General, Sebastian Emig, said “today we have heard that industry bashing is en vogue, but I think it is too simplistic to lay the blame on industry and turn a blind eye to the efforts undertaken and progress made in terms of reformulation and advertising in recent years”.

Education, information and the empowerment of people are the appropriate means to achieve balanced diets. He concluded that “it lies with us all – as consumers – to pursue balanced and active lifestyles for ourselves and our families”.

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Notes for editors

About the European Snacks Association

The European Snacks Association (ESA) is Europe's only trade organisation dedicated to advancing the savoury snacks industry on behalf of member snack manufacturers and suppliers. Founded in 1961, ESA members are national and international snack producers and industry suppliers, who together are involved in the manufacture of potato crisps, corn chips /tortillas, pellet snacks, baked snacks, crackers, pretzels, savoury biscuits, popcorn, pork rinds, meat snacks, fruit snacks, peanuts, other snack nuts and various other savoury snacks in this category.

ESA represents member companies’ interests at national, European and International level and is proactive in its anticipation and fielding of potential issues of relevance to the industry.