



Berufsverband der
Kinder- und Jugendärzte e.V.

Dr. med. Wolfram Hartmann

Präsident

Mielenforster Straße 2
51069 Köln

Fon (0221) 68 909-0
Fax (0221) 68 32 04
bvkj.buero@uminfo.de
www.kinderaerzte-im-netz.de

Dr. med. Wolfram Hartmann Mielenforster Str. 2 51069 Köln

To the Delegates of the EU Parliament

Labelling of foods in the member states of the European Union

11. März 2010

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen,

the problem with massively overweight children and young people increases in all our EU member states. In the interest of the wellbeing and health of our children und young people and also because of the immense social follow-up costs we need extensive measures for the primary prevention of this health problem. Aside from the promotion of more physical activity in the lives of children and young people, healthy foods and eating habits will play a major role. The increasing consume of finished- and fast food products with high sugar-, fat and salt content plus flavour enhancers has a well known negative effect on the health of our children and young people and forwards diseases which later on are medically hardly or not at all controllable.

Our paediatric professional organisation (Berufsverband der Kinder- und Jugendärzte, BVKJ e.V.) together with other paediatric societies in Germany and in the EU (e.g. the European Confederation of Primary Care Paediatrician, ECPCP) is against the solely nutritional tables on food products which are favoured by industry and demands an additional “traffic light” labelling of foods as is voluntarily practised in Great Britain.

Obesity is especially pronounced in children and young people from socially underprivileged and/or less educated backgrounds. This also applies to children and young people from certain migratory populations. For these children and their parents an easily understandable (not necessarily readable) labelling system is of paramount importance. The current practice of printed (fine print) information on the composition of finished products is too complicated and does not reach the population in danger.

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Mielenforster Str. 2
51069 Köln

Fon
Verwaltung (0221) 68 909-0
Kongresse (0221) 68 909-15/16
Fax (0221) 68 32 04
bvkj.buero@uminfo.de

Deutsche Apotheker- und Ärzte-
bank Köln
Kontonummer 0 001273779
Bankleitzahl 370 606 15

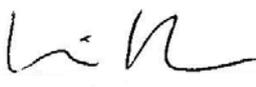
Especially those foods which children like very much normally contain lots of sugar and fat. Therefore, the “traffic light” system used in Great Britain is, in our opinion ideal, because people can understand the composition of foods (high, medium, low amounts of unhealthy components) without the need for calculations or being fluent in the national language. This system has been shown to be effective.

You as politicians have a major responsibility for the EU legislation. We urgently request of you not to exclusively support the interests of the food industry but also to seriously take into consideration the needs for a simple and understandable control mechanism for those children, young people and their parents who are at great risk because of the long term effects of obesity.

Best regards



Dr. Wolfram Hartmann
President of the BVKJ
Mielenforster Straße 2
51069 Köln
Tel. ++49 221-689090
Fax. ++49 221-683204
e-mail: bvkj.buero@uminfo.de



Dr. Elke Jäger-Roman
President of the European
Confederation of Primary
Care Paediatricians
Köhlerstrasse 23
12205 Berlin
Tel. ++49 30-81299393
Fax. ++49 30-81299394
e-mail: jaeger-roman@snafu.de