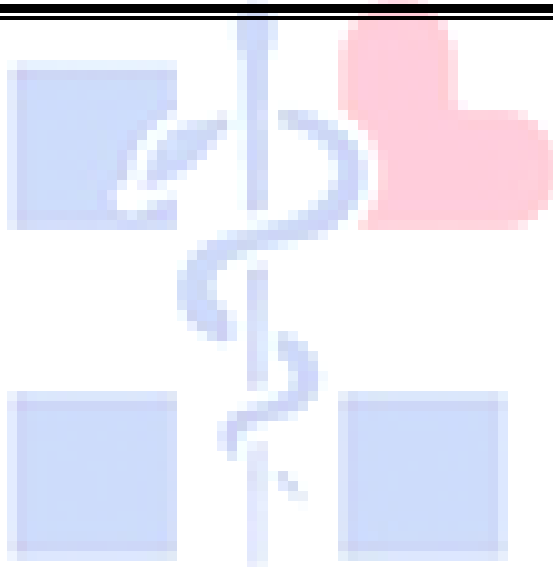


# ***Greece's***

## ***National Action Plan on Food***

### ***Reformulation***



**Greek Ministry of Health**  
**General Directorate of Public Health and Quality of Life**  
**Directorate of Public Health**  
**Department on NCDs and Nutrition**

**National Nutrition Policy Committee 2017**



## **Greece's National Action Plan on Food Reformulation**

*This Action Plan was drawn up by the “Working Group for the configuration of an Action Plan on Food Reformulation”, established by the General Secretary of Public Health of the Greek Ministry of Health. The members of the Working Group were representatives from the following bodies:*

- *Harokopio University of Athens – Department of Nutrition and Dietetics*
- *National Center for Research and Technological Development*
- *National School of Public Health*
- *Ministry of Health – Directorate of Public Health*
- *Hellenic Food Authority*
- *General Secretariat for Research and Technology*
- *General Chemical State Laboratory*
- *Federation of Hellenic Food Industries*

*The Action Plan on Food Reformulation was approved by the National Nutrition Policy Committee at 4<sup>th</sup> October 2017.*

## Greece's National Action Plan on Food Reformulation

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## A. INTRODUCTION

Reformulation of food products is the process of redefining the composition of food products in order to reduce their content in added sugars, saturated fatty acids, industrially produced trans fatty acids and/or salt, to lower the energy value and/or to increase the content of dietary fibers.

Food Reformulation has been among the objectives of European health policies since 2007, when the “White Paper on a Strategy for Europe on Nutrition, Overweight and Obesity related health issues” was adopted. In 2010, the European Commission adopted the “Council Conclusions on Action to reduce population salt intake for better health”. In 2011, EU Framework on National Initiatives on Selected Nutrients was developed, and two annexes were added some years later, the Annex for Saturated Fat in 2012 and the Annex for Added Sugars in 2015. The Framework sets actions and objectives for food reformulation, with emphasis on the relevant nutrients.

In 2016, the Dutch Presidency of the Council of the European Union set Food Reformulation as a priority and organized a Conference on Food product Improvement, that resulted in the “Roadmap for Action on Food Product Improvement”. Based on this document and the conclusions of the relevant Informal Council of Health Ministers, the “Council Conclusions on Food Products Improvement” were adopted on 17 June 2016 by the Council of the European Union.

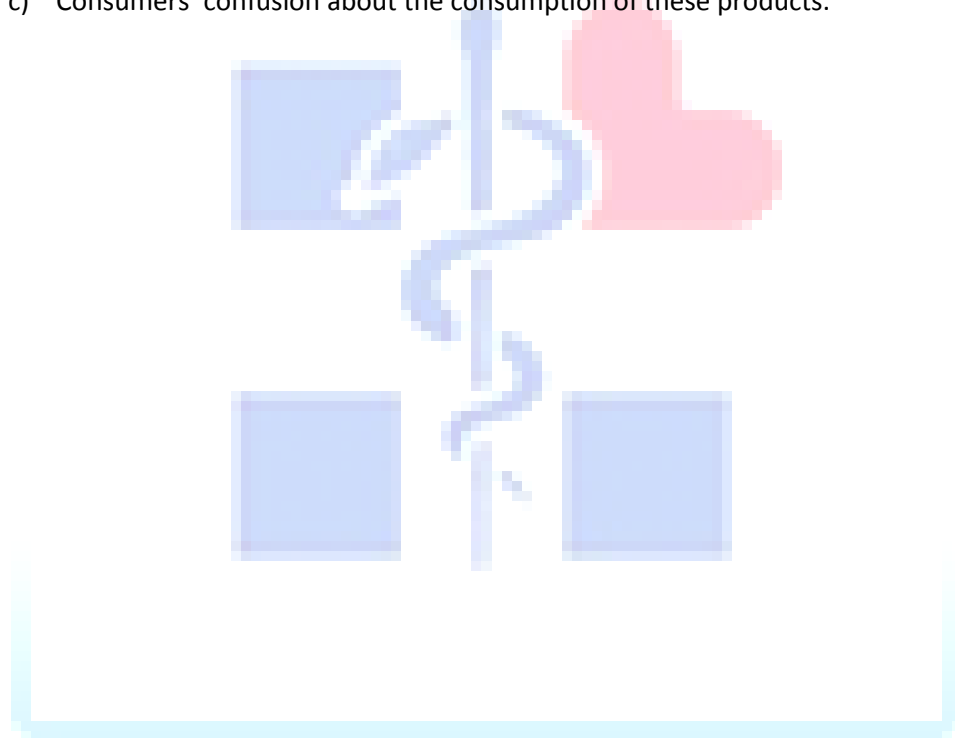
Following these Conclusions, the Council calls the Member States to have a national plan for food product improvement in place by the end of 2017, either as a new plan or integrated into an existing plan, in cooperation with the relevant stakeholders, to make the healthy choice easier for consumers by 2020, through an increased availability of food with lower levels of salt, saturated fats, added sugars, energy value and, where appropriate, through reduced portion sizes, as appropriate, and to provide information on the nutritional composition of processed foods. Local and traditional foods, including those with geographical indications, intrinsically tied to a country's culture and heritage could be subject to special consideration, taking into account the national situation as well as their contribution to the total dietary intake. The Member States are also called to make full use of all existing structures and tools, including the online tools of the EU Health Policy Platform, for sharing experiences

on new initiatives and actions, as well as best practices, aimed at promoting food product improvement.

The Member States should report regularly, at least every two years, on progress achieved in food product improvement initiatives, and share benchmarks, where available, best practices of implementation and results, within the framework of the High Level Group (HLG) on Nutrition and Physical Activity.

The ultimate objective of food reformulation should not deviate from the requirements of food safety. Caution should be taken regarding:

- a) Limiting nutrients (as salt, saturated fatty acids, trans fatty acids, sugars) should be done with caution and according to risk-benefit assessment principles.
- b) Microbiological safety of food
- c) Consumers' confusion about the consumption of these products.



## B. CURRENT NATIONAL FOOD REFORMULATION ACTIONS

### 1. Salt Reduction Strategy 2016-2020 – Hellenic Food Authority

The Action Plan to reduce salt intake in Greece 2016-2020 is based on the following pillars:

- Assessment of total salt intake in the general population and major salt sources.
- Increase of the awareness of the general population about salt reduction, with special focus on the most vulnerable social groups.
- Use of realistic goals for upper salt content levels in different food groups and redesigning food and meals with less salt.
- Monitoring and evaluation of actions.

### 2. Food Legislation in school canteens

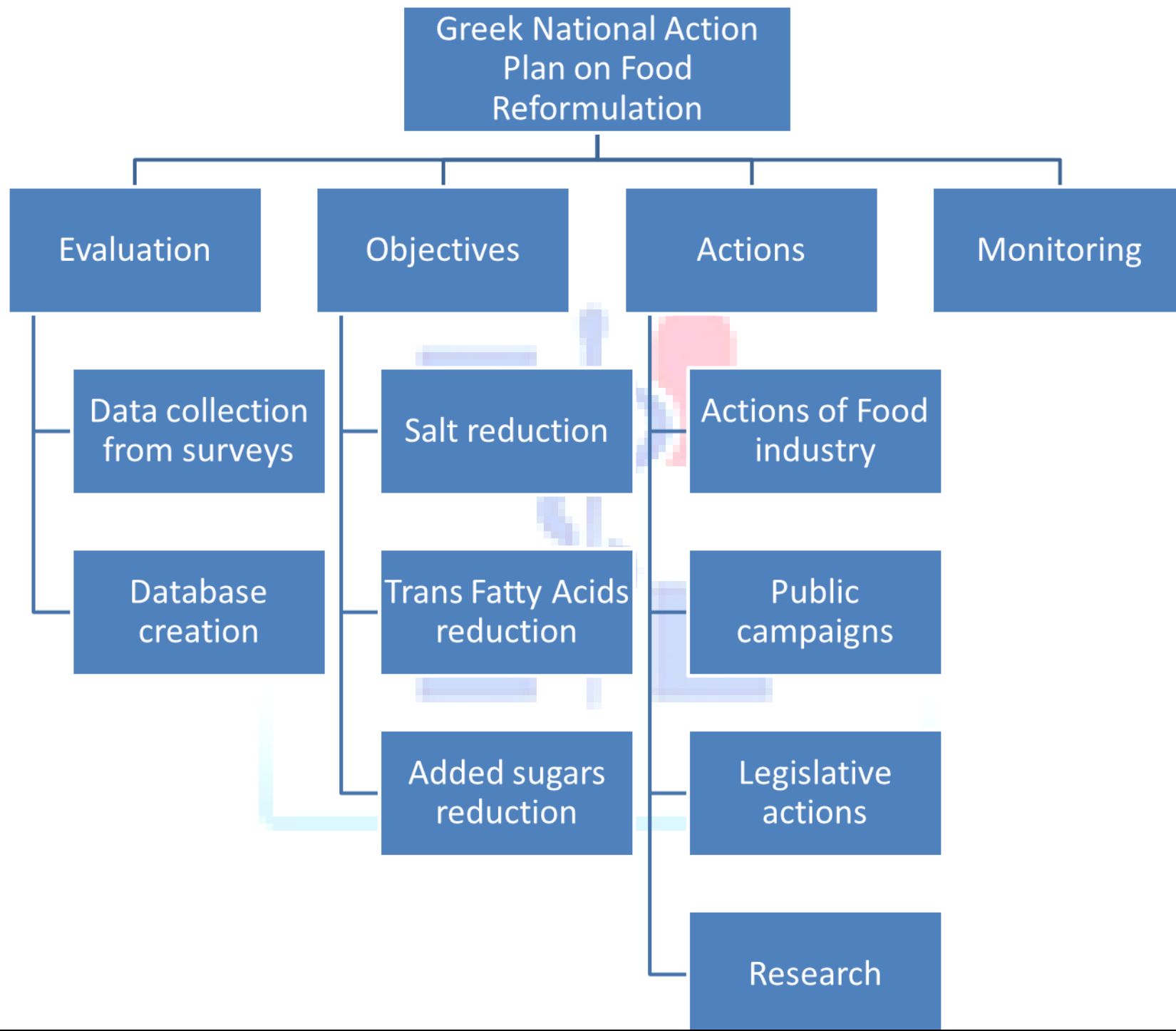
- Legislation regarding food products sold in school canteens: only certain products are allowed to be sold, while for some of them nutrition labeling criteria are set (e.g. sugar, lipid etc.)

### 3. 90/2015 Decision of Supreme Chemical Council of the State

A series of previous articles and Decisions providing minimum content of artificial sweeteners of non-alcoholic beverages were recalled.

### 4. 149/2012 Decision of Supreme Chemical Council of the State

«Approval of partially hydrogenated palm kernel olein». The use of olein fraction in food is limited by a trans fatty acid concentration of < 2%.



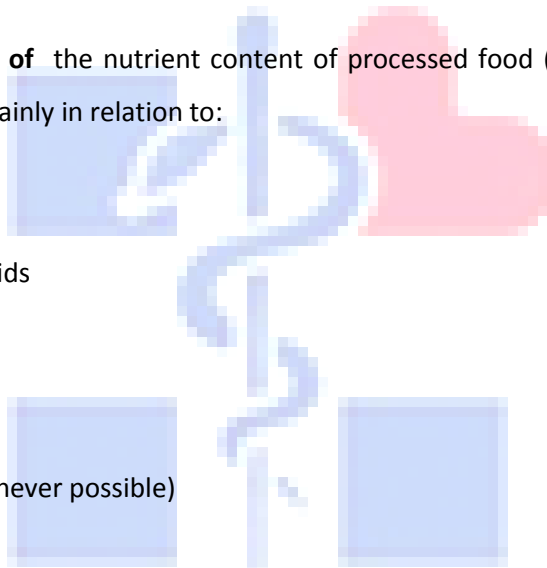
## I. EVALUATION

### 1. Evaluation of current situation by retrieving data from population studies including :

- a. Energy and Nutrient Daily Average Intakes of people residing in Greece, with emphasis on total sugars, saturated fatty acids, industrially produced trans fatty acids and salt / sodium.
- b. Main food sources of the aforementioned nutrients by age group.
- c. Data on the average consumption of various food groups in the Greek population by age group.

### 2. Establish a database of the nutrient content of processed food (from chemical analysis and food labeling), mainly in relation to:

- Total sugars
- Total lipids
- Saturated fatty acids
- Trans fatty acids
- Salt
- Energy
- Portion/size (whenever possible)



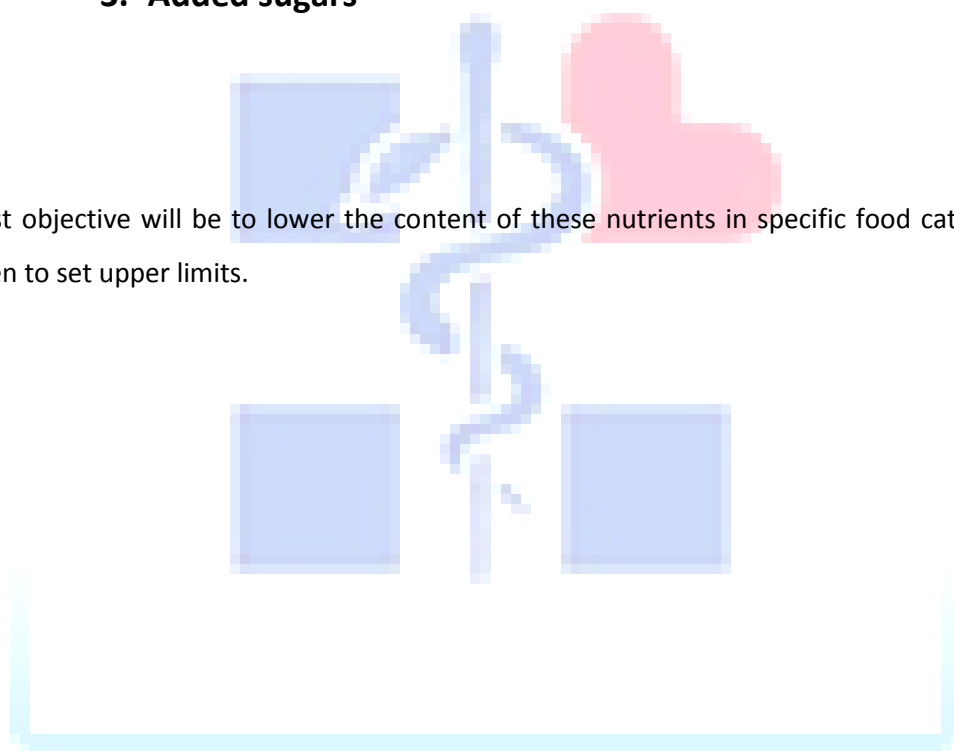
## II. OBJECTIVES

### Goal setting

Primary aim of the current Action Plan is to reduce the content of foods in the nutrients below:

1. Salt
2. Industrially produced trans fatty acids
3. Added sugars

The first objective will be to lower the content of these nutrients in specific food categories, and then to set upper limits.



### III. RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

#### **A. Food reformulation actions**

1. Promotion of actions from the part of food producers / food industry to:
  - (a) produce products with less salt, less added sugars, less industrially produced trans fatty acids, and/or
  - (b) decrease the consumption of products containing salt and additional sugars.Actions may include voluntary commitments, restriction of promotional activities in products containing salt, added sugars and industrially produced trans fatty acids, smaller packages - portions of these products.
2. Support of small-medium enterprises with the relevant know-how for food reformulation.

#### **B. Actions to inform general public or specific population groups (public campaigns)**

##### **Possible actions for consumers:**

1. Publication of printed and electronic material promoting healthy food choices.
2. Publication of printed and electronic material for increasing understanding of food labeling.
3. Collaboration with scientific and professional bodies for increasing public awareness.
4. Publication of Ministry's circular.
5. Promoting National Action Plan in scientific and public events.

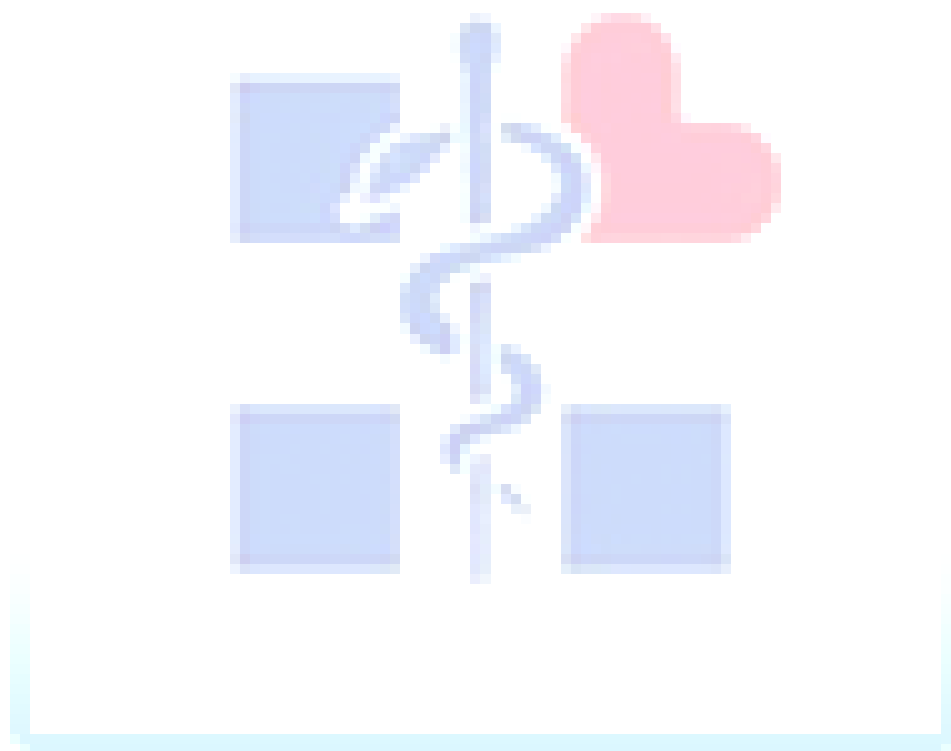
#### **C. Legislative Actions**

1. Revision of nutritional standards for nurseries and preschools.
2. Definition of nutritional standards of foods freely distributed in schools by public and private bodies (nutritional composition-portion size), including those distributed under the European Fruit, Vegetables and Milk Scheme.
3. Definition of nutritional standards in food procurements (in hospitals, summer camps, etc.).
4. Definition of nutritional standards for foods allowed to be sold in canteens - children's camps.

5. Revision of National Code for Foodstuffs and Beverages on any specified minimum value of the aforementioned nutrients in foodstuffs.

#### **D. Research Actions**

1. Promotion of research for identifying and implementing methodologies for food reformulation, as well as the production of innovative foods that are low in fat, industrially produced trans fatty acids and added sugars.
2. Promote relevant consultation in Innovation Platforms and Research Programs.
3. Investigate the possibilities and conditions of implementing the results of Research in production line.



## STAGE IV. MONITORING

### **Action Plan monitoring**

The results of the Action Plan will be monitored and evaluated through the creation of a food composition database. This database will include information from:

- Chemical Analyses,
- from Industry (self-reported data),
- Food labeling,
- Previous surveys,
- Other EU Member States or from the European Commission,
- Research activities.

*In order to implement the Food Reformulation Action Plan, the Working Group will propose targeted actions that will be included in the Action Plan Annexes, which could be renewed on a regular basis in order to follow the latest scientific evidence.*

*The implementing bodies will also be clearly mentioned.*

*National Nutrition Policy Committee, in collaboration with the relevant authorities, coordinates the aforementioned Actions and collects data regarding their implementation.*