

*On. le Michele Piraro*



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ISPA

## **Introduzione al Sistema Europeo di Sicurezza Alimentare, Etichettatura, Nutri-Score, Made in Italy e Cibi Ultraprocessati**

Good morning everyone,

It is a pleasure to be here today to talk to you about crucial issues concerning food safety, the health of citizens and the protection of our traditions, especially the Italian ones.

These topics are at the centre of the debates today in the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety (ENVI) of the European Parliament where I am a full member and involve a series of issues that, although different from each other, are intertwined in the challenge of guaranteeing safe, healthy and authentic foods.

### **The European Food Safety System**

Let's start with the European food safety system, which has as its main objective to ensure that the foods that reach our tables are safe for the health of consumers.

The basis of this system is the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA), which plays a fundamental role in monitoring and evaluating the risks associated with food, from pesticides to microbiological contamination, up to the presence of dangerous chemical substances.



However, this system must not become an obstacle to our agri-food traditions, but must aim for a balance that does not threaten the quality agriculture that has always characterized Europe, and in particular Italy, a land that is a guarantee of quality and tradition.

### **European Labeling and Nutri-Score**

The topic of food labeling is increasingly debated, in particular with the introduction of the Nutri-Score labeling system.

Nutri-Score is a system that assigns a "color code" to foods, with the aim of simplifying consumer choice, indicating which foods are healthier and which are less so.

We, as Brothers of Italy, believe that this system does not adequately consider the specificities of Italian products.

Italy is a country of food excellence, where tradition and quality are the fruit of centuries of experience.

We cannot allow a system that does not take these particularities into account to penalize our typical products, which are the best in the world.

Labeling should therefore respect the principle of transparency, but without reducing the quality of Made in Italy to mere numerical evaluations.

It is essential that the European label respects the peculiarities of our products, such as olive oil, cheese, ham and wine, which cannot be "sacrificed" in favor of a logic of simplification that does not recognize their intrinsic nutritional value.



### **Made in Italy: A Value to Defend**

And speaking of Made in Italy, we cannot fail to underline the importance of protecting the authenticity and quality of our food products.

Made in Italy is a guarantee for the consumer of quality, tradition and safety.

Every time a product bears the “Made in Italy” brand, it must be synonymous with excellence, but also with responsibility.

For us at Fratelli d’Italia, the defense of Made in Italy is not only an economic issue, but a cultural duty.

We must be on the front lines to prevent our agri-food heritage from being weakened by policies that risk endangering our gastronomic identity, in favor of low-quality productions with no connection to the territory.

### **Ultra-processed foods.**

The debate on ultra-processed foods is also worthy of attention and is animating the debate of the Envi Commission. Just in the past few weeks I have already had the opportunity to address the topic at the annual Safe Conference held in Brussels.

At the moment, there is no scientific and shared definition of the term at a global level.

Classifications based on the degree of food processing are still a matter of debate in the international scientific community. Despite the growing



interest in this category of foods, it is important to remember that, based on current classifications, some traditional products of our European gastronomic culture, such as ham or cheese, could fall into the category of ultra-processed foods.

Therefore, it is essential to proceed with great caution when addressing the issue.

The generalization of certain foods, especially those that are part of our history and culture, could have unwanted effects, creating confusion among consumers and fueling unjustified alarmism.

Another aspect concerns foods that are good for health or that meet particular nutritional needs.

If a classification based only on the degree of processing is applied without a more in-depth evaluation, we risk including in this macro-category also healthy or functional products, such as those based on wholemeal flour, or gluten-free and lactose-free foods, which are essential for those who suffer from particular food intolerances.

For this reason, the European Union's food policies must go beyond simplifications and consider a more complex analysis that takes into account the quality of food, nutritional needs and health benefits.

We must avoid giving in to logics that, unfortunately, risk being dictated by consumerist logics or by pressure from external economic interests.

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## **Conclusions**

In conclusion, our commitment as Brothers of Italy is to protect the food safety of European citizens, but without sacrificing the quality of products, Made in Italy and the traditions that make our cuisine unique.

The ENVI Commission must work, and I will, to ensure that food policies do not penalize our identity, but rather protect and promote our excellence.

We must ensure that Europe respects and enhances quality, health and tradition, without giving in to logics that threaten our food safety and the authenticity of our foods.

This is our commitment, our future, our heritage.

Thank you for your attention.