

EU Bread Initiative founded

Five European trade associations have combined in Brussels to form a bread initiative. The aim is to improve bread's image and to emphasize both its health value and the European cultural heritage associated with this product group. At the same time – which is something entirely novel in the context of previous advertising and image campaigns – they want to make clear to European consumers the economic importance of the industrial sectors linked to it.



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+ The organizations that have joined forces for this purpose are the AIBI – the International Industrial Baking Association, the CEBP – the European umbrella organization of national central associations of bakers and confectioners, COFALEC – the confederation of the European yeast-producing industry, the EFM – the European Flour Millers' Association, and FEDIMA – the Federation of EU Manufacturers and Suppliers of Ingredients to the Bakery, Confectionery, and Patisserie Industries. According to Marc Casier, CEO of COFALEC, the reasons for this initiative are firstly the consumption changes in the bread market that are observable throughout Europe, and influences such as hostilities to wheat or gluten, and secondly an impetus originating from the Expo trade fair in Milan, where bread was presented as an important symbol of European culture and was also accepted as such by the visitors. Moreover the EU has changed its funding practice in the sense that a joint Europe-wide procedure when applying for aid money for such product-related initiatives is more rewarding than a local or national application. The possible grant proportion increases from 70 % for national campaigns to 80 % for European ones.

According to Casier, the main objective is to stabilize and encourage bread consumption in Europe by providing more information about the health benefit of bread as a foodstuff, and by winning back breakfast habits for example. In addition, as at the Milan Expo, he says there is a wish to stress the contribution of bread to Europe's cultural identity, as well as making visible the economic importance of bread producers and their suppliers, both as a value creation chain and also as employers. Health, culture and economic importance should become the key points of the shared public relations campaigns. Consideration is also being given to a parallel cooperative

exercise to act as the baking industry's lobby in Brussels. What the campaign will look like in detail, however, will be left to the national associations. The CEOs of the European umbrella organizations are currently focusing on supporting national associations, individually or as a cooperation between several, when applying for EU grant aid. As Casier stresses, this is not a question of unifying the aims of these national campaigns, since bread consumption ultimately depends greatly on local customs. Instead it will involve supporting the associations in their applications for funding. The corresponding applications from various European countries are currently on the table, although none from Germany up to now.

Casier says that when this has been completed in April next year (the end of the deadline period for applications), the Presidents and General Secretaries of the five European umbrella associations will meet together to develop the further common strategy and a European network.

As far as can be seen at present, the initiative will not have an organizational infrastructure of its own, but will rely on collaboration between the General Secretaries of the five associations. An agency has already been commissioned to compile a series of facts and figures about the consumption of bread and baked products in Europe. The costs of this will be borne by the five associations. The results are scheduled to be available in March next year (2016). Incidentally, according to Casier, the EU Bread Initiative is not a closed event, but is quite open to any further members who want to commit themselves to promoting bread.

The next meeting will take place in March 2016. +++



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