Protection of human health: addition of nutrients to food

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PURPOSE : to harmonise divergent national rules concerning the addition of vitamins and minerals and of certain other substances to foods in order to ensure a high level of consumer protection and the free circulation of goods within the Community. PROPOSED ACT : Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council. CONTENT : nutrients and other substances are often added to foods voluntarily in order to restore what is lost during processing, to produce foods that would be nutritionally equivalent to an important food item or to enrich foods with particular nutrients or other substances having a nutritional or physiological effect. The nutrients most commonly added to foods for the purposes mentioned above are vitamins and minerals. The practice of adding vitamins and minerals has attracted attention in recent years because of the increasing scientific evidence of the relationship between diet and health. The proposed Regulation: - defines the purposes for which vitamins and minerals are allowed to be added; - lists in Annex I the vitamins and minerals that may be added and in Annex II the vitamin preparations and mineral salts that may be used and refers to their purity criteria; - provides for certain restrictions regarding the foods to which vitamins and minerals may be added; - set the criteria for the establishment of maximum levels of vitamins and minerals in foods through the procedure of the Standing Committee on the Food Chain and Animal Health; - provides for the setting of minimum levels of vitamins and minerals to be established through the procedure of the Standing Committee on the Food Chain and Animal Health; - provides for appropriate specific rules on labelling, presentation and advertising of products to which vitamins and minerals have been added in addition or by derogation to other such horizontal rules applicable to all foods; - enables Member States to require the notification of the marketing of these products in order to facilitate their monitoring. Finally, the proposed Regulation provides the basis for scrutinising and, where necessary, regulating the addition of certain substances, other than vitamins and minerals, to foods.