**Food-related discriminatory taxation in Europe – December 2016**

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| **Country** | **Discriminatory tax under the pretext of addressing public health objectives?[[1]](#footnote-1)** | **Details** |
| Austria | No | Nothing concrete for the time being. |
| Belgium | Yes | Update December 2016  The [press](http://www.rtl.be/info/belgique/economie/le-gouvernement-renonce-a-sa-taxe-sur-le-sucre-pour-epargner-les-menages-belges-873643.aspx) reported that the Belgian government has decided not to extend the “health tax” beyond its original scope (non-alcoholic beverages, excluding water, fruit and vegetable juices, dairy and coffee).  Update March 2016  In the context of a “tax-shift” (lowering taxes on labour and raising other taxes), the Belgian government decided to introduce a “health tax”. The “health tax” must generate 50 million euro in 2016 and an additional 50 million euro each year up until 2020, bringing the total to 250 million euro annually by 2020.    Starting from 1 January 2016, the existing excise duties on non-alcoholic beverages (excluding water, fruit and vegetable juices, dairy and coffee) will be raised from 3,7284 euro/ hectoliter to 6,8133 euro/hectolitre, generating approximately 50 million euro.    The Minister of Public Health announced that she would come up with a comprehensive “diet & health plan” around June 2016. Health taxes would be part of this plan, but the nature of these taxes is unknown (another raise of the existing excise duties, a broader approach targeting other (food) products, VAT,...).  Update 2014:  A ‘think tank’ (the Itinera Institute) launched the idea of a sugar tax on soft drinks.  After this, some MPs came again with proposals concerning the introduction of fat and sugar taxes.  Update November 2013:  The Minister of Public Health in Belgium studied the possibility of introducing a tax on soft drinks but announced in mid-September 2013 not to go forward with these plans. The conclusion was that a tax on soft drinks isn’t effective in changing the behavior of the consumer.  Update August 2012:  The federal authorities announced that one of the focus points of the next Food and Health Plan for Belgium will be a study of the potential effects of any food tax on consumer behavior and on health promotion. |
| Bulgaria | No | Update March 2016  In October 2015, the Bulgarian Ministry of Health issued a public consultation on a draft Bill on food taxes (“Health Promotion Tax Act”) in Bulgaria. The proposed tax would encompass a range of products, including those containing a certain level of salt, sugars and caffeine.  Despite push-back by various actors, discussions are still ongoing.  Update September 2012:  Notwithstanding media communications on this particular issue, at the present no discriminatory sugar related tax has been imposed over the industry. The subject is mostly presented in the form of announcements for the latest news about specific initiatives/measures in this regard accepted by other countries. No official plans for future imposition of “sugar” tax have been communicated by competent authority. |
| Croatia | No | March 2012:  VAT increased from 23% to 25% as of 1 March 2012, which affects retail prices. |
| Czech Republic | No | Nothing concrete for the time being. |
| Denmark | Yes | Update March 2016  On 1 January 2015, the tax on confectionary products was raised to 25,97 DKK (ex. VAT) pr. kg chocolate and sweets. This is due to an political agreement from 2012 on indexation of this tax. In January 2018, the tax will be raised to 27,39 DKK (ex. VAT) pr. kg.  The Ministry of Taxation in Denmark is setting up a commitee to simplify or remove some taxes that are considered administratively burdensome for companies. The committee will deliver recommendations at a continuous basis. Food taxes will be among the cases to be examined.  Update April 2013:  Political agreement was reached in Denmark to abolish its soft drink tax and lower the tax on beers.  The Danish tax on beers has been reduced by 15% as of July 2013. The abolition of the soft drink tax took place in two stages, with a 50% reduction as of 1st July 2013, and full elimination as of 1st January 2014.  The Danish government made the announcement as part of an agreement on initiatives designed to stimulate favourable conditions for growth and employment in Denmark. The official text of the political agreement can be accessed [here](http://www.fm.dk/nyheder/pressemeddelelser/2013/04/delaftale-om-vaekstplan-dk-foerste-skridt-mod-staerke-virksomheder-og-flere-arbejdspladser/~/media/Files/Nyheder/Pressemeddelelser/2013/04/delaftale%20v%C3%A6kstplan/delaftale%20om%20V%C3%A6kstplan%20DK.pdf).  Update March 2013:  The government and the opposition negotiated a “competitiveness package” where the government proposal has been to reduce energy taxation and corporate taxation. The opposition has proposed in addition to lower taxation on beers and sodas. It is expected that a political agreement could be reached in the beginning of April 2013.  Update November 2012:  On Saturday 10 November 2012, the Danish government announced to scrap the saturated fat tax and to cancel the planned extension of the chocolate tax (referred to as the ‘sugar tax’) – see also **STRATTAX/011/12E**. Potential job losses, administrative burden for companies and cross-border shopping in Germany were among the main arguments for such a change in course.  Update July 2012:  2012 Overview, Excise Tax on:  **Confectionary** - Per kg sweets and chocolate, sugar content >0,5 g/100g sugar content <=0,5 g/100g .  **Duty Rate:** 23,75 DKK per kg 20,20 DKK per kg  **Prospective taxes/under discussion:** Proposal to extend the tax to jam, marmelade, pickles, ketchup, dairy products with added sugar and chocolate milk (from 2013).  **Soft drinks -** Per litre soft drinks  sugar content >0,5 g/100g sugar content <=0,5 g/100g  **Duty Rate:** 1,58 DKK per litre, 0,57 DKK per litre  **Ice cream -** Per kg ice cream sugar content >0,5 g/100ml sugar content <=0,5 g/100ml  **Duty rate**: 6,38 DKK per litre, 5,10 DKK per litre  **Coffee and tea** - Per kg coffee/tea  **Duty rate:** 5,70 – 16,32 DKK per kg  Increases by 4,35 % in 2013  **Saturated fat** - Per kg saturated fat in meat, dairy products, edible oils/-fat, etc., incl. production loss. Exempt are products with less than 2,3 % saturated fat.  **Duty rate:** 16,00 DKK per kg saturated fat  **Almonds, nuts, seeds etc -** Per kg almonds, nuts etc.  **Duty rate:** 4,25 – 25,55 DKK per kg  **Soft drinks -** packaging Per unit, provided recycling system. Duty rate varies due to size of container.  **Duty rates:** 0,05 – 0,64 DKK per unit  Update May 2012:  As an integral part of its strategy the new government in Denmark announced a new tax on sugary products. A tax already exists on chocolate and sweets in Denmark, but this tax is going to be expanded to include products with added sugar. The Ministry of Treasury in Denmark has not been specific on which products will be included in the tax, but the following products have been mentioned: jam, pickled vegetables, chocolate milk, breakfast cereals, ketchup and yogurt. It is expected that a bill will be presented for public consultation some time after the Summer vacation time in Denmark (probably August 2012). The rationale of this new tax is to promote a healthier population but the real rationale is – of course – to raise revenue to the Danish government.  The Danish Food and Drink Federation is lobbying strongly against this tax. An analysis has been made showing that introducing this tax on products with added sugar creates job losses in the food industry and stimulates the shopping at the Swedish and German border instead. Hence the real effect on the health of the population is in question. There has been success so far in bringing these stories to the media but the political effect is hard to measure. |
| Estonia | No | Update December 2016  The Government reached an agreement on the introduction of a tax on sugar sweetened beverages. The tax is expected to be introduced in 2018.  The Estonian Green Paper that is being developed by the Ministry of Social Affairs is expected to be published in March 2017.  Update March 2016  There is very strong pressure to introduce food taxes in Estonia, especially a tax on sugar. At the moment, this is under discussion in the context of the Estonian Nutrition Green Paper. The Green Paper is being developed by the Ministry of Social Affairs, led by a minister who is a social democrat.    The excise tax on alcoholic drinks has increased: 2006 – 15%; from then on every year a 10% increase. This has already brought along cross-border shopping (Latvia in the south and Russia in the north).  The Ministry of Environmental Affairs is planning an excise tax on packages. Various environmental taxes (keeping up the recycle system of packages; directive for odors which is mostly affecting farmers; wastewater fees) are being considered. |
| European Commission | No | Update July 2014:  In July 2014, the European Commission published its [study](http://ec.europa.eu/growth/tools-databases/newsroom/cf/itemdetail.cfm?item_id=7668) on the impact of food taxes on the competitiveness of the agri-food sector.  Update December 2013:  Food taxes will be part of the future work of the High Level Forum for a Better Functioning Food Supply Chain. In order to inform these discussions, DG Enterprise has commissioned a study, on food taxes and their impact on competitiveness in the agri-food sector. The study is expected to be finalised in 6 months (by Summer 2014). On 25November 2013, a kick-off meeting took place in which the terms of reference were discussed. Stakeholders were encouraged to provide input that could inform the study (particularly economic data).  Update December 2012:  The High Level Group (HLG) on Nutrition and Physical Activity, in which the Member States are represented, had a discussion on national food and beverages taxation initiatives in its meeting of 2 February 2012. The debate revealed the complexity involved in monitoring the impact of food tax measures on health. The discussion revealed clearly that taxation could not be considered sufficient on its own to counter overweight and obesity trends and that it could only be part of a more global approach and range of measures. The HLG will follow national developments in particular in Member States, such as Ireland, that intend to carry out health impact assessments. The main focus for future exchanges will be on the possible monitoring tools and the outcomes of these measures in the Member States. |
| Finland | Yes | Update December 2016  On 13 December 2016, the Parliament of Finland voted to abolish the excise tax for sweets, confectionaries and ice cream from 1 January 2017. The excise tax for soft drinks will remain in force.  Although proposals for replacing the sweets tax with health based sugar tax were raised, the Parliament supported the government proposal not to take any actions for health based taxes.  For more information, please contact Heli Tammivuori [heli.tammivuori@etl.fi](mailto:heli.tammivuori@etl.fi) or Marleena Tanhuanpää [marleena.tanhuanpaa@etl.fi](mailto:marleena.tanhuanpaa@etl.fi)  Update March 2016:  Following discussions with the European Commission, the Finnish Ministerial Committee on Economic Policy decided on 29 September 2015 to abolish the excise tax on sweets and ice cream in Finland in 2017. The excise tax on non-alcoholic beverages will remain in force, but changes are anticipated in its scope of application.  This decision was triggered by an earlier complaint by the Finnish Food and Drink Federation (ETL) to the European Commission concerning the Finnish excise tax, in which it was argued that the sweets tax distorted competition and amounted to illegal state aid (**STRATTAX/011/13E**).  In informal proceedings, the Commission has communicated that the current customs tariff and fiscal based sweets tax is considered as illegal in terms of state aid rules. According to the Commission, the excess tax for sweets is not neutral in terms of the sweets tax objectives and therefore it is seen as state aid in form of selective tax to the non-taxed categories. The Commission therefore finds that changes to the tax base are essential.  The decision by the Finnish government means a much better competition environment for the sweets and ice cream manufacturers and 109 million euros less in tax revenue. ETL will continue lobbying to abolish the remaining soft drink tax and prepare for the negotiations with the Ministry of Finance.  Update October 2014:  The Government decided to rescind an increment in the sweet tax due to its projected impact on demand and a complaint filed with the European Commission by the Finnish Food and Drinks Industries' Federation (ETL), calling into question the lawfulness of the tax.  ETL in its complaint argues that the tax distorts competition by providing an advantage to certain manufacturers: the tax is levied on soft drinks, sweets and ice cream but not on cookies, cakes and yogurts, for example.  The tax hike was projected to yield 50 million euros a year in revenue. Sources within the Government admit that it was not until recently that the problems associated with the tax hike and the sweet tax in general were recognised.  The Ministry of Finance has expressed its concerns that the increment could increase the probability of the European Commission ruling that the tax violates anti-subsidy rules. The lingering uncertainty over the position of the commission has also reduced the willingness of the Government to expand the scope of the tax.  source: <http://www.helsinkitimes.fi/finland/finland-news/politics/12201-government-backtracks-on-sweet-tax-hike.html>  The government has implied that it will investigate the possibility to tax products on the basis of their total sugar content after December 2016, when the pre packed products will have obligatory statement of total sugar content on packages (natural or added) due to the enforcement of the FIC-regulation (EP) N:o 1169/2011.  Update October 2013:  On 16 September 2013, a Government Bill proposing an amendment to the Act on Excise Duty on Sweets, Ice Cream and Soft Drinks was sent to the Finnish Parliament.  The draft legislation, which is currently under discussion in the Finnish Parliament, suggests an increase to beverage tax under the basis of sugar content. Certain beverage products containing 0,5 % or more sugars will fall under the group of double taxed beverages the final tax being 22 cnt/ litre of ready to consume product. Natural juices will also fall under the double tax if the draft legislation is accepted as proposed. Regarding the rest of the products falling under the sweets, ice cream and soft drinks tax, the tax remains the same: 95 cnt / kg or 11 cnt / litre etc. The tax will **not** increase within the product groups of artificially sweetened beverages or flavoured waters.  The Finnish Food and Drink Industries’ Federation has submitted an additional statement regarding the draft amendments *(Annex 3 -STRATTAX/011/13)*.  Update April 2013:  The Finnish government recently decided to reduce corporate taxation, but in order to cover the loss it may be considering extending some of the food taxes (e.g. candies, ice cream, soft drinks).  Update February 2013:  The Final Report of the Sugar Tax Working Group was published in January 2013 and can be accessed via the link below:  [Final Report of the Sugar tax working group](http://www.vm.fi/vm/en/04_publications_and_documents/01_publications/075_taxation/20130131Sokeri/name.Final%20Report%20of%20the%20Sugar%20tax%20working%20group%20jsp)  The Working Group explored options for sugar taxation with the aim of increasing central government tax revenues and promoting healthy nutrition as well as the effectiveness of the current excise duty on sweets and opportunities to expand the tax base as an alternative to the sugar tax. Unfortunately the working group is in favour to continue the current excise duty on sweets, ice-cream and soft drinks.  Update June 2012:  **2012 Overview, Excise Tax on:**  **Confectionary etc.** - Per kg sweets, chocolate, ice cream, ice lollies. The tax came into force January 2011. Finland abolished the confectionery tax in 2000. In 1999, the tax was EUR 0.59 per kilo.  **Duty rate:** 0,95 EUR per kg  **Prospective taxes/under discussion:** A reform is on the way, with extended base and increased rates  **Soft drinks etc. -** Soft drinks with or without sugar, juice, coffe drinks. The tax came into force January 2011.  **Duty rate:** 0,075 EUR per litre |
| France | Yes | Update March 2016:  Current rate of the beverages Taxes:   |  |  | | --- | --- | | Soft drink with added sugar or with artificial sweeteners | Contribution :  2015 : 7,50 €/hL  2016 : 7,53 €/hL | | | Energy drink | Contribution :  2015 : 102,61 €/hL  2016: 103,02 €/hL | |   The French Parliament recently voted on the creation of an additional tax on palm oil in the Biodiversity Bill. This additional tax doesn’t have the support of the French Government, which has committed to not increase the existing taxation concerning the food industry. This tax is currently only at a draft stage: the bill should be definitely adopted in summer 2016.  Update December 2013:  At the Parliament only the amendment on energy drink taxation has been voted. Palm oil and aspartame taxes have been rejected. These issues seem solved for this year but can come back in 2014/15 during the discussion on the public health law project.  Update February 2013:  Several food taxes were discussed in December 2012 in the financial law (PLF) and the Social Security law (PLFSS). Some have been adopted such as a tax on beer and others (taxes on palm oil, aspartame and energy drinks) have been avoided.  The threat of a tax on palm oil or on other food products or ingredients is still strongly present in France and could come back in October either in the law of Public Health, the financial law (PLF) or in the Social Security law (PLFSS). Moreover, there is also a threat on the increase of the [value-added tax](http://www.wordreference.com/enfr/value-added%20tax) on food products (VAT). At the time, the rate of VAT for food products in France is at 5.5 % and could reach 10%.  An impact assessment is being processed regarding a beverage/soda tax by the DGS (Direction Générale de la Santé) and by the federation concerned (SNBR – Syndicat National des Boissons Rafraichissantes) and will be published in March/April.  Update November 2012:  On 14 November 2012, the French Senate voted in favour of an amendment that would quadruple the tax on palm oil to discourage consumption of the oil rich in saturated fat. The amendment, which would take the tax on palm oil from around 100 euros now to 400 euros, was voted by 212 senators in favour versus 133 against. Senators will have another chance to vote on the amendment and it will still need to be considered by the lower house, the National Assembly, before such a tax would be fully approved.  Update May 2012:  The French Soft Drink Tax took effect on 1st January 2012. It is applied at a rate of €7.16 per hectoliter to all beverages with added sugar or with artificial sweeteners such as fruit juices with added sugars, water and carbonated drinks containing added sugar.  The specificity of the approach is that the tax applies to all beverages without consideration of the quantity of added sugar.  France hopes to achieve a target of a 25% reduction in the proportion of children consuming more than half a glass of sugared beverages per day in five years. The estimated tax income is €280 million (€240 for added sugars and €40 for artificial sweeteners) of which 50% are earmarked for the social security system. |
| Germany | No | Nothing concrete for the time being. |
| Hungary | Yes | Update May 2013:  The Hungarian Public Health Office recently gave a press conference on the impact of the food taxes in Hungary. This was done in collaboration with WHO Europe. Results show that consumption of ‘wholesome’ ingredients decreased and that prices of taxed products increased on average by 29%, leading to a state revenue of 64 million euros.  ………………………………………………………………………….  The valid VAT rates according to Article 82 of Act CXXVII of 2007 are the followings:  27% Chocolates and Confectionary  18% milk and other milk products  5% other health products and services  The valid Public-Health Product fees according to Act CIII of 2011 are the following:  70 Ft/kg sweetened cocoa powder  130 Ft/kg confectionary and chocolate products,  250 Ft/kg salted snacks and food flavouring products  500 Ft/kg jams and marmalades  200 Ft/kg syrup and purée  7 Ft/kg soft drinks  250 Ft/kg energy drinks  20 Ft/kg flavoured beer and other alcoholic refreshing drinks  There are some exceptions of categories listed under Article 2.  More details can be found on http://net.jogtar.hu.  Update December 2012:  Hungary has notified (via TRIS) a draft Amending Act CIII of 2011 on the Tax on Public Healthcare Products. The Bill stipulates that a drink shall be regarded as an energy drink even if it does not contain taurine but has a relatively high methylxanthine content. Please see:  <http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/tris/nview.cfm?p=2012_533_EN_EN>  The proposal for decreasing the Energy drinks tax has been modified as below:  Energy drinks containing methyl-xanthine or any ingredient of the energy drink containing methyl-xanthine **and**  - containing taurine or any ingredient of the energy drink containing taurine in case of the methyl-xanthine content exceeds 1 milligram/100 millilitre or the taurine content exceeds 100 milligram/100 millilitre, the tax will be 250 HUF/litre.  In the case of containing methyl-xanthine or any ingredient of the energy drink containing methyl-xanthine **and**  - the methyl-xanthine content exceeds 15 milligram/100 millilitre, the tax will be 40 HUF/litre.  In order to discourage the consumption of foodstuffs undesirable from the point of view of public health and promote healthy nutrition, as well as to improve the financing of health services, in particular public health programmes, the Hungarian Government (supported by a two third majority in the Parliament) introduced a “Public Health Tax on products” from September 1, 2011. The tax is levied on salt, sugar, caffeine content of selected pre-packaged product groups (some beverages, energy drinks, sweets, confectionary, biscuits, chocolate, icecream, salty snacks, soup and other instant powders). The amount of the tax is given per product kilogramm/liter and is to be levied on both imported and domestic products. The tax is payable by the operator putting the products on the HU market for the first time (i.e. producer or importer).  Update 25 November 2011:  The Hungarian Parliament voted on amendment of the Public Health Tax from the 1st January 2012. This means that the current tax levels will be (substantially) augmented in almost every product category and new products will fall under the scope of the Tax (flavoured beers, some jams). |
| Iceland | No | Update September 2014:  There have been reports in the media that the Directorate of Health wants to see taxes increased on candy and soda, and decreased on fruits, vegetables and fish. It was reported that the Directorate has grave concerns about the eating habits of Icelanders, and are particularly worried about a government proposal to lower the so-called “sugar tax”.  Source: <http://grapevine.is/news/2014/08/20/directorate-of-health-wants-junk-food-tax/>  Update July 2012:  There are excise taxes on a large number of food products. A number of taxes are related to sugar content, but not all and not in a consistent way. |
| Ireland | No | Update December 2016:  Following the formation of the current Government, a tax on sugar-sweetened drinks was included in the Programme for Government. In the October budget Finance Minister Noonan announced that he would seek to introduce a sugar-sweetened drinks tax in 2018 after a public consultation. The objective of the consultation “is to determine how the tax will operate in practice”. The proposal forms part of the government’s “A Healthy Weight for Ireland” action plan.  A consultation document was published by the Department on Budget Day (11th October 2016). While the document calls for a broad public consultation, the 16 questions it contains ask for information from producers and importers to help with the design, implementation and administration of the tax. The period of the consultation is from Budget Day (11th October 2016) until 3rdJanuary 2017.  According to the consultation document the proposed tax would be a volumetric rate imposed at a specific amount per hectolitre at the point of production or importation. The tax would apply to water-based and juice-based drinks which have an added sugar content of 5g/100ml and above. Details on bands and rates have yet to be decided. The proposal excludes all dairy-based sugar-sweetened drink with both natural occurring and added sugar. It also excludes pure fruit juices with natural sugar content of over 5g/100ml and soft drinks/energy drinks with sugar content lower than 5g/100ml. The document also states that the proposal only applies to pre-packaged drinks – although the Department is unable to supply a definition of pre-packaged drinks at this time.  Update March 2016:  The proposed tax was again rejected by Finance Minister Michael Noonan in the last Budget round (October 2015).  However, for the national elections held at the end of February 2016, the four main political parties each had a reference to introducing a sugar or more specific sugar sweetened beverage tax in their pre-election manifestos. Following the election, negotiations are starting on the formation of a new Government and the associated Programme for Government.  October 2013  The proposed tax was rejected by Finance Minister Michael Noonan in the last Budget.  The report on a sugar tax – carried out in advance of last year's Budget – is now being looked at by a sub-committee of experts on obesity. The sub-committee is to develop a range of options to support healthy eating, including considerations on high-fat, high-salt and high-sugar foods and drinks.  Update November 2012  A confidential report commissioned by Health Minister James Reilly recommends increasing the excise duty on soft drinks, in the form of a 10pc increase in excise duty, as part of the December Budget discussions in Ireland.  FDII, member of FoodDrinkEurope, has come out against the tax with the Irish Dental Association also expressing some scepticism about the idea.  Update September 2012:  The Irish Minister for Health James Reilly wants to introduce a “sugar tax” on food and drinks which could be contributing to weight gain in young people. The news of the tax was revealed in a written answer to a Parliamentary question. “Obesity is a factor in our growing rates of Type II Diabetes,” Dr Reilly wrote in response to a question from deputy Denis Naughton. The Minister said the new tax was one of a number of initiatives being considered by the Special Action Group on Obesity, which is to report back later this year.  Update May 2012:  The Irish Department of Health will launch a feasibility study into taxation on sugar sweetened beverages on 12th June 2012. They have put together a working group to assess the issue and are talking to Mike Rayner from the UK. They have also been told that they will have support from WHO Europe. |
| Italy | No | Update May 2013:  Following the formation of the new Italian government, Federalimentare has requested the new Minister of Health to proceed along the road of cooperation and self-regulation, rejecting any kind of prohibition and discrimination of products, such as discriminatory food taxation. Regarding the recent announcements of VAT increases the new Prime Minister announced in his keynote speech to not intervene to increase VAT from 21% to 22%. The proposal to increase the reduced VAT rate from 10% to 12% had already been abandoned in December 2012.  Update September 2012:  The Health Minister considered the inclusion of a Tax on spirits and sugary drinks in a draft bill that was presented to the Italian cabinet in the beginning of September. However, the proposal was not included in the final bill, due to strong opposition by consumer groups and the food industry, through media campaigns.  The Italian government has recently planned for October 2012 additional VAT increases from 10% to 12% and from 21% to 23%. This increase will concern three-quarters of the turnover of the food and drink Italian industry (about 97 billion euro up to 300 billion).  After the endorsement of the decree-law 95/2012 the Italian government established to postpone the VAT increase to July 2013.  Furthermore, the Minister of Health has spoken in national press looking forward to the possibility of introducing a taxation on food and drink products, under the pretext of public health but, more likely, to finance health building at a regional level.  To support the unfairness of this hypothesis, the Italian Food and Drink Industry Federation (Federalimentare) is involved since January 2012 in a strong political action and communication strategy, with the support of the Minister of Economic Development and the Minister of Agriculture, who declared, during the General Assembly of Federalimentare on 7 May 2012 in Parma, their complete opposition to this food tax. |
| Latvia | No | Update September 2014:  A new national health plan has been proposed which is currently under public consultation. The plan includes one important chapter on food, including a package of measures that should be taken for the next 6-7 years. The proposed measures include the following:  - Excise taxes on HFSS foods  - Advertising ban for HFSS foods in educational institutions and sports facilities  - Limiting pack sizes for HFSS foods  - Limiting sales and advertising for energy drinks  Update August 2013  The Latvian Ministry of Health has developed proposals to increase VAT and impose a tax on certain foods to improve public health and at the same time obtain additional funds for the State budget concerning healthcare. The bill should enter into force as early as 2014.  The bill provides for the application of an excise duty applicable to:   * **Sausages and similar meat products** which contain more than 1.25g salt per 100g of the product (7 euros per 100kg), * **Lard and bacon** (21 euros per 100kg) * **Palm oil** (21 euros per 100l), * **Potato chips** (21 euros per 100kg) * **Popcorn and salty corn snacks** that contain more than 1.25g of salt per 100g of the product (21 euros per 100kg) * **Prepared soups and broths** containing more than 1 gram of salt per 100g of the product (21 euros per 100kg).   In addition to these measures, the Ministry of Health would like to almost double the excise tax on **sweetened soft drinks** (from 5.2 lats to 10 lats per 100l), while an high excise duty would be imposed on **energy drinks** (21 euros per 100l). Furthermore, the excise tax on **alcoholic beverages and tobacco** should gradually approach the EU level (beer: from 3.13 euros to 4 euros per 100l in 2014; wine, fermented beverages and intermediates with absolute alcohol content exceeding 15% by volume: from 64.03 euros to 71 euros per 100l in 2014; strong alcohol: from 940 euros to 1,485 euros per 100l in 2014; all higher in 2015).  The excise tax would bring 33.7 million (of which 7 million on ‘unhealthy foods’) to the State budget which forms a significant part of the approximately 50 million in extra funding needed for the health sector.  The Minister of Health, Ingrid Circene, emphasizes the need to improve public health. According to her, within five years, mortality from cardiovascular disease, which is the main cause of death in Latvia, could be reduced by 10% to 20%. Latvian health associations are understood to have welcomed the proposal, but call for even higher taxes.  It is believed that other Ministries, such as the Ministry of Economic Affairs, are against the proposal.  Update July 2012:  **Excise tax:** Non-alcoholic beverages  **Description**: Per litre non-alcoholic beverages  **Duty Rate:** 5.2 LVL per 100 litres  **Date:** 2012  **Excise tax:** Coffee  **Description**: Per kg coffee  **Duty Rate:**100 LVL per 100 kg  **Date:** 2012 |
| Lithuania | No | None |
| Malta |  | Update June 2012:  As part of a new strategy to counteract obesity, A Healthy Weight for Life - A National Strategy for Malta 2012-2020, Malta is considering introducing a *sin tax* on unhealthy foods. The report claims that taxes on high fat/calorie foods would help to raise the prices of such products. Those selling food would be responsible for calculating and collecting thein tax and “would likely increase prices to make up for these costs”. It also sees a tax on unhealthy foods as pushing food manufacturers to improve their products, by reducing fat, salt and sugar, in order to protect their market share. It is also looking at subsidies for healthy foods such as fruit and vegetables. An impact analysis has been announced to determine whether taxes and subsidies should be introduced and,if so, which products should be targeted, and at what level of tax. |
| Norway | No | Update December 2013:  The tax of chocolate and confectionery will increase by 1,9% by 1.January 2014. Chocolate tax/ kg 18,56 to**18,91**NOK and sugar tax 7,18/ kg to**7,32.** There is also a tax on sugar to consumers: NOK 7,18/kg sugar since 1st January, 2013  Update June 2012:  **2012 Overview, Excise Tax on**:  **Confectionary-** Per kg sweets and chocolate  **Duty rate:** 18,21 NOK per kg  **Sugar -** Per kg sugar sold to private consumers  **Duty rate:** 7,05 NOK per kg  **Soft drinks -** Per litre soft drink, provided added sugar or artificial sweeteners  **Duty rate:** 2,85 NOK per litre  **Prospective tax/under discussion:** There has been proposals changing the tax-regime from the three above mentioned “sugar-taxes” to a general “sugar-tax”, based on the quantity of sugar(added or total) in all food/-drink products. So far, due to the complexity of the issue, the Govern¬ment has refrained from doing it.  **Soft drinks -** packaging Environmental tax, reduced rate dependent on degree of return for recycling:  Glass or metal (reduced rate)  PET (reduced rate)  Carton (reduced rate)  **Duty rate:** 0,30 NOK per unit**,** 0,00 NOK per unit**,** 0,00 NOK per unit  **Soft drinks -** packaging “Base tax”, on non-return-able bottles/cans/¬cartons. Milk-products are exempted (and bottles for re-use).  **Duty rate:** 1,06 NOK per unit |
| Poland | No | Currently there are no discriminatory taxes |
| Portugal | No | Update March 2016:  Nothing concrete for the time being, but there it is frequently mentioned by some influencers.  Concerning VAT:  6% - Cereal products, fresh meat and fish, dairy, fresh vegetables, fruit juice, dietetic products  13% - Mineral water and wine  23% - Others  Special taxes on alcohol  Update May 2013:  For chocolate products the level of (VAT) taxation is 23%. |
| Romania | No | Update 2016  Nothing new on [extra] taxation on food.  In June 2015, VAT on food and drinks (excepting alcoholic ones) and on main ingredients was decreased from the general level (24%) at 9%. Draft beer was also included, to help HoReCa sector.  Update May 2012:  In April 2012, a new Government was formed in Romania that seems to be supporting food taxation.  The current Health Minister, Vasile Cepoi, has stated the following on the fast food tax: "*It has been an attempt, which failed. We are now discussing to come back to it. We intend to propose the tax. We will apply the same rules like other states applying already this tax. We will study the models from several countries"*. The Prime Minister was not aware of the above statement, when contacted by media.  Update August 2011:  A nutrition Professor and 2 MPs are preparing a law that could increase the price of the food considered unhealthy.The President of the Federation of nutrition, metabolic diseases and diabetes, Nicolae Hancu, and 2 MPs from Cluj declared that their law is a measure to discourage the population to consume unhealthy foods.  Update April 2011:  The minister of Health, Cseke Attila, has stated after the TV programme “Twenty years later”, aired on Sunday 17th of April 2011 by ProTV channel, that the introduction of the tax on fast food was postponed because it is a project he did not consider as an opportunity for the moment and for which Romania was not prepared. He explained that the Ministry of Health did not have a project draft on this issue and that the idea regarding the tax on fast food had appeared at a press conference, as a solution for the increase of the sums collected to the state budget.  Update 2010:  In Romania, a proposal for a tax on fast food was considered in January 2010 by the Romanian Ministry of Health. The proposal was targeting food products with increased content of salt, fat, sugar and food additives, the incomes from this tax going to become additional sources for funding health programs. The proposal can be found under Annex **1 – DIET/004/10**. |
| Russia | No | Update March 2016:  As reported in the [media](http://www.themoscowtimes.com/business/article/russian-government-to-introduce-tax-on-sugar-and-palm-oil/558796.html) in February 2016, the Russian government is believed to introduce taxes on a list of products, including those containing palm oil and sugar.  Update November 2012:  Russian authorities considered imposing an additional tax on “unhealthy” meat producers. The tax would form part of a proposal by the National Union of Consumers’ Rights Protection to Russia’s Ministry of Finance and is aimed at tackling high-fat products, as well as the use of antibiotics in meat production.  <http://www.globalmeatnews.com/Industry-Markets/Russians-to-impose-fat-tax-on-meat> |
| Slovakia | No | Nothing concrete for the time being. |
| Slovenia | No | Update February 2013:  The Slovenian authorities (Ministry of Finance) have issued a proposal for a tax on sugar and sweeteners in non-alcoholic beverages on 28 January 2013. The proposed tax would amount for 1€ per 1kg of sugar (added or contained naturally) in a product. In the case of sweeteners content, it would amount for 0,20€ for the maximum amount of a sweetener as defined in Regulation (EU) 1333/2008. More information can be found under STRATTAX/002/13.  The Slovenian food and drink federation (Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia, www.gzs.si/zkzp) is currently running a national political as well as media campaign, which will be strengthened further in the coming period. |
| Spain | No | Update December 2016:  The regional government of Catalonia proposed a tax on sugary drinks in the draft budget for 2017 (0,08 euros/l for sugar between 5 and 8 g/100ml and 0,12 euros/l for sugar content above 8 g/100ml). This project is now ‘on hold’ as the national government announced recently the introduction of a special tax on (among others) sugary soft drinks within the draft State budget for 2017.  There are no further details at this stage on the level or on the products affected (tax was only announced, this is a project dictated by the Finance Ministry). The draft law has to be voted by the Parliament in the coming weeks.  Update March 2016:  The only plan known so far is a draft ‘Obesity law’ that one of the biggest Spanish regions (Andalucía) has in mind for 2017. The key point for the food and drink industry would likely be a possible restriction of sales (of certain products) via vending machines in schools or in proximity. At this stage there is no much information, apparently the law would include several measures (incl. social) and not focus specifically on the food industry but rather on promoting healthy life styles and physical activity. The idea is to draft it with the consensus of all the actors involved. |
| Sweden | No | Nothing concrete for the time being.  VAT on food/drink is lower than std.VAT rate – 12/25%. |
| The Netherlands | No | Nothing concrete for the time being.  Fat taxes, calorie taxes, etc. are often discussed within The Netherlands. So far, the Dutch Government has always held a rather negative stance towards the introduction of such taxes.  The Ministry of Health had instigated research into the actual possibility, the possible merits as well as the negatives, of the introduction of such taxes. When this was published in 2010, some possible merits were acknowledged although rather small effects could be measured while there were many, many negatives.  The Minister explicitly put forward the rather libertarian viewpoint that in all cases people should have the free choice of foods and lifestyles, and no such measures would be started up, not even for a pilot.  Discussions about the introduction of such taxes are often started among MPs, but also among health care professionals like GP’s and doctors, social security firms and the like. Generally not with any knowledge of either nutrition or the effectiveness.  Update October 2014:  There are discussions in the Netherlands about changing the VAT rates, as the government wants to renew the tax regime. The government is looking into decreasing the wage taxes, probably by changing the VAT. This could potentially mean that the low VAT tariff for food (and other products/ services) will be increased.  Update January 2014:  There are currently some discussions on environmentally driven taxation, as well as on taxing sugars, but nothing concrete has been proposed.  The so-called “User Tax” has been imposed on non-alcoholic drinks since the early 1990s. This tax was introduced at the time to compensate for the elimination of the “sugar excise duty” which was a source of income until then. This is also a kind of excise duty, and is only applicable on drinks. As of 2014 the “User Tax” has been increased by nearly 40% (38% to be precise) compared to 2013.  The government has also raised the excise duties on beer and is planning to increase them again in the near future. This will increase discrimination among alcoholic drinks (the excise duty originally related to the alcohol content, not to specific products containing alcohol), but will also lead to an increase in cross-border trade to the detriment of the Dutch Brewers, as this increase is not due to the products themselves and their characteristics but to an unfair price differential. Since 2000 excise duties on beer have increased by nearly 80% (compared to app. 10% for distilled drinks with high alcohol content).  Update May 2012:  Further to the collapse of the Government coalition in April 2012, a majority group of political parties presented an agreed set of measures, including VAT increases on tobacco, alcohol and soft drinks. However, the latter (soft drinks VAT increase) seems to have been dropped in the more detailed elaboration of the plans.  Elections will be held in September 2012 and the situation is therefore to be monitored closely. |
| UK | No | Update December 2016:  The [levy on drinks with added sugars](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/soft-drinks-industry-levy) will take effect from April 2018. The measure will apply to the producers and importers of these types of drinks. It will have a lower rate which will apply to added sugar drinks with a total sugar content of 5 grams or more per 100 millilitres and a higher rate for drinks with 8 grams or more per 100 millilitres.  Alcoholic drinks with an Alcohol by volume of up to 1.2% are included in the levy. The government will make provision to exempt certain drinks that fall within this category from the levy.  Update March 2016:  On 16 March 2016, the Chancellor of the Exchequer George Osborne announced that *“soft drinks companies will pay a levy on drinks with added sugar from April 2018. This will apply to drinks with total sugar content above 5 grams per 100 millilitres, with a higher rate for more than 8 grams per 100 millilitres. The levy does not apply to milk-based drinks or fruit juices.”*  According to the Chancellor, the money will be used to *“double the primary physical exercise and sport premium (the additional money schools have to spend on physical exercise and sports) to £320 million a year.”* ([source](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/budget-2016-some-of-the-things-weve-announced))  Update August 2012:  In October 2011, Prime Minister David Cameron refused to rule out the possibility of a fat tax. However, the absence of fat taxes in the Department of Health’s obesity framework for England: “Healthy lives, healthy people: a call to action on obesity in England” would seem to confirm that such measures are not part of the Government’s immediate plans.  Additional taxes on perceived ‘unhealthy’ foods and drinks are frequently discussed in the media and some public health academics and NGOs are vocal supporters (of a tax on sugary drinks in particular), although most will concede there is limited evidence for effectiveness.  Meanwhile, in Scotland, Shadow Public Health Minister Richard Simpson tabled a motion in the Scottish Parliament urging the Scottish Government to “consider giving local authorities power to introduce a tax on sugary drinks” in September 2011. It stated that Scotland consumes 20% more fizzy drinks than England and insists that the money raised could be used to “improve school diets and support community- based nutritional improvement initiatives”. The proposed bill failed to gain enough support and fell on 5 December 2011. |
| WHO | Yes | Update December 2016  In 11 October 2016, WHO published a report titled “[Fiscal policies for diet and the prevention of noncommunicable diseases](http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/10665/250131/1/9789241511247-eng.pdf?ua=1)”. The report advocates for the use of fiscal policies as a component of a comprehensive strategy for prevention and control of non-communicable disease (NCDs). It highlights that there is strong evidence about the effectiveness in reducing consumption of taxes on sugar-sweetened beverages in the range of 20%-50%.  Update March 2016:  In 2015, WHO Europe issued a [report “Using price policies to promote healthier diets”](http://www.euro.who.int/__data/assets/pdf_file/0008/273662/Using-price-policies-to-promote-healthier-diets.pdf) to promote the use of food taxes by member countries. It regularly organises workshops for country authorities to assist them with the introduction of such taxes.    Update May 2012:  WHO Europe has expressed support for good practice in food taxes (with nutrient profiling as a basis for fiscal intervention, taxation in combination with subsidies, etc.) in a recent meeting held in Brussels.  Update February 2013:  The WHO Draft Action Plan for the Prevention and Control of NCDs 2013-2020[[2]](#footnote-2) ‘*considers economic tools, including taxes and subsidies, to improve the affordability of healthier food products and to discourage the consumption of less healthy options’*.  Update December 2013:  WHO Europe has recently published a [Progress report](http://www.euro.who.int/__data/assets/pdf_file/0004/235975/Prevention-and-control-of-noncommunicable-diseases-in-the-European-Region-A-progress-report-Eng.pdf) on the prevention and control of NCDs. Among other measures, the Action Plan had proposed that countries use fiscal policies in order to influence demand for HFSS foods (see page 25 in the report).  Update 2013:  The idea of a “fat tax” stems from the WHO Global strategy and was suggested to all nations in 2004. The 2008-2013 Action Plan for the Global Strategy for the Prevention and Control of Non communicable Diseases[[3]](#footnote-3) recommends taxation policies as a means of preventing Non Communicable Diseases. |

1. Please note that discriminatory food taxes are (excise) taxes posed on (an) individual food category(ies) or (an) individual nutrient(s) which are explicitly justified by governments to address public health objectives. This does not include mere VAT increases as such. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. WHO Draft Action Plan for the Prevention and Control of NCDs 2013-2020 (See: <http://apps.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf_files/EB132/B132_7-en.pdf> ) [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. WHO (2009): 2008-2013 Action Plan for the Global Strategy for the Prevention and Control of Non communicable Diseases (See: <http://whqlibdoc.who.int/publications/2009/9789241597418_eng.pdf>) [↑](#footnote-ref-3)