

PRESS RELEASE

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Maltese soft drinks industry commits to reduce added sugars by 10% by 2020

Local pledge will contribute to delivery of European 10% sugar reduction commitment

The Maltese soft drinks industry[1] has announced it will reduce added sugars in its products by 10% by 2020 [1,2], contributing to the delivery of the recent [European soft drink industry \(UNESDA\) 10% sugar reduction commitment](#). This initiative responds to changing consumer preferences regarding sugar intake and the calls from Member States and the European Commission for a coordinated approach to reformulation and sugar reduction.

In soft drinks, reduction in added sugars leads directly to reduced calories. To reach its ambitious target, the soft drinks sector in Malta – which includes well-known brands such as Coca-Cola, Pepsi and Kinnie – will take the following actions:

- **Reformulate** existing products including the use of low calorie sweeteners.
- **Innovate** to introduce new products with no or reduced sugar and low calorie sweeteners.
- **Increase** the availability of smaller pack sizes to allow portion control and moderation
- **Invest** in the promotion of drinks with reduced or no sugar to educate and actively encourage consumer choice towards low and no calorie products.
- **Commit** to monitor the progress of added sugar reduction achieved using independent external research and to share this with stakeholders [3].

Announcing the move today, President of the Malta Chamber of Commerce, Anton Borg, said, "We welcome the EU's policy approach to sugar reduction through reformulation and new product development. We firmly believe all food and beverage sectors need to play their part, in close partnership with the relevant stakeholders, in driving a successful strategy, to combat non-communicable diseases associated with obesity and excessive sugar consumption."

Maria Micallef, Chief Operating Officer, GSD Marketing. Ltd, bottling partner of The Coca-Cola Company in Malta, commented on the initiative: "Consumers are more conscious than ever about their sugar and calorie intake. We support the view of the world's leading health authorities that people should control their intake of added sugar - including sugar from soft drinks - and agree that too much sugar and excess calories are not good for anyone. We are committed to helping our consumers manage their sugar intake and to make the right decisions for them and their families."

Norman Aquilina, Group Chief Executive Officer of Simonds Farsons Cisk plc., authorised bottlers for PepsiCo in Malta stated: "Though the issue at hand is certainly not exclusive or specific to the soft drinks industry, we come well-prepared to endorse this pledge. Hence we are here today publicly committing to play our part to reduce overall calorie and sugar consumption. As a company we have long been looking into reformulation and new product development, resulting in the introduction of various products with lower sugar content on the local market for a number of years. We fully endorse this pledge and will continue working to

reduce sugar content in our soft drinks portfolio in line with the stated objectives, and we hope Government will encourage and support industry in the undertaking of such initiatives.”

The soft drinks industry is the first sector to come forward with a commitment in response to the EU’s general 10% added sugar reduction target. The industry is already actively working with local governments and stakeholders across Europe in driving sugar reduction and looks forward to continuing these efforts tailored to local situations and needs.

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[About the European Soft Drink Industry \(UNESDA\) 10% Sugar Reduction Commitment](#)

The soft drinks sector is an early mover in added sugars reduction with its journey beginning in the 1970s when the first no sugar and no calorie soft drinks were introduced. In soft drinks, reduction in added sugars leads directly to reduced calories. The industry reduced sugar in still and carbonated soft drinks by 12% from 2000-2015[4], so the new commitment triples this pace by adding another 10% reduction over the next five years[5].

By joining industry forces at European level, the commitment has the merit of putting in place a Europe wide approach and impacting over 500 million consumers. The committed 10% is an aggregate and takes into account existing and new local industry pledges on sugar reduction, reflecting specific national diets and consumer preferences in the EU.

The initiative addresses consumer preferences regarding sugar and calorie intake. It is also a response to the EU’s call for reformulation and sugar reduction across the food industry. The commitment supports the [EU Roadmap for Action on Food Product Improvement](#) and the [Annex on Voluntary Reduction of Added Sugars](#) with its 10% sugar reduction target agreed between Member States and the European Commission.

- [1] The commitment is supported by 83% of the soft drink industry in Malta, which is represented by the Coca-Cola System in Malta (The Coca-Cola Company in Malta and local bottling partner, GSD Marketing Limited) and PepsiCo in Malta and local bottling partner Simonds Farsons Cisk plc. Sparkling and still soft drinks are included. Other categories such as bottled water, juices, milk-based or hot beverages are not included.
- [2] Metric is average content of added sugar per 100 ml.
- [3] The Maltese soft drinks sector will monitor its compliance with the new commitment through independent, third party auditors including [Canadean](#).
- [4] Source: Canadean
- [5] [UNESDA](#) will monitor its compliance with the new commitment through independent, third party auditors including [Canadean](#).