Recent media reports have suggested that CIAA spent a sum of 1 billion euro on lobbying to support its position in relation to the EU Food Information to Consumers regulation. Such reports are factually false, and CIAA believes it is important to clarify this point on public record.

In an interview with the European Voice in March 2010 (from which this figure was originally taken), CIAA estimated that collectively around 1 billion euro had been invested by the food industry over the last 4-5 years in voluntarily rolling out nutritional labelling based on Guideline Daily Amounts (GDAs). This figure referred to an approximate level of investment that member companies had made in applying the GDA scheme to their products in order to support additional nutritional information to consumers; however, some members of the press and other organisations have dubbed this as a negative lobbying campaign, which is absolutely unfounded and untrue. The introduction of voluntary GDAs by member companies was fully in line with and driven by CIAA’s commitment to the EU Platform for Action on Diet, Physical Activity and Health (DPAH), set up by the European Commission in 2005.

GDAs are a neutral, science-based tool designed to give consumers the on-pack nutritional information they need to make informed choices appropriate to their lifestyle. GDAs are a widely accepted form of labelling designed to help consumers, not a lobbying strategy or device to avoid other forms of regulation. GDAs have been rolled out voluntarily in Europe in full partnership/consultation with the European Institutions. Research by the European Food Information Council (EUFIC) (based on 11,600 in-store interviews and 5,700 in-home questionnaires across six EU countries) shows that GDAs are widely recognised and understood by consumers.

Consumers lie at the heart of Europe’s food and drink industry. CIAA understands the seriousness of Europe’s long-term public health challenges and its members are committed to empowering consumers to make more informed food choices in the context of a balanced diet and healthy lifestyle.

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The CIAA represents the European food and drink industry – the largest manufacturing sector, major employer and exporter in the EU. The CIAA mission is to represent the food and drink industries’ interests, at the level of European and international institutions, in order to contribute to the development of a legislative and economic framework addressing the competitiveness of industry, food quality and safety, consumer protection and respect for the environment. CIAA membership is made up of 26 national federations, including 3 observers, 26 European sector associations and 20 major food and drink companies.

For more information on CIAA and its activities, visit: www.CIAA.eu