



## EAPF statement: Veggie burger survives EU fight, but plant-based steaks will have to be renamed

The European Alliance for Plant-based Foods criticises unnecessary bureaucracy, leading to economic damage and consumer confusion

Brussels – On 5 March 2026 afternoon, trilogue negotiators from the European Parliament, the Council of the EU and the European Commission reached an agreement on restricting the use of certain names for plant-based food alternatives, resulting in a ban of several terms, including “steak”.

*“No one accidentally buys plant-based products thinking they are meat. Confusion is the official reason given for the initiative, but in fact, it’s about protecting the interest of the meat industry. This threatens the emerging innovative plant-based economy to its core. It does not help a single farmer and it limits consumer choice. Today, the biggest loser is the European Union’s own food innovation capacity”,* said Siska Pottie, Secretary General of the European Alliance for Plant-based Foods.

At least, in a win for food value chain actors, consumers and the environment, widely used and descriptive terms like “burger”, “sausage,” or “schnitzel” for plant-based alternatives will still be permitted.

The agreement prohibits the use of animal names such as “chicken,” “beef,” or “pork,” and terms for cuts like “breast,” “thigh,” or “drumstick” on plant-based products, based on a list of 29 terms the European Commission proposed in July 2025.

### **Damaging consequences for emerging food value chains**

The European Alliance for Plant-based Foods warns of substantial economic impacts of the agreement and criticises the striking omission of a comprehensive, EU-wide impact assessment or public consultation, especially for legislation with such broad consequences for food manufactures, retailers, food services, restaurants and consumers.

*“Products now have to be renamed, packaging redesigned and supermarkets and restaurants must overhaul their inventory systems and menus. At a time when the European*



*Union claims to be simplifying rules and strengthening competitive food value chains, plant-based businesses are instead drowning in unnecessary red tape. The real confusion, however, falls on consumers, who must now decipher unfamiliar product names just to understand how to use the food they buy,”* said Siska Pottie.

The new rules are also expected to generate legal uncertainty. Varying interpretations in different languages and enforcement across the 27 Member States could trigger numerous court cases.

Moreover, the scope of the new law remains potentially damaging in several other critical areas, including its impact on flavourings: The use of “chicken” and “bacon” flavourings in thousands of mainstream food products (e.g., noodles, crisps, sauces, soups) will no longer be permitted.

Also hybrid (sometimes called “blended”) products are affected: Products combining both animal and plant-based proteins, which are growing in popularity in markets like Denmark, Belgium and the Netherlands, now need to be renamed.

### **A Detour from Original Intentions**

This legislation was originally intended to strengthen farmers' position in the supply chain. Instead, it was sidetracked by a naming debate that will not increase farmer income, improve market access, or address the core structural challenges facing European agriculture: ensuring fair prices, tackling the dominance of large value chain actors and investing in local supply chains.

### **Immediate Next Steps**

The European Alliance for Plant-based Foods will together with its partners meticulously analyse the agreed-upon text as soon as it is available. It pledges to continue its engagement in the legislative process to seek necessary clarifications and, where feasible, corrections. EAPF urgently calls upon the Commission to make a full impact assessment a matter of priority before any implementation.

### **About EAPF**

The European Alliance for Plant-based Foods (EAPF) is an alliance of food businesses in the plant-based value chain and like-minded organisations, bringing them together in a unique mission: To put plant-based foods at the heart of the transition towards more sustainable and healthy food systems.