

# THE EC “FARM TO FORK STRATEGY” FOOD SYSTEM AND SUSTAINABILITY

ESBEN LAULUND \_ PRESIDENT IPA EU



**ipa**   
EUROPE  
INTERNATIONAL  
PROBIOTICS ASSOCIATION



## IPA EUROPE: HISTORY AND MISSION

**IPA Europe is the European voice of the probiotics industry**

**The IPA Europe mission is : to gain acceptance of the term probiotic in Europe and provide accurate information to all stakeholders**

The members are companies directly engaged in the manufacture of probiotic cultures or probiotic foods, supplements, nutritional or therapeutic products in Europe.

**BioGaia**  
Probiotics grounded in evolution  
Driven by science

**CHR. HANSEN**

  
**DANONE**

**LALLEMAND**

  
**LESAFFRE**

  
**probi**  
first in probiotics

**Yakult**

**iff**

# THE FARM TO FORK STRATEGY

## HEALTHY PEOPLE, HEALTHY SOCIETIES AND A HEALTHY PLANET

Launched by the European Commission on May 2020, the EU Farm to Fork strategy for the EU food system aims to produce fundamental changes by promoting actions for healthy and sustainable diets.

Some of the objectives are:

- 1 Making relevant liable information available to the consumers
- 2 Motivating consumers in making decisions on good and healthy diets in a sustainable perspective;
- 3 Using a more flexible approach to regulatory and non-regulatory to promote best practices
- 4 Making use of research and innovation.



# THE FARM TO FORK STRATEGY

**What it is about: to make the link between healthy people, healthy societies, and a healthy planet.**



**IPA Europe notes the contribution that the probiotic sector can make to deliver on a number of objectives listed by the European Commission in the Farm to Fork strategy Action Plan**



## PRIORITY 3 IN THE UN AGENDA

**“ENSURE HEALTHY LIVES AND PROMOTING WELL-BEING FOR ALL AT ALL AGES” IS CONFIRMED AS A PRIORITY AREA BY THE UNITED NATIONS**

United Nations - New development set of goals for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development - Goal 3 of the Agenda



<https://sdgs.un.org/topics/health-and-population>



**United  
Nations**



# A SUSTAINABLE APPROACH TO FOOD SHOULD BE HOLISTIC

## How the probiotics industry can contribute to the objectives of the Farm to Fork strategy and to the better functioning of the European Internal Market

**The European Probiotic industry is engaged in:**

- Working on creating a definition that clearly outlines the probiotic category
- Continuing to offer high-quality products
- Meeting consumer expectations to make informed choices
- Fostering a regulatory environment that provides consistency and promotes innovation for the probiotic industry



**FROM THE IPA EUROPE  
CHAIRMAN,  
ESBEN LAULUND  
(IPA Europe Manifesto)**



# PROBIOTICS: A SUSTAINABLE WAY TO MAINTAIN HEALTH AND WELL-BEING





# GROWING SCIENTIFIC EVIDENCE ON PROBIOTICS

**It is recognized that diet can modify the intestinal microbiome, which has an impact on health**

Some microorganisms, normally referred to as **probiotics**, can play an important role to sustain a balanced gut microbiota.

The EU itself expressed interest in this field:

Grant to the **MyNewGut** project: In the conclusion the partners expressed evidence that: “Bacterial strains in our gut could be the next generation of probiotics”

Grant to **International Human Microbiome Coordination & Support Action** (Horizon 2020 project, from 2021 to 2024)  
<https://cordis.europa.eu/project/id/964590>



<https://www.mynewgut.eu/>

**BUT BETTER COMMUNICATION IS NEEDED!**

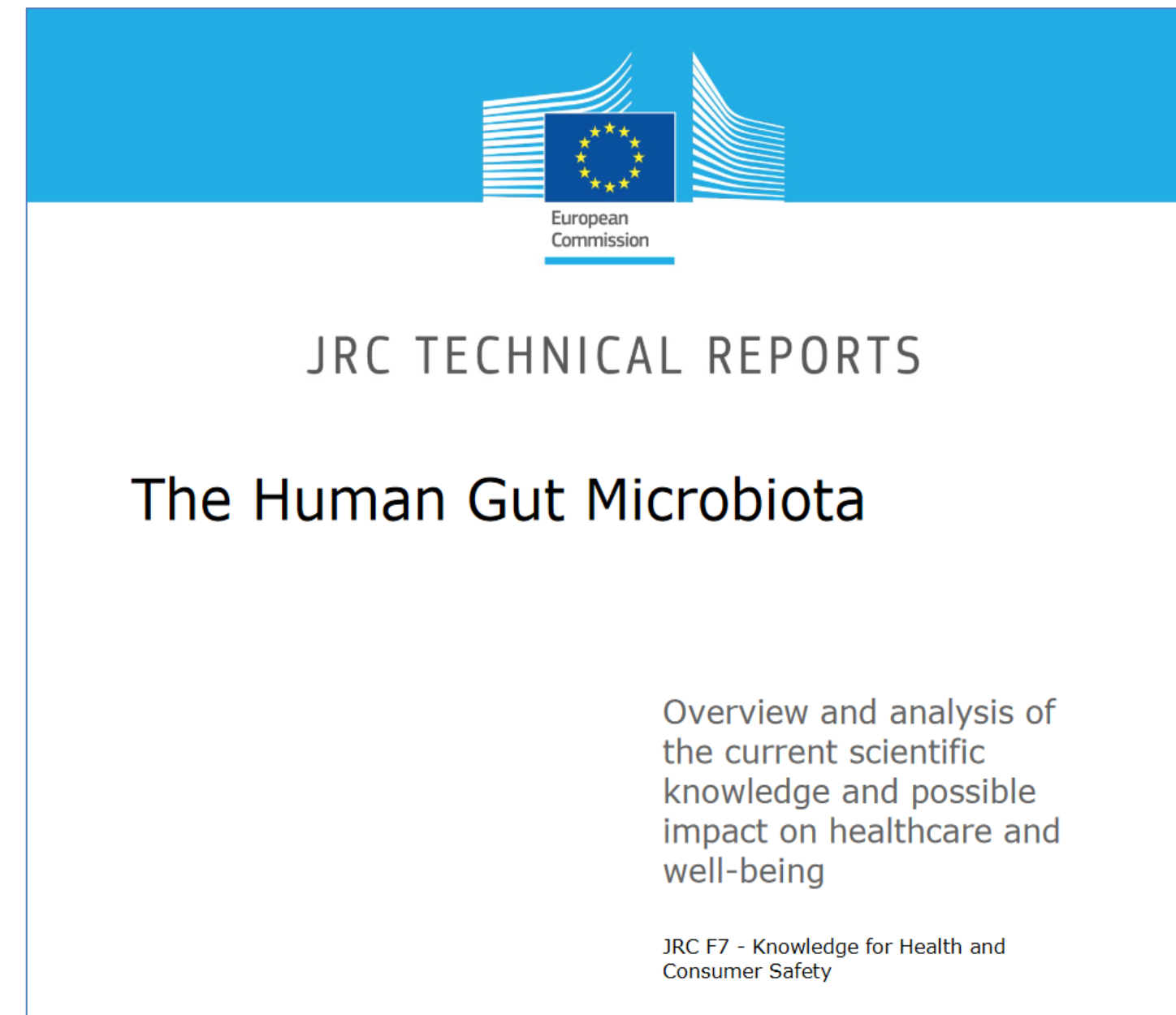


# GROWING SCIENTIFIC EVIDENCE ON PROBIOTICS

Publication of the Joint Research Centre (JRC), the European Commission's science service, in 2018, making the link between the probiotics and the balanced gut microbiota health

[https://publications.jrc.ec.europa.eu/repository/bitstream/JRC112042/human\\_gut\\_microbiota\\_online.pdf](https://publications.jrc.ec.europa.eu/repository/bitstream/JRC112042/human_gut_microbiota_online.pdf)

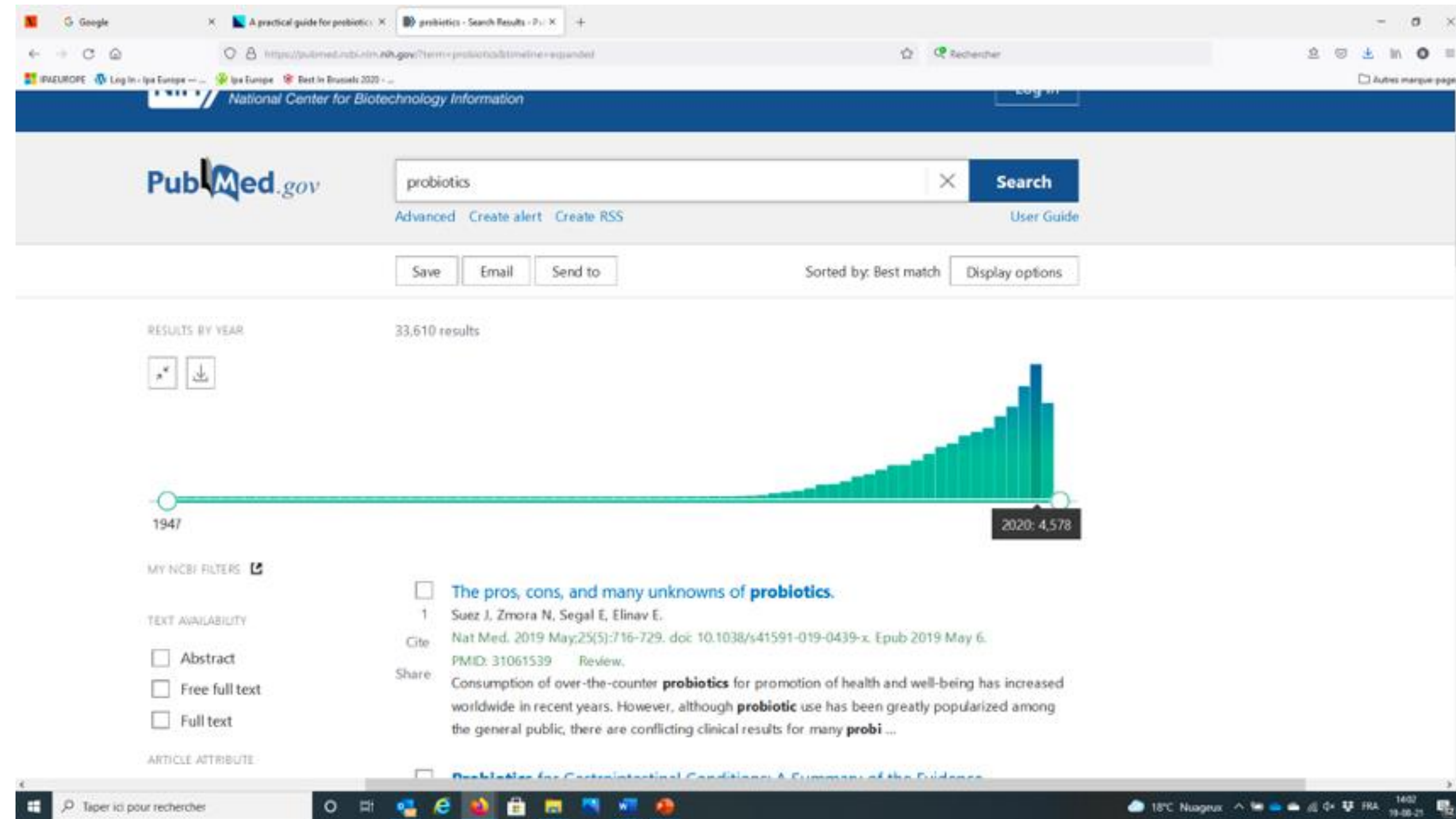
**BUT THE EUROPEAN  
CONSUMER CANNOT BE  
INFORMED OF THE PRESENCE  
OF PROBIOTICS IN FOOD**



# PROBIOTICS: A SUSTAINABLE WAY TO MAINTAIN HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

Probiotics are the subject of an increasing number of scientific publications.

European Consumers thus find themselves deprived of information in their search for health solutions





# PROBIOTICS: A SUSTAINABLE WAY TO MAINTAIN HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

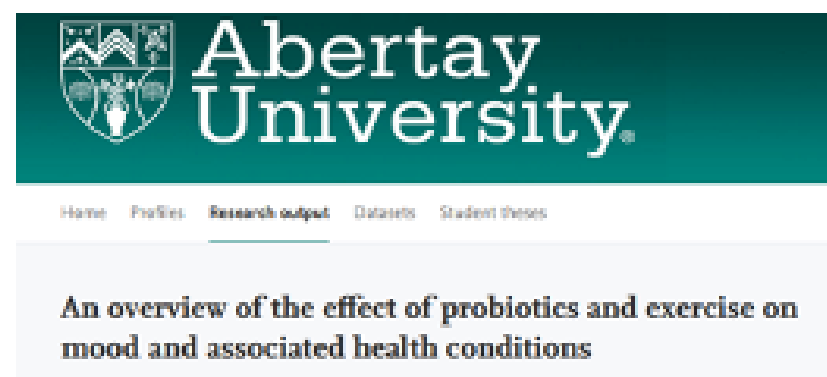
Consumers today are increasingly moving towards personalised nutritional diets, which require access to specific food products with accurate, appropriate and comprehensive information.

**Grant MC, Baker JS. An overview of the effect of probiotics and exercise on mood and associated health conditions.**

Critical Reviews Food Science and Nutrition. 2017 Dec;57(18):3887-3893. DOI: 10.1080/10408398.2016.1189872.

<https://rke.abertay.ac.uk/en/publications/an-overview-of-the-effect-of-probiotics-and-exercise-on-mood-and->

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7019274/>



*Nutrients*. 2020 Jan; 12(1): 17.  
Published online 2019 Dec 20. doi: [10.3390/nu12010017](https://doi.org/10.3390/nu12010017)

PMCID: PMC7019274  
PMID: [31061755](https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/31061755/)

## Mutual Interactions among Exercise, Sport Supplements and Microbiota

Sabrina Donati Zeppa,<sup>†</sup> Deborah Agostini,<sup>†</sup> Marco Gervasi, Giosuè Annibalini, Stefano Amatori, Fabio Ferrini, Davide Sisti, Giovanni Piccoli, Elena Barbieri, Piero Sestili,<sup>†</sup> and Vito Stocchi<sup>†</sup>

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# PROBIOTICS: A SUSTAINABLE WAY TO MAINTAIN HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

IT APPEARS THAT **PUBLIC HEALTH AND LOW BUDGET IMPACT** DUE TO THE CONSUMPTION OF PROBIOTICS ARE SUBSTANTIAL

- ❑ From a health-economic analysis in France (2015): **generalized probiotic use could generate healthcare savings of between €14.6 Million and 37.7 Million a year.**
- ❑ Another study in Canada (2016) shows that the potential of probiotics to reduce RTI-related events may have a substantial clinical and economic impact.

<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/27832195/>

<https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0122765>



> PLoS One, 2016 Nov 10;11(11):e0166232. doi: 10.1371/journal.pone.0166232. eCollection 2016.

## The Clinical and Economic Impact of Probiotics Consumption on Respiratory Tract Infections: Projections for Canada

Irene Lenoir-Wijnkoop <sup>1,2</sup>, Laetitia Gerlier <sup>3</sup>, Denis Roy <sup>4</sup>, Gregor Reid <sup>5</sup>



# PROBIOTICS: A SUSTAINABLE WAY TO MAINTAIN HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

**STRONG INTEREST FROM HEALTH PROFESSIONALS BUT THE REGULATORY SITUATION IN EUROPE IS PREVENTING MANUFACTURES FROM EXPLAINING THEIR PRODUCTS**

A total of 1066 health professionals (859; 80.6% female) from 30 countries responded to this International survey. They evaluated their knowledge of probiotics as medium (36.4%) but they also indicated that they wanted to learn more (36.2%),

Int J Environ Res Public Health. 2019 Aug 28;16(17):3128. doi: 10.3390/ijerph16173128.

## Health Professionals' Knowledge of Probiotics: An International Survey

Sabina Fijan<sup>1</sup>, Anita Frauwallner<sup>2</sup>, László Varga<sup>3</sup>, Tomaž Langerholc<sup>4</sup>, Irena Rogelj<sup>5</sup>, Mateja Lorber<sup>6</sup>, Peter Lewis<sup>7</sup>, Petra Povalej Bržan<sup>8,9</sup>

Affiliations + expand

PMID: 31466273 PMCID: PMC6747149 DOI: 10.3390/ijerph16173128

[Free PMC article](#)

An interesting example: the practical guide published in **The Netherlands** informing healthcare on the availability of probiotics products in prevention and to the case of antibiotic associated diarrhea

<https://bmcgastroenterol.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12876-018-0831-x>

# PROBIOTICS: A SUSTAINABLE WAY TO MAINTAIN HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

THE INTEREST IN THIS CATEGORY OF INGREDIENT IS HAMPERED BY A LACK OF KNOWLEDGE AND A LACK OF PRODUCT INFORMATION

Results from the Harris Interactive study for Synadiet of May 2021 conducted in France on 1.084 people of different genders and ages:

- ❑ 40% of French people consume probiotics, and these are widely recommended by healthcare professionals who are the primary source of information
- ❑ When reading the packaging where appear only the name of the strains of probiotics used, 50% of the French do not understand/ not useful and less than 30% understand that the product contains probiotics

<https://www.synadiet.org/actualites/communique-de-presse-probiotiques-2021>



# LOOKING AT THE REQUIREMENTS TO SET THE CATEGORY OF PROBIOTIC FOOD AND FOOD SUPPLEMENTS



# BETTER REGULATION FOR BETTER CONSUMER PROTECTION

## IPA EUROPE CLAIMS THAT THE TERM SHOULD BE ALLOWED IN EUROPE ON BOTH FOOD PRODUCTS AND FOOD SUPPLEMENTS ACCOMPAINED BY CRITERIA AND CONDITION OF USE

The current position of the European Commission is based on the EC guidance of 2007 that has only considered probiotic ‘health claims’.

This EC Guidance is obsolete and not reflect the reality of the scientific innovation and of the societal changes

A different approach is needed, with specified criteria for use of the term, to make clarity on “what probiotic is” and to avoid misinterpretation by the consumers

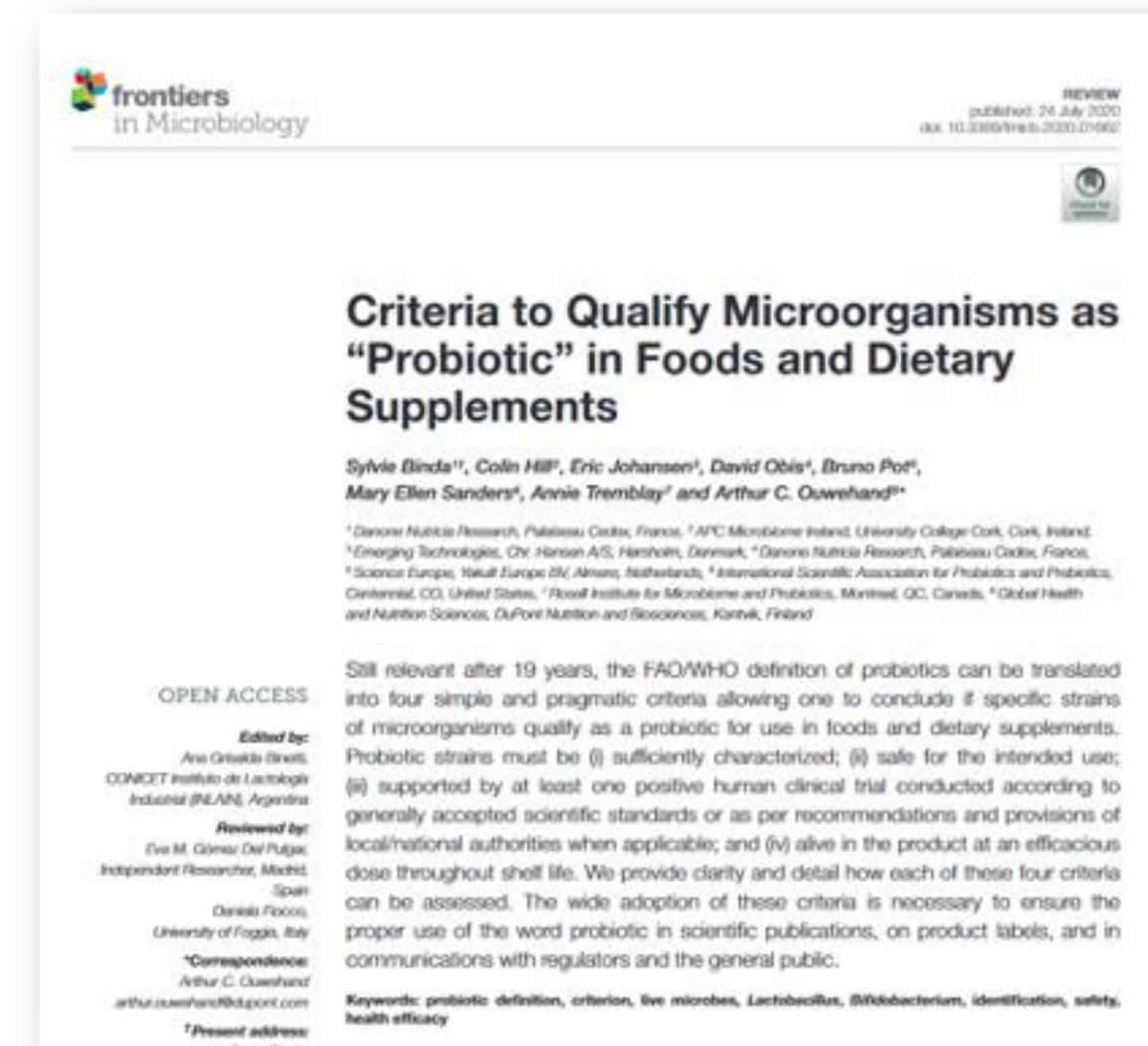
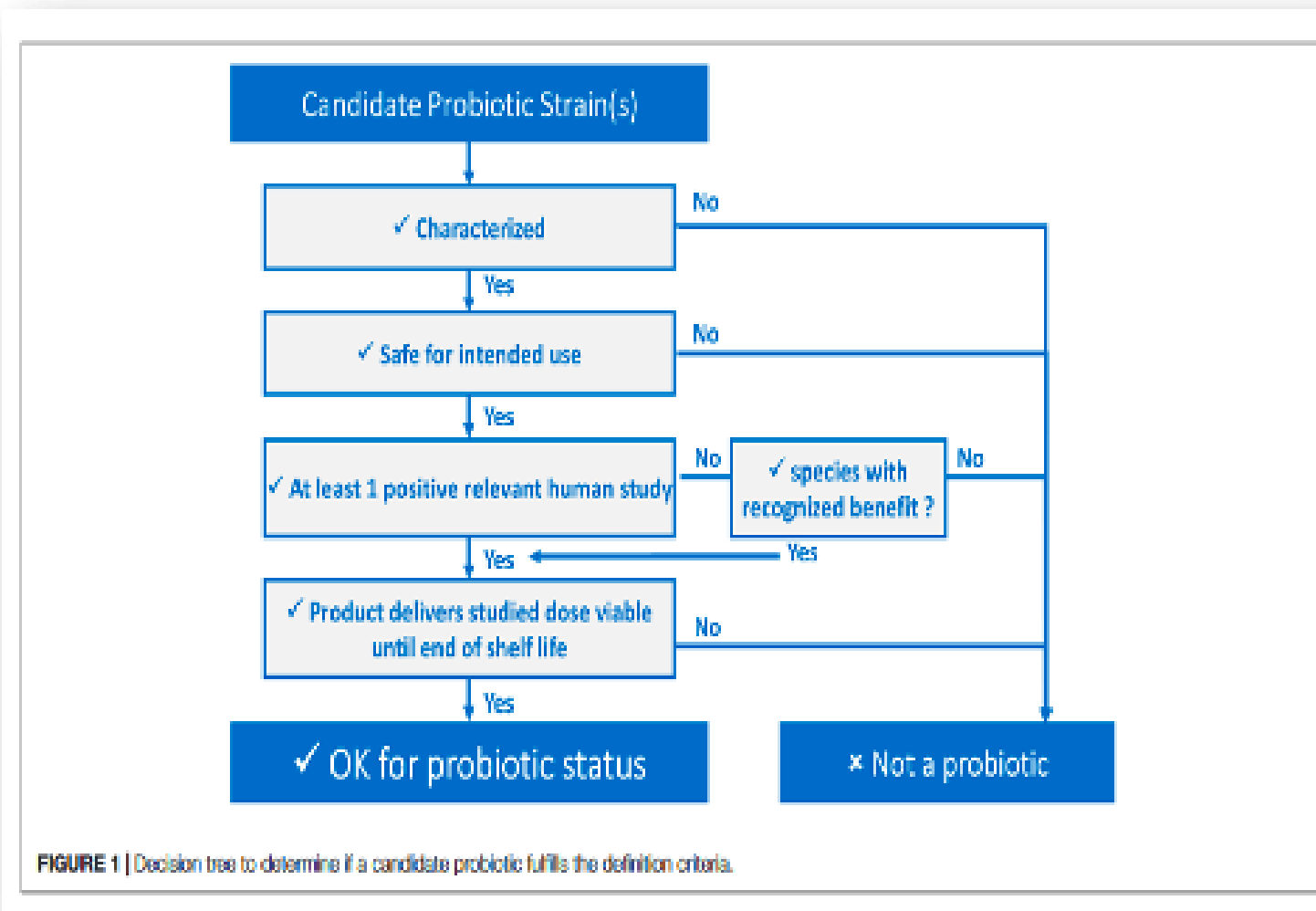
The use of the term would then no require an EFSA health assessment, as long as no reference to a specific health effect is made





# IPA EUROPE CRITERIA FOR THE USE OF THE TERM PROBIOTIC

FAO/WHO definition (2001), revised by Hill et al. (2014): probiotics are defined as “Live microorganisms that, when administered in adequate amounts, confer a health benefit on the host”.



[https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fmicb.2020.01662/full?utm\\_source=F-AAE&utm\\_medium=EMLF&utm\\_campaign=MRK\\_1391749\\_51\\_Microb\\_20200730\\_arts\\_A](https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fmicb.2020.01662/full?utm_source=F-AAE&utm_medium=EMLF&utm_campaign=MRK_1391749_51_Microb_20200730_arts_A)

# USE OF THE TERM PROBIOTIC

## DIFFERENT INTERPRETATIONS IN EUROPEAN MEMBER STATES SOME NATIONAL APPROACH ARE MORE IN LINE WITH THE ROLE THAT PROBIOTICS PLAYS IN DIET AND WITH THE CONSUMER EXPECTATION OF BETTER INFORMATION ON LABELLING



### ITALY

When some conditions are met, the Italian guidance allows the use of the term 'probiotic' with the mention '*promoting the balance of the intestinal flora*'

Ministero della Salute.  
Italian Guidelines for  
probiotics and prebiotics;  
December 2005, revised March 2018

[https://www.salute.gov.it/imgs/C\\_17\\_pubblicazioni\\_1016\\_ulterioriallegati\\_ulteriori allegato\\_0\\_alleg.pdf](https://www.salute.gov.it/imgs/C_17_pubblicazioni_1016_ulterioriallegati_ulteriori allegato_0_alleg.pdf).



### GREECE

National Medicines Agency notification on May 2021: the term 'Probiotics' is accepted for food supplements only for the nutritional table, with the contained microorganisms (qualitative and quantitative). [Εθνικός Οργανισμός Φαρμάκων - Ανακοινώσεις για λοιπά προϊόντα \(eof.gr\)](https://www.eof.gr/Εθνικός_Οργανισμός_Φαρμάκων_-_Ανακοινώσεις_για_λοιπά_προϊόντα_(eof.gr))



### DENMARK

National rule published in May 2021 stating that the term probiotic can be used on the label of the products as a mandatory category term for food supplements.  
<https://www.foedevarestyrelsen.dk/Foedevarer/Kosttilskud/Sider/Kosttilskud.aspx>



### SPAIN

The Spanish Q&A refers to the Mutual Recognition Principle(MRP \*), and mentions infant formulae and follow-on formulae, food supplements marketed in Spain.  
The term probiotic can be used also on the food and food supplements produced in Spain.  
[http://www.aesan.gob.es/AECOSAN/docs/documentos/seguridad\\_alimentaria/gestion\\_riesgos/Probioticos\\_alimentos.pdf](http://www.aesan.gob.es/AECOSAN/docs/documentos/seguridad_alimentaria/gestion_riesgos/Probioticos_alimentos.pdf)  
English version:  
<https://www.ipaeurope.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/202010-QA-Spain-Engl.pdf>

(\*) MRP stating that, in absence of EU harmonisation, the products legally marketed in others EU Countries can circulate on the European Market



### THE NETHERLANDS

The Nutrition and Health Claims Handbook of NVWA published on March 2021 indicates that the term "probiotics" can be used on food and on food supplements on the label and in mandatory information to identify the categories of micronutrients or substances that characterize the product (see on page 35, and footnote 2).  
<https://www.nvwa.nl/documenten/consument/eten-drinken-roken/etikettering/publicaties/handboek-voedings-en-gezondheidsclaims>

This confirms the indication of the 2018 Guidance of the self-regulatory body KOAG/KAG on NHCR



## CONCLUSIONS

# FOR A MORE HOLISTIC APPROACH FOR PROBIOTICS IN EUROPE

➤ The interpretation given by the European Commission Guidance of 2007 is clearly obsolete.

➤ A more holistic approach should be implemented in Europe, in line with the consumer expectations of receiving clearer information and to avoid disruption of the European Market.

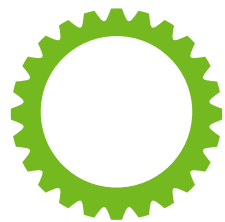
➤ The term is an important and specific description of food that is required by the general principles of food labelling



# IPA EUROPE: DISCUSSING THE INTERPLAY BETWEEN SCIENCE, NUTRITION AND REGULATORY ISSUES FOR PROBIOTIC FOOD AND FOOD SUPPLEMENTS



We share and support the European ambitions in the “Food to Fork strategy” that are in line with our defined goals



We interact with relevant stakeholders to build a coherent and consistent framework in Europe, to alleviate avoidable legal burden, enhance the functioning of our European Single Market



We stress the importance for consumers to receive appropriate information and fair advertising: there should be a balance between protecting consumers, allowing innovation and satisfying consumer needs



We count on having political support during further coordination efforts to continuously improve the provision of healthy food products to European consumers





**THANK YOU TO THE IPA EUROPE STEERING COMMITTEE FOR  
THE CONTRIBUTION TO THIS PRESENTATION.**

**FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THE IPA EUROPE ACTIVITY  
PLEASE VISIT OUR WEBSITE [IPAEUROPE.ORG](https://ipaeurope.org)**

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