

# International Consumer's Symposium in Tokushima Consumer Policy Session

## “Food” and Ethical Consumption in the EU

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# Brief Self-introduction

- Bachelor of Laws, University of Athens
- Master's Degree (Master of Laws), Graduate School of Law, University of Athens
- Formerly a member of the Athens Bar Association
- Ph.D. (Law), Graduate School of Law, Waseda University
- Visiting Researcher, INTI International University (Malaysia)
- Previously held, among others, the following concurrent positions:
  - Visiting Professor, Faculty of Law, University of Malaya (Malaysia)
  - Visiting Associate Professor, Faculty of Law, Thammasat University (Thailand)
  - Visiting Associate Professor, Faculty of Law, Suor Orsola Benincasa University (Italy)
  - Adjunct lecturer, Ho Chi Minh City University of Law (Vietnam),
  - Adjunct lecturer, Tashkent National Law University (Uzbekistan)
  - Adjunct lecturer, Faculty of Law, National University of Mongolia (Mongolia)

# Brief Self-introduction

- Director, Japan Association of Consumer Law; Member, Kyoto City Consumer Affairs Council; Member of the Board of Directors, Kansai Consumers Support Organization, a non-profit organization; Member of the Board of Directors, Association for Dark Pattern Measures
- Member of the Study Group on Information and Telecommunications Law, Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications; Member of “New Future Vision Forum” and “Public-Private Roundtable on Building Trust for Better Consumer Lives in the Digital Age”, Strategic Headquarters for Frontiers of Consumer Policy, Consumer Affairs Agency; Member of Tokushima International Network for a Sustainable Society (TIS), Tokushima Prefecture
- External Editorial board member, Research Journal “Journal of Research on Social and Economic Life”, National Consumer Affairs Center, etc.

# Brief Self-introduction

- Fellow of the European Law Institute (Austria), Member of the Scientific Board of Mediterranea International Centre for Human Rights Research (Italy) ); the Scientific Committee of the European Journal of Privacy Law and Technology (Italy); the International Editorial Committee of the Journal of Liberty and International Affairs (Republic of North Macedonia); the Editorial Board of the Journal of Law, Market and Innovation (Italy), the Editorial Board of the Asian Crime and Society Review (Thailand), etc.

## Main books:

- ⇒ “Consumer Law” (2nd edition, Yuhikaku, 2024) [Co-author].
- ⇒ “Unfair Commercial Practices and Private Law Theory: A Comparative Analysis with EU Law” (in Japanese)  
(Horitsu Bunka Sha, 2020) [sole author].
- ⇒ “Consumer Law: Present and Future” (in Japanese)  
(2nd ed., Horitsu Bunka Sha, 2023) [Co-author].
- ⇒ Outline and New Developments of Japanese Inheritance Law  
(Adam Marszarek, 2021) [Co-author]

# I. “Food” in the EU

# Food Culture and Customs in the EU

- Some characteristics of food culture and customs in the EU
  - ⇒ Diversity
  - ⇒ Emphasis on tradition and heritage
  - ⇒ Eating as a social and communal act
  - ⇒ Emphasis on freshness and seasonality
  - ⇒ Adaptability and integration
- \* Health and Sustainability as emerging trends

# The Transformation of “Food” in the EU

- Food culture and customs in the EU have undergone a major transformation in recent years, influenced by the following factors:
  - ⇒ Health
  - ⇒ Environment
  - ⇒ Economy
  - ⇒ Culture
- Below is an overview of these changes

# Shift to a Plant-Based Diet

- Many EU countries are emphasizing plant-based foods to improve public health and reduce environmental impact
  - ⇒ Austrian guidelines recommend limiting meat and fish intake to once a week
  - ⇒ Germany and the Netherlands also advocate reducing meat intake
- \* On the other hand, Spain, a major fish producer, continues to encourage increased fish consumption



# Emphasis on Whole Grains

- The Danish Whole Grain Partnership (DWGP) is an example of a public–private partnership to promote healthier diets
  - ⇒ Since its inception in 2008, the initiative has successfully increased average daily whole grain intake from 36g to 82g by 2019, the highest in Europe

# Preserving Culinary Heritage

- The EU has adopted a system of protection of designations of origin (PDO) and protection of geographical indications (PGI) to protect traditional foods
  - ⇒ On the other hand, drought affects the production of regional specialties such as Parmigiano–Reggiano and Conte cheese, so strict production standards may be temporarily waived to maintain the availability of these products

# Impact of Regulations on Traditional Practices

- New EU regulations aimed at promoting market competition are affecting long-standing food traditions
  - ⇒ In Amsterdam, iconic herring and flower stalls face uncertainty due to proposed changes to the vendor licensing system, which could disrupt businesses that have been part of Dutch culture for centuries

## II Ethical Consumption in the EU

- Focusing on “food”

# “Farm-to-Fork” Strategy

- As part of the Green Deal, the Farm-to-Fork strategy aims to build a sustainable food system
  - ⇒ Reduce pesticide use by 50% by 2030
  - ⇒ Convert 25% of EU farmland to organic farming by 2030
  - ⇒ Halve per capita food waste by 2030
  - ⇒ Improve food labeling to help consumers make sustainable food choices

# Efforts Toward Sustainable Food Choices

- Proposal for mandatory front-of-package nutrition labeling to enable consumers to make healthier food choices
- Proposal to require origin labeling for certain products (expansion of existing mandatory labeling)
- Establish minimum mandatory standards for sustainable food procurement to promote healthy and sustainable diets, including organic products, in schools and public institutions
- Proposal for a sustainable food labeling framework to enable consumers to make sustainable food choices
- Review of the EU's agricultural and food promotion program to strengthen its contribution to sustainable production and consumption
- Review of the legal framework of the EU school system with a focus on healthy and sustainable food

# EU Code of Conduct on Responsible Food Business and Marketing Practices

- The Voluntary Code of Conduct launched in July 2021 as part of the “Farm-to-Fork” strategy described above
- Encourages food industry stakeholders to engage in sustainable practices, such as
  - ⇒ Reduction of greenhouse gas emissions
  - ⇒ Improvement of animal welfare
  - ⇒ Promoting healthy and sustainable diets

# III Some Statistical Data on Ethical Consumption in the EU



# Some Statistical Data

- Willingness to pay more for sustainability:  
According to PwC's "Voice of the Consumer 2024" study, 80% of consumers are willing to pay an average of 9.7% more for sustainably produced or sourced goods, even with concerns about the cost of living
- Sustainable living practices:  
According to a 2024 survey by the EIT Food Consumer Observatory, 71% of European consumers actively seek sustainable living and 49% consider environmental impact when choosing what to eat

# Some Statistical Data

- In Europe, there is a growing interest in plant-based diets from health, environmental, and ethical perspectives  
(Based on the results of a survey conducted by FMCG Gurus)
- The EIT Food Trust Report 2024 provides insight into how European consumers trust the food system, based on responses from nearly 20,000 consumers in 18 countries, and also reflects attitudes toward sustainability and ethical behavior

Thank you very much  
for your attention

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