



Names such as "soy steaks" and "vegetable sausages" may be used in France.

Décision de justice 28 janvier 2025

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Further to an application brought by companies and trade associations, the Conseil d'État today annulled two decrees banning the naming of products containing plant proteins with terms used for meat and fish products, such as "steak" or "sausage". France cannot prohibit the use of common names for foods of animal origin to market foods containing plant proteins.

In 2020, the French Parliament banned the use of terms used to designate foods of animal origin to market products containing plant proteins (1) ("soy steaks", "plant-based sausages" etc.). The Government specified this ban in a decree dated 29 June 2022, followed by a decree dated 26 February 2024 (2).

Further to an application from companies and trade associations, the Conseil d'État referred the matter to the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) before ruling on the legality of the decrees (3). In October, the CJEU ruled that European legislation fully covered the issue at EU level, preventing member states from introducing national measures to regulate or prohibit the use of common or descriptive names - other than legal names - to describe, market, or promote food products containing plant proteins.

In compliance with this CJEU ruling, the Conseil d'État ruled that the decrees of 2022 and 2024, which prohibited the use of common or descriptive names comprising terms from the butchery, delicatessen and fishmongery sectors to describe, market or promote foodstuffs containing plant proteins, are illegal as they are contrary to European regulations.

(1) Law 2020-699 of 10 June 2020 on the transparency of information on agricultural and food products

(2) Decrees issued pursuant to article L. 412-10 of the French Consumer Code

(3) Ruling of the Court of Justice of the European Union of 4 October 2024(C-438/23, *Protéines France et al.*)