



## PRESS RELEASE

### Meat-sounding: Law 172/2023 and the European Court of Justice Ruling

Comment by Atlante, signed by Natasha Linhart, CEO of Atlante

*Casalecchio Di Reno, October 9th, 2023*

Over the last two decades, we've seen a growing number of consumers turning away from animal-based foods for various reasons, including concerns about the environment, animal welfare, and health. These issues are at the core of the ethical approach we at Atlante have always taken when it comes to the meat trade. It's for this reason that Atlante has been a strong advocate for promoting 'plant-based' products.

For some time, there had been rumors that lawmakers were considering banning the use of terms traditionally associated with meat products, like 'burger', 'stew', and 'meatballs'. This worried us because we'd be forced to use awkward descriptions like 'vegetable discs' instead of 'veggie burgers' or 'vegetable cylinders' instead of 'veggie sausages'. In short, it would have made it harder to communicate with consumers. We started paying close attention to the issue when the proposed law was first introduced in the summer of 2023, concerned about the potential impact on the entire plant-based sector.

When Law 172/2023 was approved by the Italian Chamber of Deputies on December 1, 2023, and signed off by President Mattarella, we quickly formed a Task Force. We reached out to other companies in our industry, set up a discussion table, and organized meetings with a large group of entrepreneurs and professionals. Together, we discussed and agreed on the next steps: First, we issued a press release, followed by letters, co-signed by our Task Force, sent to the Cabinet Office – MASAF, and the Department for Common Agricultural Policy and Rural Development.

In these letters, we specifically asked to open a constructive dialogue with the government and engage with the relevant authorities to discuss key issues for us, such as the level of consumer awareness in Italy, the law's impact on businesses in the sector, and the broader topic of sustainability, which is central to both legislative and political debates in our country (especially in light of the recent COP28 meeting). We also aimed to highlight the practical and operational issues that Article 3 of Law 172/2023 would bring, affecting marketing campaigns, packaging designs, and more.

On this matter, several members of Parliament raised questions that echoed our concerns. Interestingly, the much-talked-about Black List of banned terms never actually materialized. And it didn't come as a surprise that, in case C-438/23 | Protéines France et al., the European Court of Justice ruled that without an official legal definition, a Member State cannot prohibit the use of terms traditionally linked to animal products to describe plant-based products.

Personally, I find the 'meat-sounding' law to be misguided, and it's disappointing to see the interests of one group prioritized over the respect for consumers, who are unfairly seen as incapable of recognizing the products they've been buying for years. Yes, people are free to consume animal meat, but it's clear—and, in my view, necessary—that we need a change. Cattle farming worldwide

accounts for about a third of carbon dioxide emissions, a figure that absolutely must be reduced. When we see that meat consumption per capita in the U.S. is 124 kg, compared to 90 kg in Italy, and just 4 kg in India, the imbalance is obvious. Lastly, with global population growth expected to reach 9.7 billion in the next 20 years, we have a responsibility to find alternatives to meat to ensure our children and grandchildren have enough food resources.

Winning our fight against the ban on 'meat-sounding' terms will be a victory worth celebrating.

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### *About Atlante*

*Atlante is an Italian company operating in the large-scale food distribution sector as a strategic partner for leading Italian retail chains, handling the selection, import, and distribution of food products from around the world. The company is also active in exporting the finest specialties of Made in Italy abroad. Led by CEO Natasha Linhart and based in Casalecchio di Reno (Bologna), Atlante has more than 100 employees and achieved a turnover of 252 million euros in 2023.*

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