

National transposition of the “Breakfast Directive” New rules for honey, juices, jams and milk

Introduction

Italian Legislative Decree No. 207 of 30 December 2025, published in the Italian Official Gazette on 5 January 2026 and due to enter into force in Italy on 14 June 2026 (the “**Decree**”), transposes into national law the Directive (EU) 2024/1438 of 14 May 2024, known as the “Breakfast Directive” (the “**Breakfast Directive**”), introducing some significant changes to the regulatory framework governing the food sector.

This alert provides an overview of the key developments introduced by the new regulatory framework.

Overview of the purposes of the Breakfast Directive

The aim of the Breakfast Directive is to strengthen transparency for consumers and ensure fairer competition within the EU internal market, by integrating four existing EU directives:

- (i) Directive 2001/110/EC on the production and marketing of honey (implemented in Italy by Legislative Decree No. 179 of 21 May 2004);
- (ii) Directive 2001/112/EC relating to fruit juices and certain similar products (implemented in Italy by Legislative Decree No. 151 of 21 May 2004);
- (iii) Directive 2001/113/EC on jams, jellies, marmalades and sweetened chestnut purée (implemented in Italy by Legislative Decree No. 50 of 20 February 2004); and
- (iv) Directive 2001/114/EC relating to certain types of preserved milk (implemented in Italy by Legislative Decree No. 49 of 20 February 2004, subsequently repealed by Legislative Decree No. 175 of 8 October 2011, adopted in implementation of Directive 2007/61/EC).

All of the above legislative instruments pursue the objective of harmonizing, at EU level, the rules governing the production and marketing stages of the relevant products, by establishing compositional requirements, legal designations and minimum quality

standards, serving a dual purpose: on the one hand, that of ensuring a high level of consumer protection through clear, accurate and transparent information; on the other hand, that of promoting the proper functioning of the single market by preventing misalignment between national legal systems and ensuring fair competition for operators.

Against this background, the Breakfast Directive represents an update and revision of the aforementioned sector-specific rules, aimed at aligning them with market developments, evolving consumer expectations and innovations in production processes.

Accordingly, the transposition of the Breakfast Directive into Italian law by means of the Decree requires food business operators to review not only their production processes but also the labelling of the products covered by the new rules. However, a transitional regime is also in place that allows products already labelled or placed on the market prior to the Decree's entry into force to continue to be marketed until stocks are exhausted, thereby enabling operators to adapt gradually.

Obligations by product category and key compliance actions

Given the concise nature of this alert, the following paragraphs outline only the main changes introduced by the Breakfast Directive with regard to production processes and labelling. Each paragraph focuses on a specific food category covered by the new regulatory framework.

1. Honey: enhanced origin transparency and new classification

One of the key developments arising from the transposition of the Breakfast Directive in relation to honey concerns the amendment of Legislative Decree No. 179 of 21 May 2004, particularly with regard to labelling requirements.

Prior to the introduction of the Breakfast Directive, in the case of blends of honey originating from multiple EU Member States or third countries, the specific indication of the country of origin on the label could be replaced by more general wording (e.g. "blend of EU honeys", "blend of non-EU honeys" or "blend of EU and non-EU honeys").

Under the new rules, however, the obligation to indicate the origin of the product – especially for blends – has been significantly strengthened. Following the amendments introduced by the Decree to Article 3 of Legislative Decree No. 179 of 21 May 2004, all countries of origin must now be indicated on the label in descending order by weight, together with the corresponding percentage share of each country¹.

¹ In any event, where the blend consists of honeys produced in more than four countries of origin it is possible to apply a specific simplified regime. Specific rules also apply to packages containing

A further change concerns the removal of the designation “filtered honey”, which has now been incorporated into the broader category of “industrial honey”. This category is also subject to new labelling requirements: the wording “intended for cooking use only” must appear in close proximity to the product name.

For businesses, these changes entail a substantial strengthening of traceability systems, which must be capable of accurately reconstructing the composition of blends, as well as updates to ensure compliance with the new labelling requirements.

2. Fruit juices: new low-sugar categories

The regulatory framework governing fruit juices, established at EU level by Directive 2001/112/EC and implemented in Italy by Legislative Decree No. 151 of 21 May 2004, sets out, inter alia, clear definitions of “fruit juice”² and “fruit juice from concentrate”³, as well as their respective compositions, including limits on the addition of sugars or water depending on the type of juice.

However, the framework previously lacked a clear classification for products with reduced natural sugar content, resulting in a regulatory gap also affecting labelling requirements and, consequently, consumer transparency.

The Breakfast Directive addresses this gap by introducing new legal designations for fruit juices with reduced sugar content, applicable both to direct juices and those made from concentrate. In particular, as implemented by the Decree, products in which naturally occurring sugars have been reduced by at least 30% compared to the standard equivalent may bear one of the following new designations:

- (i) “reduced-sugar fruit juice”;

less than 30 g. of honey, for which the countries of origin may be indicated using the two-letter codes established under ISO standards, instead of the full country names.

² Defined as “*the fermentable but unfermented product obtained from the edible part of sound and ripe fruit, whether fresh or preserved by chilling or freezing, belonging to one or more species and having the characteristic colour, aroma and taste of the fruit juices from which it is derived*” (see Article I, Annex I to Italian Legislative Decree No. 151 of 21 May 2004).

³ In particular, fruit juice from concentrate “*means the product obtained by reconstituting concentrated fruit juice, as defined in point 2, with potable water meeting the criteria laid down in Directive (EU) 2020/2184 of the European Parliament and of the Council*”, whereas concentrated fruit juice is “*the product obtained from the fruit juice of one or more fruit species by the physical removal of a specific proportion of the water content. Where the product is intended for direct consumption, the removal must be at least 50% of the water content*” (see points 1 and 2 of Article I, Annex I to Italian Legislative Decree No. 151 of 21 May 2004).

- (ii) “reduced-sugar fruit juice from concentrate”; and
- (iii) “reduced-sugar concentrated fruit juice”.

These designations apply to products obtained through authorized processes that reduce naturally occurring sugars while preserving the typical organoleptic and nutritional characteristics of the original juice.

The new rules clearly distinguish these products from other fruit juices and prohibit the addition of sugars or sweeteners to compensate for the reduction of naturally occurring sugars. In addition, a new optional labelling statement has been introduced: “fruit juices contain only naturally occurring sugars”, which, if used, must appear in the same field of vision as the sales denomination.

From an operational standpoint, businesses will need to pay close attention to the technological processes used to reduce sugar content, ensuring compliance with regulatory requirements, and to update their labelling practices in line with the enhanced transparency standards.

3. Jams and extra jams: increase in minimum fruit content

The transposition of the Breakfast Directive also introduces a number of changes with regard to jams, already regulated at EU level by Directive 2001/113/EC and, domestically, by Legislative Decree No. 50 of 20 February 2004.

In particular, by amending the above-mentioned Legislative Decree, the new Decree increases the minimum quantity of fruit required for production: from 350 grams to 450 grams per kilogram for jams, and from 450 grams to 500 grams per kilogram for extra jams⁴. These are significant increases, reflecting a continued focus on product quality and consumer expectations.

Although many jams and marmalades produced in Italy already contain fruit quantities exceeding the new minimum thresholds, producers may nonetheless need to review their product formulations to ensure compliance, with potential implications also for industrial processes. The higher fruit content may require adjustments to processing stages, a rebalancing of other ingredients, and updates to technical specifications and labelling information.

4. Preserved milk: labelling of lactose-reduction treatments

⁴ Different minimum quantities are established for specific types of fruit.

To conclude this brief overview of the developments introduced by the Breakfast Directive, we will briefly touch upon the amendments to the domestic rules governing preserved dehydrated milk⁵ set out in Legislative Decree No. 50 of 20 February 2004.

First, the list of permitted ingredients that may be added to the product has been revised and expanded. These include, in essence, vitamins and minerals, milk-derived components, enzymes and additives (all, of course, within the limits established by the relevant EU sector-specific regulations).

In addition, the new framework expressly allows treatments aimed at reducing lactose content through its conversion into glucose and galactose. In such cases, any resulting changes to the composition of the milk must be clearly indicated on the packaging, in a visible, legible and indelible manner.

These developments are therefore significant both from a production standpoint and in terms of consumer information, and dairy operators will need to ensure full awareness of and compliance with the new requirements.

Sanctions

The system of sanctions applicable to producers that fail to comply with the new provisions remains that already established under the individual legislative instruments governing the relevant products, as summarized in the table below.

Products	Sanction
Honey	Unless the conduct constitutes a criminal offence, any breach of the applicable sector-specific legislation is subject to an administrative fine ranging from Euro 600 to Euro 6,000.
Fruit juices	Unless the conduct constitutes a criminal offence, breaches of the applicable legislation are subject to an

⁵ Pursuant to Article 1 of Italian Legislative Decree No. 175 of 8 October 2011, “partly dehydrated milk” means “the liquid product, with or without added sugars, obtained by the partial removal of water from milk, wholly or partly skimmed milk, or a mixture of such products, possibly with the addition of cream or wholly dehydrated milk or both; in the finished product, the addition of wholly dehydrated milk must not exceed 25% of the total milk solids”, whereas “wholly dehydrated milk” means “the solid product obtained by the removal of water from milk, wholly or partly skimmed milk, cream, or a mixture of such products, with a water content equal to or less than 5% by weight of the finished product.”.

	administrative fine ranging from Euro 3,000 to Euro 9,000.
Jams, jellies, marmalades and sweetened chestnut purée	Unless the conduct constitutes a criminal offence, violations are punishable by an administrative fine ranging from Euro 3,000 to Euro 9,000.
Preserved milk	Composition: unless the conduct constitutes a criminal offence, violations are subject to an administrative fine ranging from Euro 3,000 to Euro 18,000.
	Labelling: unless the conduct constitutes a criminal offence, violations are subject to an administrative fine ranging from Euro 2,000 to Euro 12,000.

Conclusions

In conclusion, the transposition of the Breakfast Directive forms part of a broader effort to strengthen transparency and quality within the food sector, introducing updates that are set to have a tangible impact on production processes, product formulations and labelling.

For the subjects affected by these developments, compliance cannot be achieved through merely formal adjustments, but will also require a coordinated review of internal processes, control systems and commercial documentation, in order to ensure consistency and compliance across the entire supply chain.

In view of the Decree’s entry into force on 14 June 2026, food business operators should therefore begin, without delay, a structured compliance process, undertaking a comprehensive and systematic review of their internal procedures to ensure full and timely alignment with the new regulatory framework. A proactive approach will not only help mitigate sanction risks, but also enable businesses to seize the opportunities arising from a more transparent and competitive market positioning.

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