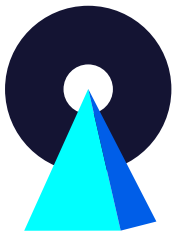


# L'essentiel



## Evaluation of the Food Charter - 2022 edition

The second report on the application of the current Food Charter (2020-2024) reveals a number of positive trends in terms of promoting healthy eating and behaviour.

The involvement of the signatories to the Charter has been instrumental in achieving an overall improvement in the display and quality of the Nutri-Score ratings shown during programmes aimed at younger viewers. In addition, broadcasters have fulfilled their quantitative commitments by screening programmes promoting healthy lifestyles. The qualitative survey carried out as part of this report shows that the influence of such content varies according to the context in which it is shown. As such, it is important to take account of any mixed messages, particularly those conveyed by food advertisements.

Special care should consistently be taken with commercials that are broadcast alongside programmes watched

by more than one person within the same household. The large proportion of sweetened beverages and chocolate products among the indexed food advertisements leads to the prevalence of Nutri-Score D and E ratings.

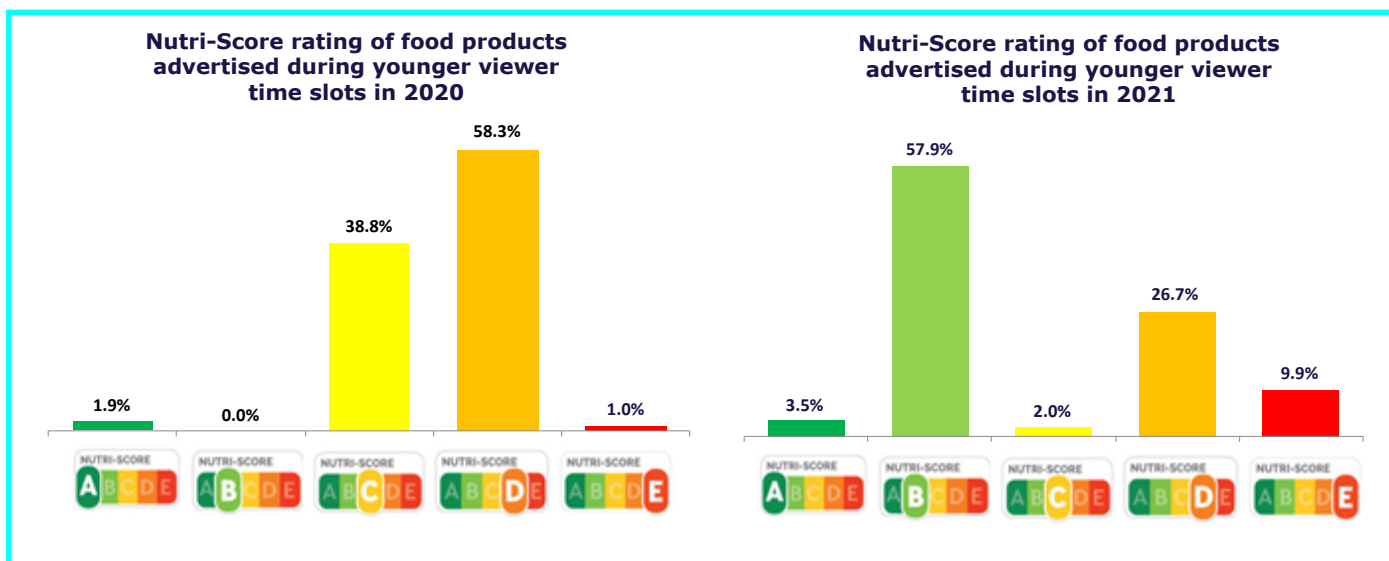
The scope of the Food Charter needs to be broadened to encompass the growing number of young people using media platforms and the reduction in their TV viewing times. Between 2012 and 2022, the TV viewing time per person fell by 55% among 4 to 14-year-olds. The initial findings for YouTube are intended to be extended to other digital platforms.

### **Advertisements during programmes for younger viewers<sup>1</sup>: an overall increase in the display and quality of the Nutri-Score ratings**

**Food and beverage advertisements** broadcast in the time slots for younger viewers mainly **achieve a Nutri-Score B rating (57.9%), which represents a clear improvement** (58.3% of products with a D rating in 2020).

However, the proportion of advertisements with a Nutri-Score E rating has increased at the same time to reach 9.9% (compared to 1% in 2020).

<sup>1</sup> Advertising screens and sponsorships were viewed over a four-week period (15 February, 29 March, 2 August and 25 October). The study focused on the young viewer time slots on TF1 and M6, and the 7-9 am slot on Gulli, Télétoon + and Disney Channel.



**The on-screen display for Nutri-Score ratings has increased significantly** for advertisements before, during and after younger viewer time slots. **45.5% of advertisements that can be associated with a Nutri-Score rating now include a visual of this nutrition label.**

However, care should be taken with advertisements for fast food outlets that cannot be tied to a specific Nutri-Score rating.

## Food sponsorships during programmes for younger viewers: improved results but trailers still frequently associated with products offering low nutritional value

In terms of sponsorships, **the few food products** that are promoted during younger viewer time slots **are characterised by their good nutritional qualities** (Nutri-Score A rating).

For **sponsorship reminders in trailers, most products still feature a Nutri-Score E rating**, but to a **lesser degree: 36.8%** vs. 50% in 2020. Products with an A and B rating are given greater exposure (10.5% and

21.1% respectively, compared to 7.1% and 14.3% in 2020).

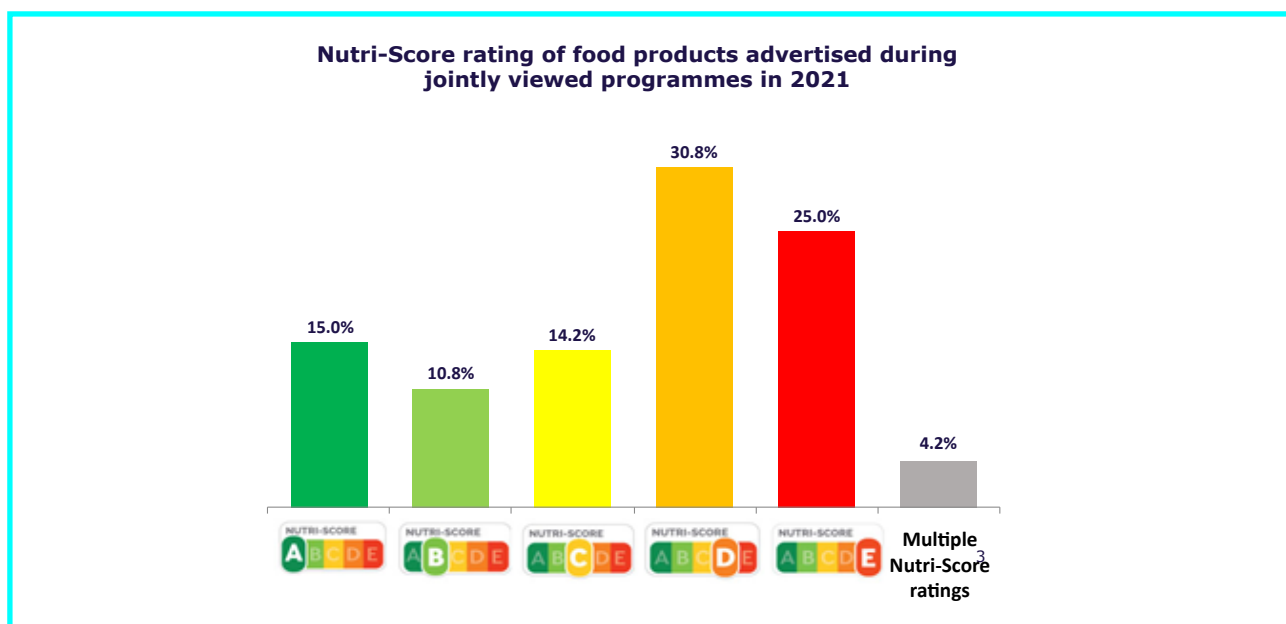
**Only 13.2% of the sponsorships concerned refer to the Nutri-Score rating** and almost exclusively display an A rating, whereas an E rating is actually the most represented.

## Jointly viewed programmes<sup>2</sup>: the food advertisements and sponsorships broadcast still require close attention

**Children appear to face higher exposure to food advertisements during jointly viewed programmes**, since they account for approximately **one quarter** of the ads seen by Arcom during those time slots.

**Sweetened beverages (13.3%), chocolate products (11.4%) and fast food products (9.5%)** are widely represented. **55.8%** of the products seen feature a Nutri-Score rating of **D or E**.

<sup>2</sup> A jointly viewed programme is a programme that reaches several viewers or listeners of different ages within the same household at the same time. The 10 programmes studied were those broadcast during the first half of the evening, where 4 to 14-year-olds represented at least 20% of the audience and accounted for more than 200,000 viewers.



As for food sponsorships during jointly viewed programmes, the Nutri-Score rating is infrequently shown,

and this applies to both programmes and trailers.

## Findings for YouTube: food product advertisements integrated into the editorial content of the channels viewed

For the first time, the report includes findings for a few YouTube channels<sup>4</sup> that are known to produce food-related content and attract a young audience. Although exposure to food advertisements appears to be fairly low when viewing content, promoting food products appears to be an integral part of these YouTubers' editorial strategy:

- **A significant proportion of videos focusing on food products** (from 32% to 100% of the 50 most popular videos on each channel)

- Editorial trends that contribute to **promoting excessive consumption**, such as food challenges, unboxings<sup>5</sup> and mukbang shows<sup>6</sup>
- **Fast food brands** are widely represented
- **A strong incentive to consume** in the content offered (90% of the videos viewed) and **too few messages advising viewers to exercise restraint** (35% of the videos viewed)

<sup>3</sup> Some commercial messages present several products at the same time, which may be associated with different Nutri-Score ratings.

<sup>4</sup> Swan & Néo, Ryanne and Sephora, Studio Bubble Tea, and Studio Bubble Tea Food

<sup>5</sup> Videos where users unpack and comment on products

<sup>6</sup> This viral phenomenon originated in South Korea and involves eating food, often to excess, while interacting with the audience

## Actual exposure of audiences to commercials: children do not appear to be more exposed to food advertisements than other age groups in the population

**On average, every child aged between 4 and 14 viewed 1,027 food product advertisements in 2021.** These advertisements represent 20% of all advertisements seen by those children, which is close to the proportion reported for the other age groups in the population.

The advertisements most seen by children over the whole of 2021 were for cars. However, advertisements for girls' / boys' toys and games have the highest percent-

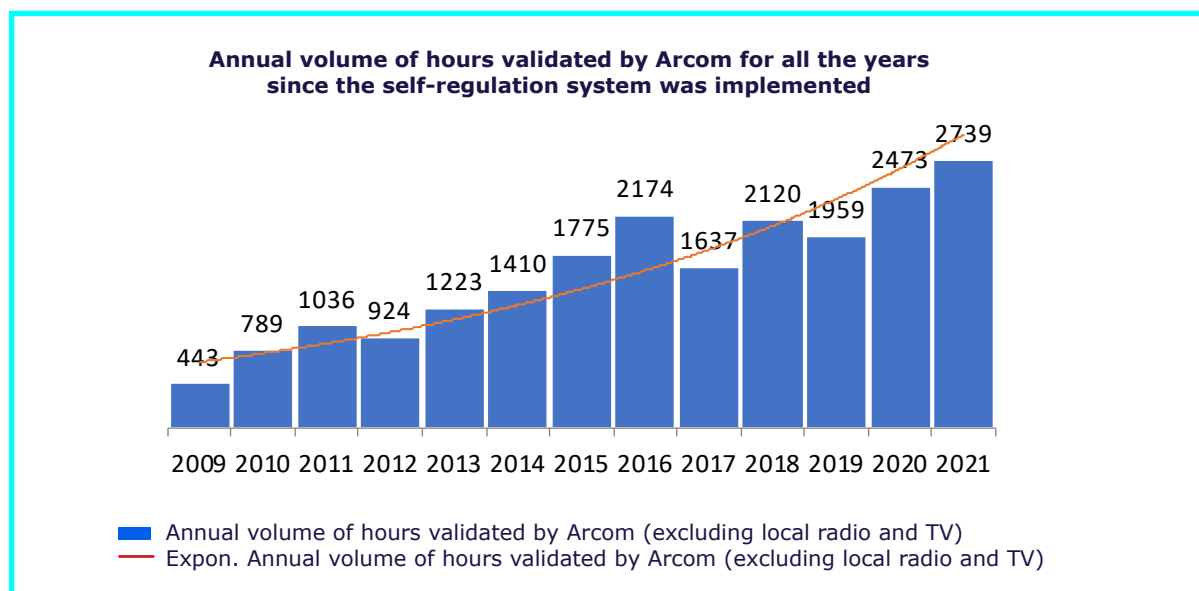
age of children in their audience. Nearly 41% of the advertisements for this product group are seen by children.

**In 2021, fast food advertisements were the fifth most frequently seen product group by 4 to 14-year-olds.** This group is down on 2019 and 2020, when it came in third and fourth place respectively.

## Initiatives to encourage healthy lifestyle choices: the audiovisual media honour their quantitative commitments and renew the programmes offered

Mainstream television channels (including the "Outre-mer La Première" network in France's overseas departments) and those aimed at younger viewers broadcast **2,739 hours of programmes** that promoted a varied diet, physical

activity, sports or restorative sleep, which is the **highest volume since the self-regulation system was introduced in this area.**



Television and radio stations continued to renew their programming to remind the French population of the importance of a healthy diet, physical activity and restorative sleep.

Once again in response to calls from Arcom, publishers have overwhelmingly lent their support to the initiatives spearheaded by the CNAO (National Collective of Obesity Associations) for World Obesity Day on 4 March 2021.

<sup>7</sup> Data relating to all advertisements broadcast on DTT channels (excluding all-news channels and L'Equipe).

## Assessment of the influence of messages promoting healthy lifestyle choices and food commercials on children and their parents

A complementary survey was carried out among a panel of viewers to assess the influence of messages promoting healthy lifestyle choices and food commercials on children and their parents. The levels of ownership on the subject of healthy living are fairly mixed, with three approaches: control, flexibility and relaxation. Consequently, the effective influence of healthy lifestyle programmes appears to vary tremendously depending on the profiles and how receptive they are to the different types of messages and topics.

### Healthy lifestyle programmes offer:

- **Reassuring messages** for the most rigorous
- **Sources of information** for households where healthy lifestyle choices are part of the household's rules, but not a priority
- **An indispensable presence** for those with less knowledge on the subject

Several markers of these programmes' influence were observed during the interviews: the presence of tangible actions that viewers can reproduce, the clarity of the message delivered, the type of message used according to the theme or the viewer's ability to identify with the programme.

### The influence of such programmes may also vary according to the context in which they are shown:

- **Long-running programmes** represent an additional way of providing guidance and developing awareness since viewers tend to see them as a familiar face
- **Providing mixed messages during these programmes** seems to be largely responsible for blunting their impact

### Arcom's recommendations:

[For the attention of the public authorities]: **Continue prioritising the strategy of stepping up information for consumers** (consistently include the Nutri-Score logo, since it provides a simple indication of a food product's nutritional quality) instead of prohibiting commercials for certain products.

[For the attention of the French public health authorities]: **Design campaigns to educate consumers about the meaning of the different Nutri-Score ratings** and explain that food products with a D or E rating should not be «banned» but consumed in moderation.

[For the attention of broadcasters]: **Produce programmes to educate viewers about the nutritional information featured on food labels.**

[For the attention of on-demand AVMS providers (excluding catch-up linear services which are already subject to the regulation), video sharing platforms and online platforms]:

- **Sign the Food Charter** to «ensure that poor eating habits are curbed on the platforms», especially for theme-based services aimed at young people.
- **Freely participate in public information campaigns** promoting the benefits of healthy eating and physical exercise.

- **Submit broadcast advertisements to the ARPP (France's advertising regulatory authority) for approval.**

[For the attention of video sharing and online platforms]: **Alert content creators to the importance of including preventive or moderation messages** in videos featuring children and promoting food products or brands.

[For the attention of the ANIA and advertising associations]: **Lend greater support to implementing nutritional indicators, especially Nutri-Score**, in the advertisements produced by advertisers who have chosen to indicate them on their product packaging, in accordance with their voluntary commitments. Ensure that labels are clearly presented on the screen, and display multiple Nutri-Score ratings when different products appear on the screen at the same time. **Continue raising awareness in France's overseas territories about the applicable regulations.**

**For further reading: [www.arcom.fr](http://www.arcom.fr)**

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