

Florence, Italy
February 28th, 2025

Declaration to Improve the Safety of Persons with Dysphagia

International Dysphagia Diet Standardisation Initiative (IDDSI)

Dysphagia, or Disorders of Eating, Drinking and Swallowing, affects individuals of all ages and can result from a variety of medical conditions. Texture-modified foods and thickened drinks are commonly used to manage dysphagia, but the inconsistent terminology used to describe these modifications across the European Union presents a significant safety concern, sometimes leading to serious consequences, including fatalities.

The International Dysphagia Diet Standardisation Initiative (IDDSI) is a non-profit global initiative dedicated to improving swallowing safety using standardized terminology and testing techniques for (texture-modified) foods and (thickened) drinks. This initiative aims to address the challenges of oropharyngeal dysphagia in diverse populations, across ages and cultures, and in all care settings.

IDDSI has developed an international framework that includes standardized labels, descriptors, and testing methods, which are now adopted in over 50 countries worldwide. The IDDSI framework provides rigorous, yet affordable testing methods, eliminating the need for costly laboratory tests.

IDDSI's mission is to facilitate the safe consumption and enjoyment of food and drink by individuals with dysphagia by:

- *Maintaining the IDDSI Framework, a unified system for naming and describing food textures and drink thicknesses.*
- *Providing free access to the IDDSI Framework, supporting documents, and electronic resources.*
- *Promoting global adoption and implementation of the IDDSI standards.*

Declaration

We, the undersigned organizations, hereby endorse the IDDSI terminology and its associated definitions, testing methods across all settings supporting persons with dysphagia in Europe, committing to the following recommendations:

- 1** Support and promote IDDSI as the standard European terminology for modified food textures and thickened drinks, to improve safety for individuals with dysphagia.
- 2** Ensure that future European health initiatives and strategies incorporate IDDSI as the standard terminology for texture modified foods and thickened drinks.
- 3** Enhance safety for individuals with dysphagia by ensuring IDDSI terminology is adopted in multi-stakeholder environments, including healthcare, community care, food services, industry, education, research and government.
- 4** Engage food and nutrition manufacturers, as well as catering services, in producing culturally appropriate, healthy, and appealing texture-modified foods and drinks that aligns with the IDDSI framework.
- 5** Promote the harmonization and standardization of health records and taxonomies by using IDDSI terminology.
- 6** Encourage the development of new technologies, including those based on artificial intelligence, to assist healthcare professionals and patients in using IDDSI.

This declaration is endorsed by the following organizations:

