

EU Healthy Eating Campaign – a new initiative in the fight against child obesity

Eat it, Drink it, Move it: the EU's Tasty Bunch. On 28 September 2009, Mariann Fischer Boel, Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development, will fire the starting gun for a new Healthy Eating Campaign. The campaign consists of three roadshows that will set off from EU headquarters, the Berlaymont building in Brussels, giving children across Europe a chance to take part in on the spot activities and games. The European Commission will also launch an interactive website, competitions and other events with one key goal in mind – to change children's eating habits for the better. To help get the message across, Belgian tennis champion Justine Henin and 8 year old Guinness record holder Rosolino Cannio will be lending their support.

It's fun to be fit

The **Healthy Eating Campaign**, which is financed entirely by the EU agricultural budget, will run alongside the EU's **School Fruit Scheme** and **School Milk Scheme** – important initiatives for a more balanced diet and healthier eating habits amongst children.

The Healthy Eating Campaign takes the message: **Eat it, Drink it, Move it** right into schools. Over the course of eight weeks, the amazing characters of the Tasty bunch will travel through Belgium, northern France, the UK, Ireland, Estonia, Lithuania and Poland. The roadshow will visit two schools a day. In total our roadshow will reach 18 000 kids in 180 schools. The message: Eat well, because **it's fun to be fit**.

In parallel with the roadshow, an interactive treasure hunt game will be running over the 8 weeks on the EU's Tasty bunch web site. Schoolchildren aged 8 to 15 from all over the EU will try to win entertaining and sports prizes.

Background

Reaching a wider audience

One speaker at the press conference knows all about the sense of achievement being young, fit and healthy can bring. Rosolino Cannio, an 8 year old Italian boy, is the youngest person ever to swim across the strait of Messina, separating Sicily from the mainland. On 27 July 2009 he earned a place in the Guinness Book of Records by swimming the 3.6 km strait in 58 minutes. His presentation will form part of the launch.

The new website, which will feature a video message from Belgian tennis champion Justine Henin, will also be covered at the conference, which ends with a sample of the roadshow display.

Press packs and sample promo material will be available for journalists each time the roadshow pulls into a new country, at schools visited by the roadshow. Interested journalists will be invited to stay and report on how the event goes down with the children.

For the roadshows, fun is the name of the game. Once healthy eating habits and the importance of a balanced diet have been presented, entertaining team games will be played. A quiz illustrated by slides and impromptu activities will grab the kids' attention and freebies will serve to reinforce the message.

EU taking action now to help kids make smart food choices

With a recent Eurobarometer survey showing three quarters of respondents "totally agreeing" that "there seem to be more overweight children these days than five years ago", members of the press can be sure the topic is high profile and newsworthy.

Indeed, around 22 million kids are overweight in the EU, with 5 million of them obese. There's no doubt that the time has come to turn the situation around or face the consequences. Diabetes, cardiovascular disease and even early onset osteoporosis lie in wait for those youngsters who remain oblivious to the need to eat and drink well and wisely.

For further information:

Tasty Bunch campaign:

ec.europa.eu/tasty-bunch

Updated press material is published at <http://ec.europa.eu/tasty-bunch/press-corner>

EU School Fruit Scheme:

http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/markets/fruitveg/sfs/index_en.htm

European School Milk Scheme:

http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/markets/milk/schoolmilk/index_en.htm

DG AGRI: http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/index_en.htm

DG SANCO: http://ec.europa.eu/health-eu/my_lifestyle/nutrition/index_en.htm

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