



15 March 2006

Helen Benson  
UNESDA -Union of European Beverages Associations  
Bd. St. Michel 77-79  
1040 Brussels  
Tel: 32-2-743 40 52  
Fax: 32-2-732 51 02  
e-Mail: [hbenson@agep.be](mailto:hbenson@agep.be)  
<http://www.unesda-cisda.org>

## **UNESDA Comments on the EU Green Paper :**

### **« Promoting healthy diets and physical activity: A European dimension for the prevention of overweight, obesity and chronic diseases » (COM (2005) 637 final, 8 December 2005)**

#### **1. Introduction and General Comments**

UNESDA represents a substantial part of the European non-alcoholic beverages industry, uniting all major producers of non-alcoholic beverages (including carbonated and non-carbonated drinks, juice-based drinks, ready-to-drink teas and coffees, sports and energy drinks), as well its national member trade associations in twenty-five European countries.

UNESDA and its members:

- a) recognise public concerns about today's health issues, particularly the rising levels of obesity and chronic diseases related to poor diets and lack of physical activity; and
- b) fully acknowledge their responsibility in playing a positive role in tackling these problems, together with other relevant actors, and has been developing and implementing initiatives to address these issues.

UNESDA endorses the comments submitted by the CIAA on the Green Paper.

In addition, UNESDA members wish to contribute a few additional comments and explanations from the specific perspective of the European beverage industry, especially in relation to the self-regulatory approach given UNESDA's recently submitted commitments to the EU Platform for Action on Diet, Physical Activity and Health.



## **2. Self-Regulation & the European non-alcoholic beverage industry**

During 2005, UNESDA developed a series of commitments specific to the beverage industry – mostly focused on the advertising and marketing of soft drinks, especially vending in schools and advertising to children.

UNESDA submitted these commitments to the European Commission in December 2005 (*please see attached*). For each commitment, a proposed Key Performance Indicator ('KPI') is indicated to measure implementation and compliance.

The implementation process will commence during 2006 by the nine UNESDA corporate members undersigning these commitments - Cadbury Schweppes European Beverages (now known as the Orangina Group), Cantrell and Cochrane Ireland, The Coca-Cola Company, Coca-Cola Enterprises, The Coca-Cola Hellenic Bottling Company, Gerber Foods Holdings Ltd, GlaxoSmithKline, Pepsi Beverages Europe, and Unilever.

Ultimately, lifestyle and consumption patterns are questions of personal choice and individual responsibility. UNESDA is committed to playing a positive role in helping consumers to make these conscious choices by encouraging, by way of these commitments, commercial communications and sales practices that adhere to sound and responsible principles. UNESDA members believe that self-imposed measures by the industry, combined with a rigorous implementation and compliance scheme, are the most effective way to define these principles and to truly ensure responsible behaviour by the relevant producers.

The fact that the causes of overweight and obesity are multifactorial is correctly acknowledged in the Green Paper. As indicated in the CIAA comments, there is increased recognition of the importance of taking into account the context in which a person lives, the family and wider social contexts to implement preventative strategies targeting lifestyles.

**Effectively tackling the multifactorial aspects of obesity will require multiple strategies and the sustained efforts of many players, both from within and outside the food and beverage industry.**

## **3. Conclusions**

- **Given the multifactorial nature of the causes of overweight and obesity, policies focusing solely on food and food marketing can not be effective in**



addressing the wide spectrum of causes and factors related to overweight and obesity.

- In addition to the UNESDA commitments, equally proactive measures are required from other stakeholders - especially initiatives encouraging substantially greater levels of physical activity across the European population, to achieve a reduction – or at least a stabilisation – in the rates of obesity and overweight.
- UNESDA looks forward to playing a full part in a collaborative and target-focussed approach with all stakeholders to ensure that a synergistic, sustained and, most importantly, a successful approach to promoting healthy diets and physical activity is achieved.

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**CONTACT:**

*Alain Beaumont*  
*Secretary General*  
*UNESDA – Union of European Beverages Associations*  
*79 Boulevard Saint Michel, 1040 Brussels*  
*Tel: +32 2743 40 50*  
[\*abeaumont@agep.be\*](mailto:abeaumont@agep.be)

*Attached:*

*UNESDA ‘Commitments’, i.e. “Contribution by UNESDA and its corporate members to the EU Platform for Action on Diet, Physical Activity and Health”  
(20 December 2005)*

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