

## **COMMENTS ON GREEN PAPER**

### **Child Rights Protection Association -“CLARITAS”**

We've got acquainted with Green Paper – “Promoting Healthy Diets and Physical Activity: a European Dimension for the Prevention of Overweight, Obesity and Chronic Diseases” – issued by Commission of the European Communities.

We want to pay attention to the chapter V.3 of the Green Paper (“A focus on children and young people”). It contains healthy-promoting interventions and protection of children's health by promoting healthy diets and physical activity and it mainly refers to the school age children. The feeding issue in early childhood first of all healthy nutrition habit such as breastfeeding is not properly addressed in it. While there is widely known, that breastfeeding provides ideal nutrition for healthy growth and development of the children and the prevention of severe morbidity and mortality. Breastfeeding may contribute to reducing health risks and curbing health care spending. Babies not fed human milk have high rates of chronic diseases later in life.

Infants who are fed with breastmilk more than infant formula or who are breastfed for longer periods, may have a lower risk of being overweight during older childhood and adolescence.

Breastfeeding has many health and emotional benefits for the mother, decreasing blood loss postpartum, delaying return to fertility and reducing the risk of cancer of the breast and ovaries.

A higher rate and duration of breastfeeding is associated with reduced cost for the family, the health care system and the society in general. This would involve reduced future treatment costs for conditions like allergic disease, heart disease, obesity, breast cancer and osteoporosis, as well as respiratory and gastrointestinal infections.

The protection, promotion and support of breastfeeding is therefore of the utmost importance in public health, as emphasized in important European documents.

The main strategies for the protection, promotion and support of breastfeeding are:

- The implementation of Global Strategy on Infant and Young Child Feeding
- The implementation of the International Code
- The implementation of the ILO Maternity Protection Convention
- The Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative (BFHI)
- Support by the trained health professionals
- Support by the trained peer counselors
- Support by the family, community and workplace

The mentioned interventions are usually interrelated and integrated in order to maximize their combined effect. The effect will also depend on the continuity, because a change in the behavior of mothers, families and health professionals and of the infant feeding culture in society requires the interventions to be sustained for a sufficient length of time.

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