



Response to DG SANCO's Green Paper on Healthy Diets and Physical Activity March 2006

Something about Nike ...

In 1972, Nike was a small athletic footwear company, and since then we have built our business focussed on delivering the best, most innovative products to athletes and consumers.

Today we are a \$14 billion company, with over 23,000 employees and the global leader in our industry. Nike is about sport, but we also recognise the responsibility we have as a global company to address our impact on the environment and the communities in which we live, work and play.

Our Company mission statement is, TO BRING INSPIRATION AND INNOVATION TO EVERY ATHLETE* IN THE WORLD, *"If you have a body you are an athlete"* and our core brand principles are to *inspire, innovate, focus, connect and care* – these are at the heart of our business.

Whilst our core business is of course focused and interested on mainstream physical activity issues, and clearly has a corporate interest in promoting it, we would like to highlight our particular interest in how we raise the participation levels of excluded communities.

Across Europe, we run community investment programmes, which use sport as a catalyst for social cohesion focusing on disadvantaged young people. Our goal is to develop innovative, multi-stakeholder partnerships that help build young people's self-esteem and use sport as a way to bring them into the community.



GREEN PAPER

Promoting healthy diets and physical activity: a European dimension for the prevention of overweight, obesity and chronic diseases

RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS

IV.3. Health across EU policies

- 1. What are the concrete contributions which Community policies, if any, should make towards the promotion of healthy diet and physical activity and towards creating environments which make healthy choices easy choices?**

Community Policy:

- 1. Should proactively support business contributions to the debate notably through multi-stakeholder groups. This may cover groups such as the platform on Obesity, Physical activity and health as well as other platforms, whether driven by a Member State, the not for profit or the business sectors, and working at EU or national level.*
- 2. In this debate, no "one size fits all", but the EU can act as a catalyst so innovative ideas and solutions can be developed. Community policies can also usefully contribute by identifying opportunities for building or supporting existing public policy networks and increasing awareness of physical activity issues with EU member state governments.*

- 2. On which areas related to nutrition, physical activity, the development of tools for the analysis of related disorders, and consumer behavior is more research needed?**

According to a recent study on Sports Participation in the European Union: Trends and Differences¹, some research exists on the extent, motives, and determinants of sports participation, dropping-out and non-participation, but there is far too little knowledge about the more profound background thereof.

In order to gain real insight into the dynamics of sports participation and non participation, sport and physical activity should be studied with respect to their developmental and social context. This requires a qualitative research approach alongside the quantitative approach to

¹ *Sports Participation in the European Union: Trends and differences, Maarten van Bottenburg, Bas Rijnen, Jacco van Sterkenburg, W.J.H Mulier Institute Arko Sports Media, 2005*



sports participation with a differentiation according to social characteristics (age, gender, social milieu, ethnicity) on the one hand and sporting or physical activity characteristics on the other hand.

Further research should be conducted to determine root causes, identify data gaps and comparable data and develop solutions as a contribution to the policy debate.

V.2 Consumer education

- 3. How can consumer's best be enabled to make informed choices and take effective action?**
- 4. What contributions can public-private partnerships make towards consumer education?**
- 5. In the field of nutrition and physical activity, which should be the key messages to give to the consumers, and how and by whom should they be delivered?**

Rather than using mass media campaigns to educate the consumer, a recent study on Sports Participation in the European Union: Trends and Differences² concludes that a variety of evaluative data has demonstrated that the effectiveness of such campaigns is actually rather disappointing both in the short term and in the long term. It appears that purely raising people's awareness does not alter their behaviour. Campaigns work on the assumption that people are rational to such a degree that they will modify their behaviour when more frequently confronted with the consequences thereof.

In order to understand means for effective communication, we would suggest working in consultation with all stakeholders to find innovative, tailored solutions for the different regions in the EU.

V. 4 Food availability, physical activity and health education at the work place

- 1. What measures would encourage and facilitate the practice of physical activity during breaks and on the way to and from work?**

The most promising way to help change the working culture is to work directly with employers and provide guidelines which actively encourage physical activity within the working day, so in turn the right approach to exercise becomes central to what it means to be a good employer. This could be as simple as discouraging meetings during the lunchtime period, to give people an opportunity to take a break as well as encourage and organise staff volunteering opportunities promoting physical activity outside the office surroundings.

² Sports Participation in the European Union: Trends and differences, Maarten van Bottenburg, Bas Rijnen, Jacco van Sterkenburg, W.J.H Mulier Institute Arko Sports Media, 2005



It is unrealistic to expect all businesses to have gyms on site, but there may be some value in providing guidelines for new commercial buildings. A baseline minimum requirement should be the provision of workplace access to showers. Also offering tax relief for employee gym and sports club memberships could be a powerful policy driver for some employers.

In urban areas, having good cycle routes is important, as are safe places to keep bicycles during the day. There could be an opportunity to set up bike stations in towns & cities where one can pick up a bike from Point A and drop it at Point B – at a minimal cost.

Volunteerism can also be an effective way to contribute to local communities as individuals, in teams and as departments bringing the physical activity into play. Nike is actively engaged in programmes across Europe which encourage employees to volunteer using physical activity as a tool to fight social exclusion.

Selected examples:

Nike volunteering programmes in Berlin, Germany, promote social inclusion projects in disadvantaged areas of the city, while giving Nike employees the opportunity to be actively involved.

Nike is also piloting a volunteer programme in the Netherlands (already running in the UK) through which employees get maximum of 5 days paid to volunteer. Volunteering programmes are co-ordinated with local NGOs and Foundations and focus on using physical activity to fight social exclusion.

V.6 Addressing the obesogenic environment

2. In which ways can public policy contribute to ensure that physical activity be build into daily routines?

As per our earlier comment, it would be beneficial to hear from stakeholders directly and then formulate their recommendations into policy proposals. The EU can have a role in co-ordinating this work at the international, EU, national, regional as well as local level. The EU can also have a role in demonstrating existing best practice and solutions that seem to work in some Member States.

3. Which measures are needed to foster the development of environments that are conducive to physical activity?

We believe in the long-term goal of abolishing barriers to physical activity and promoting the access to sport for all. Examples of public policy support for these goals could be:

- 1) Re-positioning physical education in schools in terms of importance in the weekly curriculum*
- 2) Guaranteeing access to facilities and good use of urban space for both children and adults.*

V.7 Socio-Economic inequalities

- 1. Which measures and at what level would promote healthy diets and physical activity towards population groups and households belonging to certain socio-economic categories and enable these groups to adopt healthier lifestyles?**
- 2. How can the clustering of unhealthy habits that has frequently been demonstrated for certain socio-economic group to be addressed?**

According to a recent study on Sports Participation in the European Union³ there is a need to take into account the cultural and socio-economic levels of the local community. Young people have different preferences in terms of physical activity to older people. Women tend to play sport in a different context to men. Women of immigrant origin are influenced by different cultural stereotypes to men. The urban situation is fundamentally different to that in rural areas. Policy interventions have to take these differences into account and need to adopt a differentiated approach.

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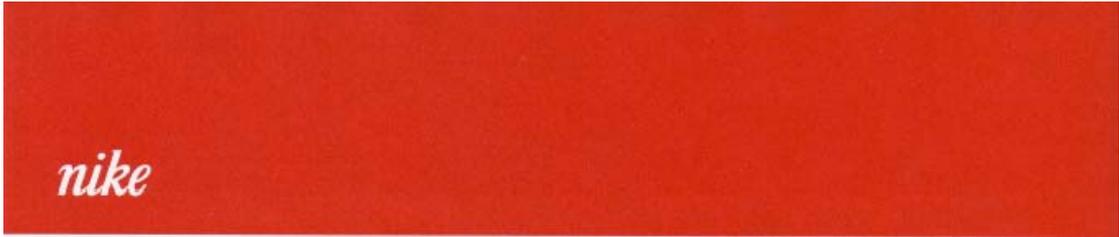
V.8 Fostering an integrated and comprehensive approach towards the promotion of healthy diets and physical activity

- 1. What are the most important elements of an integrated and comprehensive approach towards the promotion of healthy diets and physical activity?**
- 2. Which role at national and Community level?**

In order to understand how to develop a comprehensive approach towards promoting physical activity we would suggest working in consultation with all stakeholders to find innovative tailored solutions for the different regions in the EU.

In this debate, no “one size fits all”, but the EU can act as a catalyst so innovative ideas and solutions can be developed. Community policies can also usefully contribute by identifying opportunities for building or supporting existing public policy networks and increasing awareness of physical activity issues with EU member state governments as.

³ *Sports Participation in the European Union: Trends and differences, Maarten van Bottenburg, Bas Rijnen, Jacco van Sterkenburg, W.J.H Mulier Institute Arko Sports Media, 2005*



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V.10 Co-operation beyond the European Union

- 1. Under which conditions should the Community engage in exchanging experience and identifying best practice between the EU and non-EU countries? If, so through which means?**

In seeking solutions to this difficult issue, the EU is ideally placed to provide examples of best practice. However, the EU will not be able to solve the problem alone and dialogue with 3rd parties is essential. We would encourage exchange with the US in particular, and would suggest that partnership with the WHO amongst others, is extremely useful.

This paper represents the views of its author on the subject. These views have not been adopted or in any way approved by the Commission and should not be relied upon as a statement of the Commission's or Health & Consumer Protection DG's views. The European Commission does not guarantee the accuracy of the data included in this paper, nor does it accept responsibility for any use made thereof.