



EU Platform on Diet,
Physical Activity and Health

Plenary Meeting Tuesday 19 September 2006 Summary Report

APPROVED AGENDA

- 1. Introduction by the Commission**
- 2. Update of Synopsis on Commitments**
- 3. Monitoring Working Package**
- 4. Platform new membership – State of Play**
- 5. Joint commitment on healthy workplaces**
- 6. Platform networks**
- 7. Simplified labelling (BEUC)**
- 8. Managing sweetness conference**
- 9. WHO Europe Ministerial Conference**
- 10. Measures and activities of the major German retailers to prevent obesity and to promote healthy diets and physical activity**
- 11. Any other business**
 - Conference EGEA IV “The role of fruit and vegetables in the fight against obesity”**
 - German Presidency conference on physical activity and nutrition**
 - Announcement by EuroCommerce**

1. INTRODUCTION BY THE COMMISSION

Chair Mr Madelin welcomes all participants.

Since the 11th of September 2006 the individual contributions to the Green Paper but also the report on the analysis of the contributions to the Green Paper have been made available on website

http://ec.europa.eu/health/ph_determinants/life_style/nutrition/green_paper/consultation_en.htm.

Mr Madelin mentions that partnership in public health has moved into spot light and that there is an increasing focus on nutrition strategies within EU. So these developments fit very well with our Platform activities. There are two points raised with respect to the agenda. Firstly, there is an additional announcement by Eurocommerce, which is added to point 11 of the agenda. Secondly, regarding late availability of documents, Mr Madelin asks that documents are provided earlier at the next meetings.

2. UPDATE OF SYNOPSIS ON COMMITMENTS

Mr. Roux introduced the present Synopsis document. The commitments have been updated up to the 31st of August 2006. The previous version presented commitments up to April 2006. In the present version, the commitments have been categorized according to main area of action, and more information has been included on monitoring aspects. This also means that the present Synopsis overlaps to some extent with the First Monitoring Progress Report (see next point on the agenda). Therefore, the Commission proposes that future modalities for summarizing the Commitments are further discussed at next meeting.

The Platform members may submit comments on the present version of the Synopsis of Commitments until the 1st of October. After that date the document will be finalised.

3. MONITORING WORKING PACKAGE

Mr Madelin compliments the Monitoring Work Package (MWP) group with the large amount of work performed and with the present document on the Monitoring Framework. He also noted that now it has become time to move on from theory into practice.

One of the Platform members has a comment on the minutes of the Monitoring Work Package meeting of the 12th of September. One of the members had stressed upon the importance of an independent monitoring system, but that remark had not been included in the minutes. Although the Commission recognizes this, it is not always possible to have a fully independent monitoring system. It is also a matter of resources and one single prescription cannot be given. Therefore, it is important that there is transparency in views and that a scoring system is developed to check the quality of the monitoring process.

Mr Bell mentions that although there are still some concerns within the MWP group with respect to the framework and the monitoring process, we have to move on. The nature of the MWP meetings is now moving from discussing on what monitoring involves to actually performing monitoring and to discuss the problems the members face. One of the Platform members stresses the importance of clear and simple goals in order to make monitoring possible. Another point raised is that when one is dealing with competitors it might be difficult to bring transparency in the monitoring process.

EUFIC mentions that they are in the process of developing a template for communication (2-3 pages) that might be particularly useful in the end stages of actions. It is suggested to discuss this document in one of the next Platform meetings.

Mr Madelin states that the challenge is to do better monitoring in the future. There should be an increasing focus on the outcomes of the monitoring process. It is important to come up with case studies that can be helpful for others.

The Platform members adopt the Monitoring Framework document and the First Monitoring Progress Report.

Mr Bell states that from now onwards all members will be followed more intensively on their progress in their commitment and in their monitoring. **All stakeholders will be asked to give presentations on their progress in the coming Monitoring Work Package meetings and will be held accountable.**

Dates and topics for the next meetings are:

- 17 October: Advertising/marketing and nutrition information and labelling
- 14 November: Product development/reformulation and portion sizes
- 5 December: Promoting a healthy lifestyle/education on nutrition and physical activity
- 16 January: Discussion on report
- 6 February: Discussion on report

4. PLATFORM NEW MEMBERSHIP – STATE OF PLAY

The Commission decided to accept full membership of 3 new organisations (the Federation of the European Play Industry (FEPI); the European Health and Fitness Association (EHFA) and the Assemblée des Régions Européennes Fruitières, Légumières et Horticoles (AREFHL).

5. JOINT COMMITMENT ON HEALTHY WORKPLACES

The Commission paper on healthy work places has been distributed at the previous Platform meeting. The discussion now is on how to proceed. Mr Madelin asked all Platform members whether they are committed to join efforts for healthy work places. At this point the aim is not to reach consensus, but to have a critical mass. In general, the Platform members also support the idea, but there are some reservations with respect to the additional work related to monitoring of healthy work places initiatives. The discussion that follows touches the issue whether this should be considered additional or as part of the other commitments. There are no extra resources available from EU. It is also mentioned that in some sectors it may be very difficult to get the health messages across and to get people motivated. It is important to learn from best practices, to build up case studies and use it for promotion among other stakeholders.

Mr Madelin concluded that there should be recognition of the importance of healthy work places within our own organizations and that the members should be ambassadors for health messages for other sectors ('health in all policies'). Finally, the Platform should try to get workplace on the agenda. In this respect, we should try to use a common message that applies to everybody. At the end of January 2007 Platform members should have assessed the initiatives on healthy work place within their organisations. The present Commission paper will be revised and will be formulated as a decision paper. Next meeting this revised version of the paper will be discussed.

The Platform members may submit comments on the present version of the paper until 10 October.

6. PLATFORM NETWORKS

The Commission feels that partnerships are needed at EU level but also at the national and local level. A first step, would consist in producing a directory bringing together the same sort of actors at national or at regional/city level present in the EU Platform. These should be linked and be complementary to national platforms, or could serve as the core for the development of multi-stakeholder initiatives in countries where national structures do not yet exist. This could facilitate proper relationships down the line and effectively reach the population. It would help national authorities to start initiatives if they can easily access

experiences from other countries. There is no intention to replicate earlier initiatives or to propose a single design. The Commission recognizes the differences between the various national platforms. Platform members generally welcome the idea. Raised issues by the Platform members address some comparable and available initiatives or databases. It is decided that the working document will be revised according to the comments and that it will be returned to the Platform members for further discussion.

Every Platform member should name a contact point by the end of October. This person may be senior or junior as long as this person can answer questions of the Platform about nutrition and physical activity strategies.

7. SIMPLIFIED LABELLING (BEUC)

Barbara Gallani presented the work performed on simplified labelling. Members of the research group were representatives of national authorities (FR, UK, NL, DK), independent nutritionists, representatives of Nestle, Unilever, Ahold, Walmart, BEUC and DG SANCO (Jonathan Back). Reason for this research is the trend of a variety of health and nutrition related labels. A survey performed in five European countries showed that most people want to have a nutrition indicator on food packaging, even those who are not interested in nutrition. A small discussion group was established with the aim of developing a model representing a wide consensus (not unanimous). In the process they used scientific evidence and a wide representation of stakeholders. Questions addressed were “is there a need for a EU system? What are the nutrients to be considered? What would make the system credible”. Minutes of the meetings can be found at www.beuc.org

Material considered is data on current situation (DK, NL, FR, SE and UK), research studies (e.g. FSA, CLCV-DGAL, Unilever, Walmart, Tesco, Sainbury’s, etc) and sales data.

Conclusions of the report: a EU wide simplified labelling scheme

- Would help consumers to choose a healthy diet and constitute an incentive for producers to reformulate products.
- Should be on front of pack and in addition on back of pack there should be nutrition information
- Requires an agreement on a clear format and a set of underpinning nutritional criteria
- It should not require intensive education
- Should be introduced EU wide
- Need for an interpretative element to make sense of numerical info ‘at a glance’.
Combination of facts + a quick way of giving the message.
- Limited information: Fat, sat fat, sugars and salt
- Energy logo does not provide sufficient information
- A combination of information per serving and per 100 gram would help consumers.

Mr Madelin states that we need a critical view of the available studies. Traffic light should be based on science and not on political decision-making. One Platform member observed that individual variation meant that the indicative labelling such as the traffic light system might not be the same for all the population. Mrs Gallani considered that the same argument applied to labelling based on guideline daily amounts. Another area of interest would be the effectiveness of the labelling for the whole society, so including individuals of low socio-economic background. There is inconsistent evidence on this matter.

The final report of the BEUC coordinated group included a note that one of the members of the group (Unilever) did not agree with the conclusions: It was explained that Unilever is still learning on how to address labelling. More data is emerging with different outcomes, e.g. there is not such thing as bad food and the colour red is not by definition “bad”. EUFIC considered that it was important to work with academics that can perform research based on a theoretical model. At the moment there is very little insight into actual use of labelling and the

reaction to it. It is known what people like in labelling: 1. Simplification, 2. Complete information and 3. No coercion. There is no information available on long-term effects..

Next steps of BEUC are to put together different stakeholders and use a science-based approach. The discussion will be continued in next Platform meeting.

8. MANAGING SWEETNESS CONFERENCE

The purpose of the managing sweetness conference was to provide a platform for a consensus statement to be produced by selected invitees of Oldways, an organisation in particular supported by UNESDA. The presenters mention that sugar is not as bad as often suggested. It is not sweetness that is the problem but calories. At the conference a scientific consensus statement on sugar and sweetness was adopted. One of the members of the Commission mentions that the consensus statement does not cover all elements. There is no mention of problems related to over-consumption or problems of sugar consumption in children. Excessive sugar consumption is a learned taste. It is difficult to separate innate likeness of sweet and what is learned. There is still no full support, be it by consumers, in particular consumer organisations or some scientists on the safety and use of intensive sweeteners in drinks. Can a product with sweeteners get a green label? It is important to have clear criteria beforehand on to what is acceptable and should receive a green dot.

9. WHO EUROPE MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE

The delegation of the Platform is limited to in total 15 persons. The Commission presents a proposition of people who may participate in the delegation. However, **those on the list should notice the Commission before Friday 22 September 1500 hr whether they will participate.** If not, someone else will be added to the list. Other Platform members can participate to the satellite session. Funding is available on the same basis as for participation in the Platform.

The program of the Satellite session is presented, discussed and approved. The focus is on partnership as a tool.

10. MEASURES AND ACTIVITIES OF THE MAJOR GERMAN RETAILERS TO PREVENT OBESITY AND TO PROMOTE HEALTHY DIETS AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Britta Gallus gives a presentation on behalf of German retail organizations. The aim is to give an overview of activities related to diet and PA. Several retail organizations have adapted their products and have obesity on the agenda. For example:

ALDI: has 20 articles with reduced fat and calories, DOHLE: promotes fruits and vegetables (fit for sun), EDEKA: has 12 nutritionists that help customers online and make healthy nutrition plans. FENEBERG: delivers healthy meals to factories, schools and nursing homes, NORMA: has new product range: 'nimms leicht' and uses star labelling (energy labelling), GLOBUS: provides knowledge about healthy products and cooking, METRO group: provides healthy wellness organic products and organizes sports events, labels according towards the CIAA approach, REWE: follows 5 a day initiative, low fat campaign, SCHWARZ gruppe: Linessa line, reduced fat/calorie and rich in vitamins, active in sports events, TEGUT: Uses lifestyle model. Balance of diet, PA and recreation, e.g. skate and running event. TENGELMAN: Product range VIVA VITAL. Major advertisement campaign (1.2 million contacts reached), run events, WALMART: a playground campaign.

Questions related to the presentation are: 'Do companies sit together and discuss action (as part of a learning process)', 'does any of the retailers do monitoring and make plans for what they do next' and 'did the companies do consumer research on labelling?' or 'was there nutrient profiling behind the labelling?' With respect to learning, yes there was a food law committee that met twice per year and discussed the activities. However all companies have

their individual approach and adapt their labelling to the needs of their consumers. They tackle issues individually. With respect to monitoring: yes they do monitor but this information is confidential. With respect to nutrition information or labelling, it seems that consumers do not understand the nutrition information. The companies tried to find a solution (individual), some follow CIAA but others do not. In general, the companies are not happy with nutrition profiles.

11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- **EGEA Conference** on “The role of fruit and vegetables in the fight against obesity” 17-19 April 2007 Brussels. Aim of the conference is to present the opportunity to gather science based evidence on

1. Obesity epidemic
2. Fruit and vegetables and prevention of diseases
3. Fruit and vegetables and prevention of obesity
4. Promotion of fruit and vegetables
5. Policies and political commitments to increase fruit and vegetables consumption within obesity prevention. + Round table discussion, practicable actions.

The conference will include a session with the Platform.

- **German Presidency conference** on physical activity and nutrition (February 2007). Standing committee of European Doctors and CIAA are in organization board to represent the Platform.

- **Eurocommerce** presents a National Brochure on the 4th of October. BIG actions towards healthier eating. Members who are interested to participate, please contact EuroCommerce.

- A leaflet ‘Fit am ball’ is distributed. It concerns a conference organized by the German Sport University Cologne.

Mr Madelin closes the meeting and repeats the deadlines:

- **For those on the list to participate in the WHO conference: Give notice of your participation before Friday 22 September 1500 hr**
 - **For all members: Give your comments on the Commitment paper before the end of this month and to the workplace commitment paper before 10 October**
 - **Platform members are asked to provide a name of a contact person by the end of October**
 - **Next meeting will be 21st of November 2006**
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