



EU Platform on Diet,
Physical Activity and Health

DIET, PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND HEALTH – A EUROPEAN PLATFORM FOR ACTION

PLENARY MEETING THURSDAY, 19 APRIL 2007 SUMMARY REPORT

APPROVED AGENDA

[Morning Session: 10.00-13.00; Centre of Conference Albert Borschette, Brussels]

- 1. Introduction by the Commission**
- 2. Synopsis Commitments – Annual Report 2007
Second Monitoring Progress Report**
 - Presentation of the Synopsis (by RIVM)
 - Presentation of the Monitoring Report (by Rand –Europe)
 - Data Management (by Commission)
 - Discussion
- 3. Any Other Business**

[Afternoon Session: 14.30-17.30; Sofitel Brussels Europe, Brussels]

- 4. Session organized in coordination with Aprifel in the context of the EGEA Conference
“The role of fruit and vegetables in the fight against obesity”**

Title Session: Policies and political commitments to increase F&V consumption within an obesity prevention strategy

ROUND TABLE: “The challenges to increase F&V consumption”
(chaired and animated by Mr. Tim Lang)

1. INTRODUCTION BY THE COMMISSION

Mr Madelin welcomed the Platform Members.

The Synopsis Commitments Annual Report 2007 and the Second Monitoring Progress Report were released in March 2007.

2. SYNOPSIS COMMITMENTS - ANNUAL REPORT 2007 SECOND MONITORING PROGRESS REPORT

Presentation of the Synopsis Commitments – Annual Report 2007

Mr Joop van Raaij (RIVM) presented the synopsis of commitments. The increase in commitments over the past year: from 70 in January 2006 up to more than 200 (by 31 Platform Members) in March 2007 was highlighted. The intention of providing information about the actions is to give the user of the database details on the planning stage of the action in order to understand why the action is being done and how much work the initiative involves. The intention of providing output information is to provide details on the implementation stage of the action, to outline how the action was put in place, and to give an indication about the size of the action. Not all descriptions of the actions are really helpful for these purposes and the monitoring of actions has proven to be more difficult than expected (see presentation Second Monitoring Progress Report). For about 60% of the commitments the actors reported at least some remarks on relevance of their action. Sometimes the relevance was given at the health level, sometimes at the level of action outcome. The process from development of action to impact of action was discussed and it was shown at what steps there are main roles for the individual actors. Finally, Mr van Raaij suggested that a tool that might help the actor to improve an intended action before the action is actually implemented and to measure to what level a described action might result in a good or best practice if it would be performed as described. He gave a presentation of the idea of such a tool and explained that the development of the tool was not part of the Platform process and that the data from the Platform database that had been used to illustrate as an example how the tool could be applied would not be used in external presentations or shown on websites.

Some Members indicted that their commitments had not been correctly classified or summarised in the report. Mr. van Raaij suggested that for future reports the actors could provide a summary of their activities in order to avoid this.

[for more information: see the Synopsis report and the PowerPoint presentation “Synopsis Commitments – Annual Report 2007” by Joop van Raaij and Ingeborg Bovendeur]

Presentation of the Second Monitoring Progress Report

Mr. Tom Ling (RAND-Europe) discussed the achievements of the EU Platform in 2006 as derived from an analysis of 121 monitoring forms submitted by the Platform Members. This report outlines the considerable range of activities associated with the Platform. In addition to an overview of the Platform’s achievements, RAND highlighted monitoring practice as being important or relevant to the Platform. Four quality categories are agreed upon for assessment of the monitoring forms: specificity, clarity, focus, and measurement. The results suggest that a significant number of monitoring forms were not entirely adequate, although most forms communicated enough

information to allow at least a general understanding of what is being indicated by the Platform Member.

The Monitoring Progress Report recognizes that after two years the Platform has developed a range of skills in producing monitoring data. However, it is also clear that there are significant variations in the quality of the reports and that some Platform Members are struggling with the monitoring of their commitments. He underlined that only 6 Platform Members (representing 16 Actions) accepted the invitation of RAND for a more individual advice.

[for more information: see the Second Monitoring Progress Report and the PowerPoint presentation on this report by Tom Ling and Michael Hallsworth]

The Chair observed the challenges mentioned by RAND are not platform-specific. He commented on three areas (1) Relationship to the Platform: there seems to be a strong push to be politically correct; (2) Clarity: there is a need to define the ‘reader’; organisations might have to produce the output in a completely different way depending on who the ‘reader’ is; (3) Resources: is there enough allocation of resources by the organisation?

Data Management

Jonathan Back (Commission) made a number of points in relation to information gathering and the Platform database. Highlighting that whilst the current systems have evolved with the help and support of members, it is clear that some are finding it difficult to provide the required information. He went on to note that there needs to be a balance between having sufficient information to produce synopsis and monitoring reports (i.e. to communicate the output of the Platform) and minimising the burden on members to provide this information. The Commission were considering ways of lightening and simplifying the data requirements for the Platform, although this had to take account of the resources available within the Commission and IT issues.

The Chair informed that the Commission intended to prepare an orientation paper on how the Platform may continue including the issue of data management.

Discussion

It was decided that there would be an individual feed back to Members on the monitoring of their commitments.

Some Platform Members sought clarification on whether they need to adjust their commitments. It was noted that the basis of the Platform is to share voluntary initiatives of the Members but it is not necessary for the Platform as a whole to filter them.

It was noted that the inclusion in the database of commitments that were not being monitored should be reviewed to ensure that the information was credible. Small organisations without many resources may have difficulty to initiate concrete monitoring on their commitments though. This, in combination with the imposed timeframe, makes it difficult for them to meet the requirements of ‘good’ monitoring or best practice

It was considered that Members could learn more from each other by exchange of experience through commitments that had not been successful, by highlighting potential obstacles as well as learning from the successes.

The Chair explained that:

- He was pleased to see the progress made so far by the Platform and that it had been a challenge for all Members.
- He believed that both reports can play a role in the Members' own organisations and help with the refinement of commitments and monitoring of commitments..

3. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- UNESDA invited members to the UNESDA Commitments Monitoring Workshop (“Responsibility and Choice in Action”) on the 2nd of May 2007 in Berlin, Germany.
- Mr Philippe Roux gave an update to the Platform Members on the progress made with respect to the Conference on Action in the Workplace that will take place the 3rd of July 2007, the day before the next Platform Meeting.

4. SESSION ORGANIZED IN COORDINATION WITH APRIFEL IN THE CONTEXT OF THE EGEA CONFERENCE “THE ROLE OF FRUIT AND VEGETABLES IN THE FIGHT AGAINST OBESITY”

From 17 to 19 April 2007 the EGEA International Conference “The role of fruit and vegetables in the fight against obesity” was organised by Aprifel with the support of DG SANCO, DG AGRI and the EU Platform for Diet, Physical Activity and Health. The Conference was divided into six sessions. The first four sessions dealt with background issues on fruit and vegetables and the prevention of obesity and associated diseases. The fifth session discussed the barriers to reaching the recommendations for fruit and vegetables, in the context of obesity prevention. The sixth session (afternoon session of 19 April) dealt with policies and political commitments to increase fruit and vegetable consumption within an obesity prevention strategy. The Platform Members were able to attend the sixth session.

The sixth session was organised as a Round table (“the challenges to increase F&V consumption”) and was chaired and animated by Mr. Tim Lang. The panellists were representatives of the European commission (DG AGRI, DG Research, DG SANCO), EFSA, EGEA, European consumer's organisation, a National Center of Public Health, Stakeholders (Platform Members).

In addition to the Platform Chair several panellists are from Platform organisations.

The Conference agreed the following conclusions:

"European action to increase fruit and vegetable consumption

To address the growing challenge of chronic diseases - cancer, coronary heart disease and obesity - on health, the economy and development, EGEA 2007 adopted the following

statement, following valuable input from Egea scientists, DG Health and Consumer Protection, DG Agriculture, DG Research and the WHO Regional Office for Europe:

Increasing fruit and vegetable consumption is an important part of comprehensive prevention of chronic diseases. Currently citizens of only few European countries eat the daily recommended amount of 400 g of fruit and vegetables.

The WHO European Charter on counteracting obesity sets goals for curbing the epidemic and reversing the trend in children and adolescents by 2015. It recommends increasing consumption of fruit and vegetables.

The German government has given, during its Presidency, commitment to increase fruit and vegetable intake by 2010, so that 20% people are consuming *at least* 5 portions of fruit and vegetable each day; and that by 2010, an extra 30% of catering (such as kindergartens, schools, cafeterias and old people's homes) serve healthy meals, which include fruit and vegetables.

The 2007 EGEA conference "The Role of Fruit and Vegetables in the Fight Against Obesity" has identified a number of effective and innovative solutions to increase consumption of fruit and vegetables.

Among these effective solutions, three main areas of action should be given priority:

- Increase access to and availability of fruit and vegetables in school
- Improve information on the health benefits of fruit and vegetables and increase advertising.
- Reduce social inequalities in fruit and vegetable consumption."

[For more information, see the *ABSTRACT BOOK – EGEA IV – The Role of Fruit and Vegetables in the Fight Against Obesity*]