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

PLENARY MEETING
23 April 2008
SUMMARY REPORT
(DRAFT)

APPROVED AGENDA

1. Introduction by the Commission

2. Annual Monitoring Report (draft report disseminated)

3. “The Proof of The Pudding: Analysis of ten of the world’s largest food companies’ response to obesity and related health concerns.”
   Rachel Crossley, Insight Investment

4. Memberships (paper by Commission services)

5. Debate on Platform initiatives in reformulation and labelling fields
   - “Salt Initiatives, recent developments”
     Information by Commission services
   - Nutrition Labelling
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   - Reformulation and Labelling monitoring survey
     CIAA
   - "Pan European Research on Nutrition Labelling"
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6. AOB
   - Foresight report
     Peter Kopelman, Foresight Programme
   - International code on Marketing of Foods and Non-alcohol beverages to children
     Neville Rigby, IOTF
   - Initial creative concepts for the Healthy Lifestyles Campaign
     Dominique Lyle, EACA
1. INTRODUCTION BY THE COMMISSION

Robert Madelin welcomed the Platform members and the various guest speakers. He also welcomed ECO Consultants who have been contracted by the European Commission to provide technical support to the Platform. ECO will act as the secretariat for meetings and prepare a number of thematic background documents which will be used to initiate discussions at Platform meetings.

2. ANNUAL MONITORING REPORT (draft report distributed)
   Philippe Roux / Jonathan Back (DG SANCO), Tom Ling / Michael Hallsworth (RAND Europe)

Philippe Roux explained that in the interest of simplifying the monitoring and reporting process, a decision was made in 2007 to produce a single Annual Report rather than separate documents on synopsis and monitoring. This would reduce the burden for Platform Members and be more accessible for external audiences. The draft 2008 Annual Report circulated to Platform Members includes an overview of the achievements of the Platform, summaries of Platform meetings, outcome of workshops and the data gathered by RAND Europe on monitoring.

Jonathan Back explained how the monitoring section of the report had been produced and highlighted how this was different from that of the previous year. Specifically, more categories had been added in order to better group similar commitments and to aid readability of the report, and discussion sections had been added for each category in order to try and put the achievements into context in relation to meeting the aims of the Platform.

Tom Ling and Michael Hallsworth from RAND Europe introduced the results of the monitoring exercise of 2007 Platform actions, based on a detailed review of the 148 commitments which had been completed and for which monitoring information had been submitted. They briefly explained the process for assessing the quality of monitoring forms, which was the same as the one used the previous year and was based on giving commitments a score from 1 to 5. Analysis of the scores demonstrated that the average score had increased from last year, representing both the diversity and innovation of the Platform, but almost 50% of monitoring forms still do not reach an “adequate” score of 3. While they acknowledged that some activities were inherently harder to monitor, they felt that it should not be that difficult for any individual commitment to reach the 'adequate' score. Especially as often it was simply a case of providing some basic information on the commitment and the monitoring. For example clearer objectives, dates for when activities would be completed, and details that helped to put the achievements into context.

Feedback from Platform members:
The Report was generally welcomed, particularly the simplified process and overview. There was a call to make the report more user friendly, with a layout which clearly separates comments and contextual information from factual material. The sub-categorisation was considered to be useful because it assists understanding of what is being done and what can be improved. However, Platform Members preferred to be able to select the sub-category themselves, possibly through a prompt in the submission form process.

Conclusions:
In concluding, Mr Madelin noted that Members seemed generally content with the report and that any further comments should be submitted to the Platform secretariat by the 30 April. The report was to then be formally published soon after that date.
Mr Madelin also commented that it was somewhat disappointing that around half of the commitments were not yet achieving an adequate score for the monitoring. His view was that this was something that Platform members could, and should, focus on over the next year and he would like to see a key goal for the Platform, namely that at least 80% of the commitments scored at 3 or higher in the monitoring exercise for 2008.

Rachel Crossley, Insight Investment

On 9 April 2008, Insight Investment and JP Morgan published the results of a benchmarking analysis of ten of the world's largest food manufacturers. The companies were evaluated against a best practice framework developed by Insight and the International Business Leaders Forum. Over one year, they worked with the individual companies to identify where they are meeting best practice and how they should focus their efforts. Their unique position as shareholders meant they could have access to direct discussion with managers, as well as analysing public domain data. Insight Investment reviewed whether companies had created objectives and performance targets in relation to obesity and related health concerns. They found that even leading companies had not consistently implemented this agenda across their global practice.

However, health and wellness has been taken into account at senior management level in European companies, whilst US companies are still attempting to integrate this agenda. A cultural divide can be seen, with European companies using EU/WHO or even FDA guidance on nutrition to create 3 tiers of products: healthy, less healthy and unhealthy, and exploring ways to move products towards the healthier tier. In the US, companies tend to make commitments on specific nutrients such as trans-fat or salt. So far there is little data on health outcomes of initiatives and on whether better products are being made affordable for everyone in global markets. Greater transparency is needed. The report contains a number of detailed recommendations for each company and Insight Investment will follow up with them.

“Proof of the Pudding” report

Full analysis of the findings in a presentation of “Proof of the Pudding”

4. PLATFORM MEMBERSHIP (paper by Commission services)

The European Commission invited the Platform Members to take note of the information in the briefing note on membership.

a/ Eurofel have resigned their membership. The Commission recommends that the Platform registers this resignation.

b/ ACT (Association of Commercial Television) and ESPGAN (European Society of Paediatric Gastroenterology and Nutrition) have not responded to repeated emails regarding their lack of
commitments. The Commission recommends that their membership of the Platform is suspended. The CIAA asked for an opportunity to make contact with ACT because they are part of the wider commitment on healthy lifestyles.

c/ EGTA (European group of Television Advertisers) and HOTREC (Confederation of National Associations of Hotels, Restaurants, Cafes), have expressed a wish to remain in the Platform but have not promised to deliver concrete commitments. The Commission recommends they be given a deadline of 15 of June 2008 to submit their commitments in order to remain members of the Platform.

d/ BEUC (European Consumer Organisation), EPHA (European Public Health Alliance), Eurohealthnet and COFACE (Family Associations Confédération des organisations familiales de la Communauté européenne), EACA (European Associations of Communications Agencies), EHN (European Heart Network) still need to update or submit commitments for 2008. The Commission recommends that they be informed of the deadline of 15 of June 2008 to submit their commitments.

e/ Members that joined the Platform in 2007, CESS (Confederation Européenne Sport Santé) and EUROPREV (European Network for prevention and Health Promotion) have not yet submitted commitments for 2008.

f/ European Cyclist's Federation (ECF) has applied to join the Platform and has already tabled a commitment for 2008. The Commission recommends that their membership be accepted.

The Commission will circulate a short note to re-explain the process to update or submit new commitments and suggest a timeline for the 2008 monitoring process.

5. DEBATE ON PLATFORM INITIATIVES IN PRODUCT REFORMULATION AND LABELLING

A background document on reformulation and labelling prepared by ECO Consultants was presented by ECO to frame the debate. After reviewing the database of Platform commitments and the RAND report on monitoring, the experts identified a number of questions for Platform members to consider on the evidence base, impact and reporting of their commitments:

Data collection and reporting
- Company reporting could cover:
  - Number of country markets and % of population covered
  - Data on whether reformulation in one ingredient changes the proportion of other nutrients which could reduce beneficial effect.
  - Data on the importance of reformulation compared to total consumption of product class
  - Does product reformulation deliver competitive advantage or disadvantage in comparison to other EU or global manufacturers?

Portion size and packaging
- How do consumers react to smaller portion sizes? Do they eat one or several portions?
- How do consumers evaluate packaging changes for health in relation to other aspects of packaging, e.g. waste or environment concerns?

From nutrition information to sales
- How are different presentations of nutrition information used and understood?
- Do consumers like and accept nutrition information?
- Is the nutrition information and style of presentation (GDA) consistently implemented across all products in all markets?
- Do different age groups of consumers use data differently?
- Can medium to long-term change in purchase patterns be identified?

Product range changes and point of purchase
- What is the basis for measuring improved product range - total energy intake? Other?
- Does product range reformulation result in healthier options in addition or substitution/elimination of less healthy products in the range?

Nutrition information – off label
- What are the most successful communication approaches and vehicles for permanent change?
- Does information off-label magnify, reinforce or contradict nutrition labels?
- Is potential switching of consumer behaviour temporary?
- How should effectiveness be measured and communicated?

The Platform members mentioned that they had already tackled some of the issues raised in the background paper as would be presented later in the meeting.

- **“Salt Initiatives, recent developments”**
  Information compiled by Stephanie Bodenbach, DG SANCO
  The High Level Group (HLG) was established through the White Paper on Nutrition and Physical Activity. An initial priority is for the Commission to facilitate, in partnership with Member States, an initiative to on salt across the EU. An expert meeting was convened on 31/01/2008 bringing together Commission officials, representatives of 23 Member States and the WHO Regional Office for Europe. They discussed the rationale and potential impact of salt reduction measures and the key elements for an EU Framework on salt which will have 5 key actions:
  - Take stock of existing national data and consider additional needs
  - Establish targets and monitoring framework
  - Develop and implement a public awareness campaign
  - Develop and implement reformulation actions with partners
  - Monitoring and results

The next meeting of the HLG will be on 25/04/2008. This initiative has high policy relevance and is a learning process for public officials and food producers that could be applied to other nutrients.

- **Nutrition Labelling legislative proposal**
  Information by Commission services, Helen Lee, DG SANCO
  The Commission proposal for a Regulation on the provision of food information to consumers was adopted in January 2008. The draft legislation was based on extensive consultation and sets out general principles for food labelling at Community level. The goal is simplification and modernisation of food labelling within the internal market to make food labelling efficient and to support consumers in making informed choices. The proposal combines the legislation on general labelling (Directive 2001/13/EC0 and nutrition labelling (Directive 90/496/EEC).

The issues targeted by the draft legislation are simplification of the legislation through the recasting of several legislative acts and including technical issues in the annexes which can be updated through comitology. General principles on labelling are proposed changes to the existing provisions
on legibility of the information on the label and the availability of information on substances that cause allergic responses or intolerances for all non-prepacked foods. There is clarification of the rules that apply to distance selling of foods and origin labelling. The labelling of ingredients and nutrition labelling on certain alcoholic drinks will be the subject of a review five years after the entry into force of the legislation.

The proposal also provides for mandatory nutrition labelling on the majority of prepacked foods. Such labelling would involve six nutritional elements on the front of a pack expressed in relation to per 100 mg/ml/portion. In addition, information on the nutrient content in relation to reference intakes for the six nutritional elements must be included on the label but it does not have to appear on the front of the pack.

An innovation in this legislative proposal is the way that the Commission proposes to deal with presentation and expression of nutritional information. The aim is to allow specific national initiatives to offer additional ways of providing information at national level, within the framework of non-binding national schemes that comply with the essential requirements laid down in legislation. These would be based on sound consumer research and involve wide and active involvement of stakeholders. Such national schemes would be subject to mutual recognition. There would be the power for the Commission to harmonise this, if considered appropriate in the future.

http://ec.europa.eu/food/food/labellingnutrition/foodlabelling/proposed_legislation_en.htm

- **Reformulation and Labelling monitoring survey**
  CIAA
  The CIAA has commissioned an independent survey of European food and beverage manufacturers’ practices on reformulation, innovation and labelling. The survey was based on a representative sample of the food and beverage sector in France, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain and the UK. Single country data is hard to find, so commercial databases were purchased to provide data sets. The sampling was undertaken in a rigorous way to meet standards of peer reviewed studies. The analysis and results will be ready to be presented at Platform meetings in Autumn 2008.

- **"Pan European Research on Nutrition Labelling"**
  EUFIC, Dr Josephine Wills
  EUFIC is undertaking a review of research on consumer response to nutrition information on food labels. Existing research provides little insight on how food labels affect purchase decisions in real life, as opposed to self-reported data, or forced exposure in focus groups. The methodology was designed to link in-store observations and answers, with in-home self-completed questionnaires. The goal is to understand “what people do rather than what they say they do”. The field research will identify how long consumers look at labels by category and what they remember, with the main reason for purchase a nutritional or healthy food item. The questionnaire was designed and pilot tested in the UK. A revised questionnaire will be used for field work in a number of European countries in the third quarter of 2008. Initial results of the survey can be shared with the Platform at the end of 2008 or early 2009.

6. **AOB**

- **Foresight report**
  Peter Kopelman, Foresight Programme
  The UK government Foresight Programme is designed to help provide the evidence base for policy-making. A report was published on ‘Tackling obesities: future challenges’ which was based on 38 short science reviews involving 200 scientists. The research fed into a cross government strategy on
“healthy weight, healthy lives”. The key question to be answered was “if we intervene now, when we will see benefits?” The short response is that the health benefits will be delivered in 20-30 years but the challenge is that political timeframes are much shorter. The study outlined the political pressure to act quickly when evidence is available but not necessarily ‘perfect’. There is a need for surveillance and to exploit opportunities to gather more data. Timing is a factor – there is a time lag in the development of obesity and in seeing change from interventions. The research highlighted the importance of social norms and culture within a broader ethical framework. The key innovation was the development of a complex systems map which shows how ambivalence and uncertainty can affect all other aspects of policy development. It emphasised the necessity for coherent, joined-up government response and showed the inter-linkages between policy areas. The Foresight report gives policy-makers a frame to look at the broader picture and see the impact of their decisions on other factors influencing the obesogenic environment.

- **International code on Marketing of Foods and Non-alcohol beverages to children**
  
  Neville Rigby, OITF
  
  Consumers International /IASO-IOTF have developed an international code on marketing of food and non-alcoholic beverages to children which they hope will be endorsed by the World Health Organisation, European and national authorities. The goal is for governments to implement the recommendations through legislation or other statutory measures. The Code is based on the IOTF ‘Sydney Principles’ that actions to reduce advertising to children should support the rights of the child, provide substantial protection and be statutory in nature. Such measures should use a wide definition of commercial promotion, guarantee commercial-free childhood settings, cover cross-border media and be monitored, evaluated and enforced.

- **Initial creative concepts for the Healthy Lifestyles Campaign**
  
  Dominique Lyle, EACA
  
  The CIAA and EACA provided an update on their multi-stakeholder Platform commitment “Healthy Lifestyles Public Information Campaign”, initially presented to the Platform last year. This update included details of the early creative concept for the campaign and the results of the initial consultations with DG SANCO and the Ministries of Health in the 5 pilot countries (Hungary, Czech Republic, Portugal, Greece, Slovakia). The campaign will be targeted at 11—15 year olds because this is the age range that can be influenced. The concept was tested with focus groups of young people in Lisbon and Prague and was well received. Rather than have prescriptive messages about what to eat or do, the campaign aims to create a community that will attract adolescents to express themselves about healthy lifestyles. The ‘Greenlace’ campaign uses a mix of images and music, highlighting the message that for teenagers to be themselves they need to be healthy. An interactive website will allow adolescents to play games, win prizes, upload their own materials and get friends involved. Celebrities and events could be linked to the campaign. By September there will be more data to report back to the Platform and the HLG.