



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

02 JUNE 2016

10.00 – 17.00

MINUTES

1. INTRODUCTION BY THE COMMISSION

The meeting was opened by **the Chair**, who welcomed the participants and introduced the agenda which focused on two activity areas of the Platform: 'Reformulation' and Consumer information, including labelling', and on the 2016 Annual Monitoring Report.

The draft agenda of the meeting was approved. A proposal for changes to the previous meeting's minutes was made by IBFAN.

The Chair welcomed the presence of delegates from The Netherlands, Croatia and Lithuania to the meeting.

2. WHAT IS NEW

The **Joint Research Centre (JRC)** presented a brief overview of the use of non-nutritive sweeteners (NNS) in foods and related, potential health effects, recommendations and policies. For this work, JRC looked at a systematic review of the past six years not touching the issue of safety as this has been extensively researched. Issues such as terminology, labelling, types of sweeteners, application in food, health implications, and policies (school food) were addressed.

The main conclusions were:

- No readily available and comprehensive data on NNS intakes in EU
- Lack of conclusive evidence from literature on benefits or drawbacks of replacing sugars with NNS
- Some recommendations or policies that deal specifically with NNS

The **European Association of Sugar Producers (CEFS)** and **International Baby Food Action Network (IBFAN)** suggested additional studies which the JRC will consider to include.

The **Confederation of Family Organisations in the European Union (COFACE)** inquired about long-term effects and the Chair replied that the opportunity of such research will be discussed with DG RTD.

3. DISCUSSION ON THE ANNUAL MONITORING REPORT 2016

ICF presented the draft Annual Monitoring Report based on the findings from the monitoring reports submitted for active commitments in 2015. In total 109 monitoring reports were submitted by Platform members, however, 6 reports¹ were not received.

This year's report allowed for a comparative element with last year's assessment so that progress or decline in reporting obligations could be made clearly visible.

The report found that

- Half of the 12 new commitments submitted in 2015 covered the Platform priority areas (i.e. food reformulation, marketing and advertising, and physical activity);
- Advocacy and information exchange⁷ was the most common focus of the monitored commitments in 2015, whereas only 39% of commitments are in the three priority areas;
- Just over half the commitments operated in 20+ countries.

Overall, there was no substantial progress in the quality of design and intent, and there was even a decrease in a couple of areas:

- Only 13% of the commitments have 'fully' S.M.A.R.T. objectives;
- Nearly all commitments made a link – explicit or implicit – to the priorities of the Platform;
- The vast majority of commitments (81%) made an implicit link with EU priorities;
- Nearly 90% of commitments did not explicitly set out to reduce health inequalities;
- Around 70% of commitments made some reference to evidence in their design;
- The report assessed for the first time if commitments had an explicit or implicit link to WHO targets on non-communicable diseases. It found that the majority of the commitments had not such apparent link.

On the implementation and result, the report showed that although reporting on inputs (i.e. financial resources and human resources) and outputs increased, there was a notable decrease in quality of reporting on impacts (only 29 monitoring reports gave clear details such as behavioural change among target group, changes in composition of food and drink, etc). On implementation and results, the report also concluded that:

- Reporting on the dissemination of results significantly improved;
- Only 39% of commitment reports showed additionality (a significant increase from the previous year where information was lacking);
- Only one-third of commitment monitoring reports showed the EU-added value of the Platform.

The report concluded that in 2015, the reporting and monitoring of only 23% of the commitments were highly satisfactory. There is an urgent need for improvement in setting fully S.M.A.R.T. objectives, increasingly cover all EU 28 Member States and providing evidence in the design, as well as focusing on Platform priorities (areas and target groups). Finally there is an urgent need for more detail and clarity when reporting input, impact and outcome indicators.

ICF will now share its analysis with each commitment holder through an individual feedback form and set up a short audio meeting to discuss its findings and find ways to further improve the monitoring and reporting for 2016. Following the discussions with the commitment holders, ICF will report back on all outcomes to the Commission.

The Chair inquired about the reported financial input. ICF replied that the number is based on the monitoring reports reported and a calculation is made to show an estimated

¹ These were by European Cyclists' Federation (ECF), European Cancer League (ECL), European Non-Governmental Sports Organisation (ENGSO), EuroCommerce and FoodDrinkEurope.

representation over the entire year. They added that 11 reports mention that more than 1 million EUR is invested.

The **European Association of Cancer Leagues (ECL)** asked if the total figures for financial and human resource input are exclusively dedicated to Platform activities. ICF clarified that these figures were based purely on data provided by Platform members in the monitoring reports. Where figures were not provided, ICF made a calculation on the assumption that the commitments were data was provided are representative of the actions within the Platform as a whole.

FoodDrinkEurope stated that they are working with their members to apply the fully S.M.A.R.T. criteria to their objectives, asking for guidance on this. **Ferrero** also pointed out difficulties in designing such objectives. **ICF** drew attention to the existing Platform Monitoring Framework², where full explanations and examples are available, and referred to the work done by the Platform Working Group around S.M.A.R.T. objectives³. ICF will provide a one-page guideline on how to include SMART objectives.

In relation to financial and human resource inputs, **Ferrero** underlined the difficulties for them to disclose such information in a detailed way. **Nestlé** highlighted that although input is being separated between commitment objectives and other business objectives to the extent possible, it is important to view industry actions in this area as a whole.

With regards to additional partnerships and synergies, **Coca-Cola** suggested that industry could extend engagements from core business to other sectors. **The Chair** replied that food reformulation and marketing and advertising are core areas for industry; actions such as involvement in health education in schools will cause comments.

The Chair mentioned that there is still work to be done in improving the lack of evidence for some commitments.

4. FOLLOW-UP DISCUSSION ON IMPROVING THE MECHANISMS OF THE PLATFORM

DG SANTE provided an update on the proposal for an improved working method by presenting a draft assessment table which would apply to new commitments, (with the aim of eventually covering all commitments). The table contains four questions and criteria which would be used to qualitatively assess each commitment and provide an overall assessment on relevance:

1. How the commitment will support Member States in reaching set objectives;
2. How the commitment supports EU policy initiatives;
3. Whether the commitment is directly related to the owner's core mission; and
4. Whether the commitment aims at a broad coverage of stakeholders and Member States.

A score of 1-5 would be provided per question, and in order for a commitment to be deemed as relevant to the priorities of the Platform, a minimum score of 12 must be attained. This system would reward commitments that are more ambitious.

The table was discussed with the members of the High Level Group on Nutrition and Physical Activity at yesterday's meeting, and received broad support.

IBFAN mentioned that we should use all WHO objectives, including those on breastfeeding. **DG SANTE** mentioned that it would check the legal aspect and in case this is not possible, the wording in the Action Plan on Childhood Obesity would be used.

² http://ec.europa.eu/health/archive/ph_determinants/life_style/nutrition/platform/docs/eu_platform_monitoring_framework_en.pdf

³ Following the work in 2015 by the Working Group on Monitoring and Reporting, it was decided that a session on S.M.A.R.T. objectives will be organised in 2016. This is planned for the Platform meeting on 24 November 2016.

The **European Cyclists' Federation (ECF)** proposed that the assessment would also take into consideration the resources of each organisation: this would ensure that commitments are targeted and aligned to the member's means.

COFACE and **ECF** added that this approach would allow the Member States to provide guidance to the Platform. **ECF** added that it is critical that commitments reflect the core business of the Platform member, reflecting its size and resources.

The **World Federation of Advertisers (WFA)** mentioned that scoring and language are key to the success of the table.

FoodDrinkEurope criticized the fact that the document was shared only at very short notice, which consequently did not allow for a proper consultation with its membership. It stressed the importance of guaranteeing the inclusiveness of the Platform. In this regard, it pointed at the risk and concern that the criteria proposed might be a disincentive for SMEs, whose commitments cannot have the same reach as those from multinational companies. It would also be regrettable if efforts to promote healthy lifestyles would no longer be considered as valid Platform commitments. Contribution to public health, rather than geographical coverage and the link to members' core missions, should be the main criteria for the assessment. It reiterated the need to consider the Platform on equal footing as the High Level Group, the need for communicating holistically about food, diets and health and investigating any potential discrepancies between WHO objectives and EU policies. On this point, it requested to clarify which precise WHO targets are being considered and to include EFSA as a main source of reference. Lastly, FoodDrinkEurope suggested some improvements to the text as regards the priorities of the commitments and asked for clarification on whether a commitment which did not pass the minimum threshold would be excluded from the Platform.

DG Sante clarified that the discussion on the need and ways to improve the work methods had started before December 2015 and that the document shared on 31 May was a simple evolution from the version distributed on 31 March.

It again clarified that the Commission stands by a holistic approach on nutrition challenges; this does not preclude –on the contrary– concrete action on specific areas. Again it was noted that all efforts contributing to public health and to promote healthy lifestyles, from all stakeholders including SMEs, will be valid and welcomed and that no commitment would be excluded. Adequate highlight would however be given to those commitments which are most relevant to the objectives of the Platform. This is in line with the aim of reinforcing both the rigour and ambition of the Platform and of increasing its usefulness as a public health tool. As for the link between the commitments and the core mission of the members, this logical preference has been the long-standing policy of the Platform.

Whereas the Platform and the High Level Group are both implementing structures of the EU nutrition strategy, the High Level Group joins the public health authorities of the Member States and has the corresponding legitimacy and political leadership. The Member States have agreed to the WHO targets and action on non-communicable diseases and the new methodology was checked by both the WHO and the High Level Group in this respect.

The Chair concluded that the proposed way to better link the commitments with Member States' priorities and objectives will further improve the functioning of the EU Platform, especially given the firm involvement of JRC, WHO and DG SANTE in the assessment of commitments. The overall purpose is to improve the credibility of Platform and to address all the issues raised in the Annual Monitoring Report.

He suggested and it was agreed that further comments would be welcomed until after the summer break and the mechanism would be rolled out and tested.

5. POSSIBLE COLLABORATIONS

The **Consumer Goods Forum** presented its mission and, their Health and Wellness pillar, where resolutions have been developed on access and availability of healthier products and services, product information and responsible marketing, and communication and education. To monitor progress towards these objectives, the Consumer Goods Forum conducts an annual survey with its members.

It was suggested that the EU Platform could perhaps cooperate with the Consumer Goods Forum on a number of issues, such as the capabilities of their members to contribute to the common goals in health and wellness, share implementation best practices, scale up existing initiatives in healthier communities, and develop partnerships, projects and other actions.

The Chair inquired if the Consumer Goods Forum would be considering submitting a commitment to the Platform, to which the Consumer Goods Forum replied that they are open to dialogue and would see what they could contribute.

The Chair asked how the marketing of the Consumer Goods Forum related to the EU Pledge. The Consumer Goods Forum replied that they cooperate with WFA and that they share the EU Pledge as best practice.

ECL suggested that lessons learnt at the EU platform could be taken on board by the Consumer Goods Forum and that the reporting of their members seems lighter.

6. UPDATE ON THE AUDIOVISUAL MEDIA SERVICES DIRECTIVE

DG CNECT provided an update on the recently adopted proposal of the Audiovisual Media Services Directive (AVMSD). The proposal includes a reinforcement of self and co-regulation and reinforces article 9.2 that now speaks of mentions "programmes with a significant children's audience".

IBFAN mentioned that in there is no proof that self-regulation works and expressed its disappointment that at a recent WHO Health Assembly meeting three objectives of a resolution on ending inappropriate promotion of foods to young children were toned down.

COFACE mentioned that several provisions of the proposal are vague (e.g. significant children's audience) and asked if this would be clarified. **DG CNECT** responded that the European Regulators Group for Audiovisual Media Services (ERGA) will play a role in assisting and advising the Commission.

7. NEXT STEPS ON FOOD REFORMULATION

Following the adoption of the Added Sugars Annex, **DG SANTE** has facilitated several meetings between Member States and stakeholders with the objective of supporting the implementation on the text. The High Level Group agreed to set up two working groups (one on monitoring framework for reformulation initiatives and one on defining benchmarks for reformulation per food category) and to complete these tasks by 22 November and then report to the High Level Group. NL, UK, IRE and FR have agreed to lead the working group on benchmarks for reformulation. The benchmarks for reformulation will have to take into account the specificities per food categories and per country; maybe there will be a table of intervals per MS. The work will start with the three categories discussed in February and March: sugar sweetened beverages, breakfast cereals and dairy products.

As FR suggested, the working group on monitoring will be led by the Joint Action on Nutrition and Physical Activity because there are many communalities with Joint Action on Nutrition and Physical Activity's work on WP5 (Nutritional information monitoring and food reformulation prompting). This work will be open to all the Member States. Two meetings

will be set up in July and September for the Member States and industry to participate in the process.

There will be regular (monthly) audio meetings in between with the two drafting groups to ensure progress.

Nestlé underlined that Member States should have different intervals per food categories.

FoodDrinkEurope called for different approaches for different categories in the different Member States. Intervals are more practical than single figures.

Coca-Cola called for flexibility and for intervals to be considered.

Copa-COGECA inquired the possibility for companies to communicate on reduction of sugar.

CEFS asked which associations will be invited to the process. DG SANTE replied that this is up to the Member States to define in detail.

FoodDrinkEurope asked to link the process to the Roadmap for Food Product Improvement, and especially how to include SMEs, knowledge transfer and sharing of best practices.

The Netherlands replied that most Roadmap elements are included in the Council Conclusions on Food Product Improvement, to be adopted at the Health Council on 17 June. Two additional actions are included: the call for national plans for food product improvement by 2017 and new benchmarks also for salt and saturated fat. Upcoming EU Presidencies by Slovakia and Malta have confirmed their support to food reformulation. The Netherlands called upon the Commission to develop a plan with more details and the next steps.

The **Union of European Soft Drinks Associations (UNESDA)** inquired if there would be intervals for all Member States and categories.

8. COMMITMENTS IN THE AREAS OF 'FOOD REFORMULATION' AND 'CONSUMER INFORMATION, INCLUDING LABELLING'

8.1 State of play on commitments

DG SANTE provided an overview of the commitments. There are currently 297 commitments on the Platform database, of which 105 (35%) are active and 192 are completed (65%). Nine new commitments have been received in 2016, however, none of these address the priority areas (i.e. food reformulation, marketing and advertising, and physical activity).

8.2 Commitments in the area of 'food reformulation' and 'consumer information'

ICF presented an overview of commitments in the two activity areas on the basis of 2015 data and monitoring results. The presentation covered the design and intent of commitments, the level of their implementation and overall assessments.

The conclusions for the 18 active commitments on food reformulation were:

- Progress of active commitments in this field has slowed down (from 20 active commitments in 2013 to 18 in 2016);
- Although food reformulation is a high Platform priority, commitments in this area only constitute 11.4% of all Platform commitments (297) and 17.1% of all active commitments (105);
- Of the 18 active actions, only seven commitments cover all EU28;
- Only around half of commitments provided financial and in-kind contribution information;
- The monitoring and reporting of half of the commitments was considered to be 'non-satisfactory', (an increase compared to 2014), lacking detail on inputs and outputs, or information on the link with the Platform and/or EU policy goals. Only 2 actions had

fully S.M.A.R.T. objectives and only 2 actions showed evidence of need and likely effectiveness.

The conclusions for the 10 active commitments on consumer information were:

- the 'general public' is the largest target group;
- only two actions cover all 28 EU Member States;
- the majority did not provide financial and in-kind contribution information
- only 4 actions had 'fully' SMART objectives;
- the overall assessment of monitoring reports was deemed 'highly satisfactory' and 'satisfactory'

FoodDrinkEurope highlighted that its commitment in the field of food reformulation is in fact a 'framework' commitment, which brings together individual actions being implemented by their membership. As a result, it may seem like actions in this area are declining, however, FoodDrinkEurope clarified that they have taken a different approach in order to streamline and create synergies between their members' actions.

Ferrero inquired about the definition of the 'EU added value' criteria, as this was a new area not previously used in the analysis of the monitoring reports. ICF explained that this area will be further defined by the Platform Working Group in 2016, however a working definition was included in the Annual Monitoring Report (page 6). ICF will further provide a one-page guideline on EU added value.

8.3 Active commitment on food reformulation

8.3.1 Product reformulation and innovations

Unilever presented the work being undertaken within its commitment 834 'Product reformulation and Innovations', setting targets to improve their food portfolio. The company goals of reducing trans fatty acids and calories have been reached; those for salt, saturated fat and sugar have not yet been reached. By 2020, 75% of their foods are expected to contribute to support citizens in meeting the benchmark of a minimum of 5g salt / day.

Unilever mentioned that it uses nutrient profiling devised by their own company for marketing, nutrition and health claims, reformulation and labelling.

9. POLICY ON CHRONIC DISEASES

DG SANTE updated the Plenary on the Commission's work on chronic diseases. On 21 April, a conference on chronic diseases took place. The way forward is to review current activities (groups, instruments, structures, plans) with focus on chronic diseases. The Health Programme will be used to support related action. The Commission will provide support to Member States on how to best develop comprehensive national strategies on chronic diseases. In addition, the Commission will engage in dialogue with stakeholders through the Health Policy Platform to share expertise and country knowledge. Finally, DG SANTE will ensure cooperation across all policy areas involving other DGs (such as DG CNECT, CG EMPL, DG RTD and the JRC) and cooperate with international organisations such as OECD and WHO).

10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Serving Europe had been invited to present their two long-running commitments on food reformulation but declined. Both **COPA-COGECA** and **EuroCommerce** were also invited

to share the main ideas of the new commitments they are currently working on, but both declined as their work is still in progress.

The Chair noted that European Association for the Study of Obesity (EASO) organised its first European Obesity Day on 21 May and may present their experience at a future meeting.

The Chair shared with the Plenary that DG SANTE has been holding meetings with Platform members (NGOs and industry) to look at how to improve the quality of the Platform and its commitments.

The follow-up Platform meeting to continue the debate on Ferrero's commitment 'Media literacy & Responsible Advertising to children' will take place on 12 July. An invitation will be sent to all Platform members.

11. CONCLUSIONS

The Chair:

- concluded that food reformulation remains a high priority for the Platform and urged members to develop ambitious actions in this area;
- invited members to send comments and feedback over the next weeks regarding the Annual Monitoring Report 2016 and to continue to improve their monitoring. As a follow up to this year's monitoring, the Platform contractor will provide members with individual feedback forms per commitment, which can form the basis for discussions on improving monitoring;
- noted the general agreement to the proposals for improvement of the methods of work of the Platform and called for any additional comments or suggestions to the assessment table to be sent prior to the summer break; the method will subsequently be tested.
- mentioned that the work on the Added Sugars Annex will continue in the two working groups on monitoring and benchmarks;
- reminded participants that the next Platform meeting will take place on 24 November 2016 in Brussels and the members will discuss the **promotion of physical activity**.