

**SECOND JOINT SESSION
HIGH LEVEL GROUP & EU PLATFORM FOR ACTION ON DIET, PHYSICAL ACTIVITY
AND HEALTH
3 - 4 DECEMBER 2009**

**CHARLEMAGNE BUILDING (ROOM JENKINS)
RUE DE LA LOI 170, B- 1040 BRUSSELS**

Minutes

1. INTRODUCTION BY THE COMMISSION

This is an interesting point in EU level work on nutrition because 2010 is the year when the Strategy will be evaluated. The HLG and Platform are integral parts of the evaluation process and their inputs are welcomed. In terms of the new Commission, the health portfolio has grown in profile and importance because of the additional responsibility for pharmaceutical and medical devices.

2. MONITORING OF THE STRATEGY

**2.1. THE EU/WHO JOINT PROJECT – MONITORING PROGRESS ON IMPROVING NUTRITION
AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND PREVENTING OBESITY IN THE EUROPEAN UNION
– *Trudy Wijnhoven WHO Europe***

This project has created an extensive database of policies and action, surveillance of nutrition and dietary behaviours, good practices in regional and local action, based on an independent evaluation of all aspects of an intervention to assess effectiveness. The database will also contain the status of key commitments of voluntary actions by economic operators. Public Private Partnerships (PPP) will also be mapped to assess if there is any impact and how they contribute towards reducing childhood obesity. The complete database will be launched in summer 2010.

**2.2. KEY INDICATORS FOR MONITORING OF THE STRATEGY
*SANCO 02, ANNE AUFFRET***

The Commission has committed to review progress on overall trends in overweight and obesity, the contribution made by EU policies and the work of stakeholders. Progress reports are scheduled for 2010 and 2013. The White Paper sets out areas for action and progress will be measured on local, national and community level initiatives. However, the identified key indicators relate to the actions being undertaken at the Member State level. Actions being carried out at the Community level all have their own independent monitoring system.

The process of setting indicators has involved an external evaluator and the WHO Euro, the Platform and HLG. In order to take account of certain constraints related to data availability and comparability, and member states' coverage, the WHO monitoring approach was selected to be the basis of the monitoring and the focus will be on areas where Member States have the main responsibility for action. The indicators will show whether all countries are beginning to act on all areas and whether the level of action is adequate. The purpose of the indicators is to show the

evolution of action in priority areas, using a limited set of data that we could all share and use for reference. The goal is to be able to demonstrate whether the EU Strategy is delivering the impact necessary to meet the objectives.

The progress report is an opportunity to move from monitoring to evaluation, for example exploring whether any topics are missing. There is now much more information about hidden hunger, deprivation, ageing and nutrition than five years ago when the Strategy was being developed. The focus has broadened beyond childhood and adolescent obesity to wider questions of poor nutrition and inadequate nutrition.

2.3. EVALUATION OF THE PLATFORM SANCO C 4

A contractor, EPAD, has been selected and the work has just started to design the structure of the methodology. The evaluation has 18 questions to be answered and will explore the approach, methods and tools of the Platform. Interviews with members will be complemented with two case studies using in-depth interviews on advertising and marketing to children, food and drink reformulation. Platform and HLG members are invited to complete the questionnaire that will be sent out in January 2010 and to volunteer to take part in structured interviews and the case studies.

2.4. PLATFORM CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE MONITORING PROCESS OF THE STRATEGY

The Commission has noted the comments and suggestions from stakeholders, some of which can be fed into the work with the WHO and the evaluation of the Platform itself. The case studies will focus specifically on commitments by Platform member, the impact and effectiveness of Platform work. The views, perceptions and experiences of Platform members will play a role in the feedback so it is important to get honest and open messages about progress achieved.

The evaluation will seek to take into account that some Platform members are Federations, meaning that they may not have implemented any action directly but encouraged their members to take action. The questionnaire would be sent to the Platform members and may be passed to their most active member organisations. Reaching the members of Platform members is a challenge and there are only 70 interviews planned. The two stage methodology, allows Platform members to consult their own networks. The goal is to reach the most relevant person to answer the question. For the Platform commitment and the target organisation for the interview, it is important to identify the right person who has been responsible for the implementation of the commitment.

The evaluation is very ambitious in scope, it is difficult to determine the extent to which it will be possible to judge the impact and effectiveness of a commitment and whether it is the most effective means of reaching the objectives. The first draft of the report will be ready by June or July 2010, and sent to the Platform/HLG. The final report will be available in the last quarter of 2010.

2.5. DISCUSSION AND SUGGESTIONS FOR DISSEMINATION OF RESULTS FROM THE MONITORING REPORT

DG SANCO noted that it would be helpful to reach groups that could be part of the efforts on nutrition but do not currently feel engaged or affected by the EU Strategy. This would mean making the results digestible and easy to read and making maximum use of awareness raising and dissemination channels. Some key opportunities can already be identified:

- The forthcoming Belgian Presidency plans to organise an event to monitor their own strategy at the end of 2010, this could be joined with an EU level meeting possibly in November.
- There are early indications that the Hungarian Presidency in 2011 will prioritise children, obesity and reformulation.
- There will be also be transatlantic event on childhood obesity jointly organised by the US administration and the European Commission in 2011.
- EPHA has offered to help use their networks and contacts with the Parliament to distribute the documents and link them to the hot topic of CAP reform which will be discussed in late 2010.
- The IUHPE World Conference on Health Promotion: Health, Equity & Sustainable Development (11-15 July 2010) provides a fixed deadline for SANCO to finalise the report.

4.1. ONGOING WHO WORK IN THE AREA OF ADVERTISING TO CHILDREN

Dr Godfrey Xuereb, Team Leader, Diet and Physical Activity Strategy

The new WHO Global Recommendations on physical activity and health will be launched at the IUHPE meeting. In May 2007, the WHO Executive Board gave a mandate to address the marketing of food and non-alcoholic beverages to children. A systematic review of the evidence base was developed and a working paper drafted with experts was commented on by 66 Member States. The paper has 12 recommendations, with two of special relevance:

- The goal should be lower exposure of children to marketing and understanding the power of marketing. Member States should consider different approaches and should set clear definitions for the key components of the policy.
- Settings where children gather should be free from marketing of high fat, salt and sugar foods, governments should be the key stakeholder in setting policy and provide leadership.

Recommendations 7-9 address actions that could be taken on effectiveness, cross-border issues and enforcement mechanisms. Recommendations 10/11 cover monitoring and evaluation. The final Recommendation calls for more research to understand the evolution of the issue and the trends.

There is some general guidance on nutrient profiles but the emphasis is on the importance of rigorous evaluation, monitoring and enforcement. The WHO Euro has a network of countries collaborating on ways to reduce marketing to children, which produced a proposal for a Code and this was one of the inputs to the global consultation.

The Recommendations will be presented to the Executive Board as part of an agenda item on reporting on the Global strategy on non-communicable diseases. All WHO members can attend the Executive Board and any country that is a member of the Executive Board has the right to open a discussion.