

FIFTEENTH MEETING OF THE HIGH LEVEL GROUP ON NUTRITION AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

14th OF JUNE 2012 10.00-16.00

Minutes

1. INTRODUCTION BY THE COMMISSION

The Chair, Mrs Despina Spanou, welcomed the participants to the 15th meeting of the High Level Group on Nutrition and Physical Activity, highlighting the item on food reformulation and the evaluation process of the Strategy for Europe on Nutrition, Overweight and Obesity related Health Issues.

Other issues to be discussed during the meeting included a study of the Joint Research Centre on research priorities for foods and diets, the latest developments in Sport policy presented by DG Education and Culture, and the report on the application of the Audiovisual Media Service Directive, as well as updates on recent developments in the Member States.

Mr Philippe Roux, DG Health and Consumers, made a presentation on recent developments in the areas of interest to the Group. He referred to:

- revised Directive 2012/12/EU regulating labelling of fruit juices;
- policy dialogue and expert workshop on nutrition and healthy living organised by the European Policy Centre. The discussion highlighted the role of education, regulation and personal choice in promoting better nutrition and health;
- the UN Report by the Special Rapporteur on the right to food, concluding that the current food systems are deeply dysfunctional and issuing recommendations to the Member States;
- the OECD Obesity Update 2012, which shows that obesity rates remain high. The report looks at new measures - namely food and beverage taxes and increasingly comprehensive strategies - introduced by many governments;
- social determinants of health and wellbeing among young people. The report "Health Behaviour in School-aged Children" published by the WHO shows generally high level of health but also need for age-differentiated interventions, persisting gender differences in health and association of high family affluence with better health behaviour;
- recent publications in the field. They include an article on voluntary targets for salt reduction in the UK, a review of research publications on nutrition from the Joint Research Centre, an article on the benefits of exclusive breastfeeding from the American Academy of Pediatrics, and a study on "the Socioeconomic patterning of childhood overweight status in Europe";

- recent European Obesity Research Conference held by the European Association for the Study of Obesity. It identified key issues, such as obesity as a predisposing factor for other diseases, transdisciplinary approach, time course perspective, societal impact and innovation;
- recent events involving research projects funded by the 7th Framework Programme: analysing outcomes of healthy eating interventions (EATWELL); looking at gaps in food and health research and recommending coordinating structures (Food and Health Research in Europe - FAHRE); analysing behaviours that contribute to energy balance of children (European Energy Balance Research to Prevent Excessive Weight Gain among Youth - ENERGY);
- examples of developments in the EU Member States. They include a Report on the Sources of Salt for Consumption in the Netherlands commissioned by the Dutch Ministry of Health; Revised Children's Code launched for consultation by the Broadcasting Authority of Ireland; and a campaign promoting physical activity in Luxembourg launched by the Ministry of Sport.

The Chair asked if there were any comments on the minutes of the meeting of 2 February 2012. As there were no comments, the minutes were adopted.

2. THE EVALUATION OF THE EU STRATEGY ON NUTRITION, OVERWEIGHT AND OBESITY-RELATED HEALTH ISSUES: STATE OF PLAY

PRESENTATION BY MR PHILIPPE ROUX, DG HEALTH AND CONSUMERS, UNIT C4

The Strategy for Europe on Nutrition, Overweight and Obesity related Health Issues was adopted for six years and was evaluated in the mid-term in 2010.

An evaluation process is now being launched to assess the achievements by the European Commission, the Member States and stakeholders; including the degree to which it has contributed to promote health, prevent ill health caused by nutrition, overweight and obesity and achieve a decline in overweight and obesity by 2015.

The evaluation will look at actions in the key areas set out by the Strategy: better informed consumers, making healthier options available, priority groups and settings, encouraging physical activity, developing the knowledge base, and developing monitoring systems. The evaluation will focus on the implementing instruments of the Strategy, including the High Level Group on Nutrition and Physical Activity, the EU Platform for Action on Diet, Physical Activity and Health, legislation, nutrition and physical activity in all policies, EC programmes (in particular the Health Programme and the Research Programme), monitoring system and evidence base, and their expected effects and impacts.

The objective will be to inform what initiatives have been developed and what results were produced. This will encompass action by the European Commission services (e.g. support to Member States and the Platform, exchange of good practice, respond to European Parliament and Council calls, propose European laws), the Member States and the stakeholders. The evaluation of the Platform will specifically look at the impact of its actions in the six priority areas and the proportionality of the actions to the needs and the represented markets.

The evaluation will cover the period 2007–2011 and will address individual initiatives, as well as the Strategy as a whole. The kick-off meeting between the Evaluation Steering group and the selected contractor will be held on 10 July 2012. The following step will consist in the production by the contractor of an inception report, detailing their work plan by the second week of August 2012. The first phase of the evaluation will be the collection of information, in particular interviews with the HLG members and selected stakeholders. An Intermediate report will be produced by the first week of December. The final report is foreseen for April 2013, and it is to be followed by a seminar with members of the HLG and the Platform for an open discussion on the findings of the Final Evaluation Report.

3. FOOD REFORMULATION: TOWARDS A FRAMEWORK TO REDUCE SATURATED FAT INTAKES

DISCUSSION OF THE SALT REPORT FOR 2012 AND THE DRAFT DOCUMENT DETAILING A FRAMEWORK ON SATURATED FATTY ACIDS

The Chair recalled that the HLG work on reformulation of nutrients started with the EU-wide framework for salt reduction with the overall reduction benchmark of 16% in four years, and underlined that these efforts have been internationally recognised at a high political level. Last year, the HLG agreed to an EU Framework for National Initiatives on Selected Nutrients. It took a holistic approach, looking at which nutrients Member States are already working on. On 2 February 2012, the HLG mandated the European Commission services to propose an annex to the Framework with a focus on the reduction of saturated fat.

The Chair mentioned the publication of the report on the salt reduction framework covering the first two years of implementation, i.e. 2008-2009. The Chair said that, as called by the Council conclusions, a full implementation report is to be delivered at the end of 2012.

Ms Stephanie Bodenbach, DG Health and Consumers, outlined the planning for producing the final report on salt reduction and informed that it will be written on the base of a consolidated version of the questionnaire that was elaborated for the first salt report. Member States are invited to propose changes before the summer break to allow for a more comprehensive representation of national approaches and initiatives.

Ms Bodenbach presented the proposal for an annex on saturated fat. This was the nutrient which the majority of Member States has already integrated in national plans. The annex is setting detailed benchmarks and major food categories to focus action at EU level. The major food categories were selected among the ones most frequently worked on by Member States, namely school meals, ready meals, dairy products (including cheeses), meat products and fats, oils and margarines. Furthermore, around one third of the Member States are also working on, or planning to work on, meals served in restaurants and breakfast cereals.

In essence, the proposed general benchmark for saturated fat reduction is of a minimum 5% in four years and a minimum of an additional 5% reduction by 2020 against the individual baseline levels at the end of 2012. The reformulation should not lead to an increase in absolute amounts of trans fat, sugars, salt and caloric content. The overall period of eight years reflects the conclusions of the experts' meeting in 2011 where industry highlighted that saturated fat reduction may require research and specific production technology and would therefore require longer periods for adaptation.

For some products, such as dairy and meat products, low fat options often exist already and the way forward includes raising awareness, promoting them and enhancing availability of the low fat options (increasing choice for consumers).

Lowest possible levels of saturated fat should be established for ready meals, fats, oils and margarines, food items served in modern restaurants and breakfast cereals; and likewise lowest possible levels of total fat should be established for meat products. There should be prioritisation of products with the largest market share and across the full range, so that all population groups can benefit. Raising public awareness about healthier options within product categories on the market and promoting their consumption is crucial.

Maximum flexibility is given to allow Member States to focus their initiatives on other target nutrients. The approach taken to lead to a reduced consumption of saturated fat may differ by product category, and for different categories different benchmarks may be set.

The Chair stressed that the proposed annex on saturated fat is without prejudice to the Member States' work on other selected nutrients. The Chair recalled the scientifically proven link between certain nutrients and chronic diseases, which are a considerable burden for national health systems, especially in the current economic situation. Furthermore, reformulation boosts industry innovation, which could be targeted to public health policy objectives. Member States initiatives will receive support from the Commission services, which cooperate both with the industry and the civil sector in the EU Platform on Diet, Physical Activity and Health.

Italy pointed at the importance of working on food reformulation, and said that it is looking at different food categories, such as sugared drinks, snacks and dairy products, as these are foods particularly consumed by children between the ages of 3 and 12. It is encouraging that the industry has already expressed willingness to work on saturated fat reduction. It is also essential to have rules on advertising these products to children, as it is equally important to provide healthy food and to provide the appropriate message. At the same time, costs can be very high and it should be ensured that the burden is spread. The food categories as described in the proposed annex are to an extent different from the way they are defined in Italy's current activities, but generally the annex is in line with the country's efforts.

Belgium expressed support for the proposed annex which is in line with its efforts as well. Belgium has worked substantially on reformulation in terms of salt, fats and sugar. In 2012, it will look at fats in general. It is important to have support from the European Commission and to have a defined framework in place with reference figures for industry to aim for. The important message to send to industry is that it should reformulate not only to decrease the quantity of fats, but also to improve quality. Reformulation of fats is more complex compared to salt due to the specificities of the different types of oils, and the agriculture and food sectors, but the tabled annex and its timing are a good start.

France appreciated the flexibility in the annex, which will allow catering to national differences. In France, a monitoring centre has been set up to monitor and apprehend the situation, e.g. to what extent saturated fat is present in different products on the market. The risk of increased dispersion and spread of values was particularly pointed at, as well as the issue of inequalities due to the fact that market operators lagging behind in reformulation offer the cheaper products. The question of whether the 5% reduction in saturated fat should apply to consumption or to food composition and the handling of the removed fat were also

raised. The representative stressed that France started its efforts in 2007, so setting 2012 as baseline will be difficult.

The Netherlands recognised the efforts and emphasised the difficulties the industry is facing in reformulation. The Netherlands is working on reformulation with a focus on salt and saturated fat. The industry's efforts on a self-regulation basis are coordinated via a network, while the government is improving monitoring on consumption and product level. The Dutch government favours self-regulation and at the same time a clear message has been sent to industry that if tangible results are not achieved, legislative measures will be considered. The industry has indicated that the general target of 5% would be a negative signal and might demotivate them in their self-regulation efforts. Benchmarks per food categories will be more valuable.

The Chair enquired whether the Netherlands referred to food categories that do not fall under the special arrangements in place for certain types of products for which a reduction of 5% is not possible. The Netherlands replied that the previously mentioned products might fall into these categories but the problem is that if there is a fixed general figure for reduction, the public tends to refer to it for all products. The Chair reminded that each Member State has to make its own national plan according to national specificities in diets, tendencies, product differentiation, etc. The proposed annex does not only allow for flexibility, but also it is general for the purpose of allowing national plans to fill in the details according to national differences. At the same time, it is important to have an objective to aim for, at least for categories where it is feasible.

France proposed to give a specific range, for example between 3% and 8% reduction depending on the product categories. Furthermore, for each category 15% to 20% of products which contain most saturated fat must re-join the average. The Chair pointed out that there is no knowledge of saturated fat levels for every single product in the European Union. As it is not possible to cover all possible targets that would apply to product categories, the work on saturated fat should start on the premise that reducing its levels and creating healthier options is beneficial for European citizens.

Finland ascertained the reduction of saturated fat is important for it, particularly in view of the country's history of high level of cardiovascular diseases. The proposed reduction of 5% in 4 years is achievable at dietary level. However, saturated fat reduction at product level is more complicated and different targets are needed for different categories. Finland supports the idea of "best in class" and is interested in benchmarks. Regarding monitoring non-communicable diseases, Finland is concerned that saturated fat has been excluded from the monitoring framework proposed by the WHO at the World Health Assembly earlier this year. At the same time, marketing foods to children is important and Finland would support taking up action at EU level. The Chair confirmed the importance of marketing and advertising foods to children and reminded that the report on the application of the Audiovisual Media Service Directive would be presented in the afternoon session.

Austria commented that there are natural fats and oils, such as olive oil. The representative enquired whether the purpose of the proposal is to create oil that does not resemble the form it naturally occurs in, or to reformulate products that are manufactured. Austria does not agree that oils and fats should not be included in the list.

Ms Bodenbach explained it is a broad category and it is not meant to change the basic pattern of individual oils. However, there are products on the market, e.g. frying oils, which could be high in saturated fat or low in saturated fat and high in monosaturated fatty acids, so there is a possibility to improve the composition. On the other hand, this is not possible for single origin products, such as olive oil, and it is clearly not the purpose of the proposed reduction.

Denmark pointed out that the intake of certain types of fat is higher in the country than the recommended 10%, and it is interested in what action might be possible at EU level. The proposal sends a good signal to industry and clearly states that reformulation should not have inappropriate impact on the food composition, so the reduction of saturated fat does not lead to something equally undesirable. Denmark's efforts are focusing on nutritional labelling, which could be used as a way of signalling whether there has been improvement with respect to certain nutrients, including fat. While informing the consumers may not be enough, a decrease in the fat level in certain national products, such as cheeses, would require a change in mentality. Denmark understands the 5% reduction as an average.

Slovenia agrees with Belgium that it is valuable to have action at EU level to support Member States in their discussions with industry. Slovenia is currently finalising its Nutrition Action plan and reformulation is an important part of it. Slovenia is looking at nutritional profiling with the cooperation of the WHO as a base for further actions, e.g. marketing of foods to children. Since February, a group on reformulation nominated by the Ministry of Health has discussed the proposed framework and followed activities at EU level. Slovenia welcomed the proposed reduction as a target is needed. At the same time, the document clearly mentions that different food categories can have different benchmarks and national plans should build on that. Slovenia was pleased that the WHO recommendations of less than 10% of energy coming from saturated fat in the daily diet were included in the annex.

Spain expressed support in general for the reduction of saturated fat. However, at the moment it prefers not to make commitments with specific goals and deadlines. In Spain, fat reduction will be promoted taking into account the national context and the consent of the stakeholders. The Chair underlined that the proposed annex is only a basis on which Member States can build their national plans. Spain replied that as there is a newly elected government, it needs some time for discussions with stakeholders but was in principle in favour of action.

Ireland indicated that the proposed framework is useful to help industry come together and develop a united approach to saturated fat reduction. Last year, it launched a new cardiovascular health strategy with a goal which is in line with the WHO recommendation of less than 10% of total energy to come from saturated fat. As some of the Irish food companies are selling on the UK market, they are already achieving the targets set by the Food Standards Agency. Ireland said that it had launched the "Healthy Eating Guidelines". The educational model of these guidelines focuses on the food permit and looks particularly to reducing the consumption of foods high in fat, such as confectionery, snacks, cakes and biscuits. Ireland suggested that this could be a possible approach.

The Chair asked if these guidelines could be shared with the rest of the Group and Ireland replied positively. The Chair also underlined that focusing the work on saturated fat reduction on a certain food group, such as processed foods, should be reflected in the national plans because Member States have different dietary challenges.

Germany stressed the importance of sustainability and informed that it is developing the concept of sustainable nutrition with a focus on managing the extracted fat. Germany supports the flexibility in the annex, as it is important to reduce the intake of saturated fat rather than its level in individual products. The side effects of reducing fat levels, for example losing vitamins, should also be considered. While it is sensible to reduce the quantity of saturated fat in products, encouraging higher consumption of certain food categories such as fruit and vegetables and lower consumption of others, is another way to improve the diet and the health of the population. Germany also brought attention to the issue of additives, as it is important in the public opinion, and cautioned against substituting fat with more additives. At the same time, taste is very important for many communities and removing certain food categories from the proposal should be considered. In conclusion, Germany generally supported the annex, underlining that it should also focus on the reduction of dietary intake of saturated fat and other means of achieving general objectives, apart from reformulation.

The Chair reminded that frequency of consumption and portion sizes form part of the general framework on selected nutrients, as agreed by the HLG. Furthermore, reformulation is only one area of the HLG work and the national plans. The reduction of saturated fat in particular is an effort to make the healthier options available and thus encourage a healthy intake. The Chair reminded that the safety levels of additives are regulated at EU level, every additive undergoes a risk assessment by the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) and is then approved by the European Commission. Germany clarified that it does not question the safety of food additives but would like to bring attention to the fact that consumer acceptance is low.

Portugal pointed out that the approach is similar to the one for the salt framework where the Member States could achieve different objectives in different food categories. It is important to start with a general framework and then evaluate the process.

Sweden remarked that there is a good supply of low fat products on its market but in the last years consumer demand has decreased, particularly due to the marketing of low carb high fat diet (LCHF diet). Ms Bodenbach pointed out that this is provided in the Annex.

The Netherlands recognised the issue of additives in the public opinion but as they are approved by EFSA, this should not prevent further efforts by the HLG. The Chair said the European Commission is aware of the issue. The Commission services have created a viral clip explaining the safety of food additives and it could be used in national consumer education campaigns.

Finland saw more benefit in a 5% reduction in dietary intake, than a reduction in the products. Ms Bodenbach clarified that theoretically, if product levels of saturated fat are reduced by 5%, then consumer intake will also be reduced by 5%. However, there are food categories where a 5% reduction is not possible and other values could be established in national plans. Saturated fat reduction percentage could be product based in some countries and population based in others, as these are linked and the final goal is the same.

Italy agreed with Finland that a 5% reduction in saturated fat intake. The representative reiterated his earlier statement that a comprehensive approach is needed.

The Czech Republic pointed out that the retailers - in addition to the food producers - should be involved. Also, there is a national trend to go back to traditional foods and products which

they should consider. The Chair recalled the importance of national plans which cater to different cultural contexts and not only in the area of reformulation.

Belgium stressed that Member States need to focus on a reduction of 5% in different food categories and that this should be the message to industry. Belgium agreed with Finland that reducing the intake is the final public health objective but a quantifiable objective is needed for the food industry. The representative stressed that there should be a clear message to industry that certain categories must be reformulated and this is even more important in view of social disparities. Often the cheapest products are the ones with a high level of saturated fat.

France said it is crucial to work on reformulation, especially in the context of social inequalities. Strategies based on education measures lead to inequalities because the better educated citizens benefit more from consumer information compared to those less educated. Member States should lay a strong general guideline that industry should focus on composition of foods.

The Chair thanked for the constructive comments and proposed that the Commission services reflect on them and give conclusions, and the way forward, in the afternoon session.

4. FORESIGHT STUDY "TOMORROW'S HEALTHY SOCIETY – RESEARCH PRIORITIES FOR FOODS AND DIETS"

PRESENTATION BY MS ANNE-KATRIN BOCK, JOINT RESEARCH CENTRE, UNIT A03

Ms Bock started by introducing the Joint Research Centre (JRC) as the European Commission's in-house science service, whose mission is to provide EU policies with independent scientific and technical support throughout the policy cycle. The JRC works on several key priorities, which cover a broad range - environment and climate change, energy and clean transport, agriculture and food security, health and consumer protection, information society and digital media, and safety and security. Most of the work is carried out in the 7 JRC institutes located in Belgium, Germany, the Netherlands, Italy and Spain; and the annual budget is EUR 381 million. The Institute for Reference Materials and Measurements in Belgium and the Institute for Health and Consumer Protection in Italy are involved in the "Foresight" study on research priorities for foods and diets.

"Foresight" is based on the idea that there are numerous possible futures which need to be considered to inform today's decision making. Time horizons typically vary between 5 and 30 years. "Foresight" is an open, participatory process which includes various stakeholders and is action-oriented. The general objective of the study on food and health is to support the implementation of the future Horizon 2020 programme. To this aim, the study will identify challenges and drivers of future societal developments relevant to the provision and consumption of beneficial foods and diets, and, on the basis of scenarios, identify research and innovation priorities in this context. It will look at two time horizons – 2020 and 2050.

The study focuses on the food chain downstream of primary production, and the provision and consumption of beneficial foods and diets, while taking into account relevant aspects of agriculture, environmental issues and food safety. The study started in March 2012 and it is planned for 20 months. The final report is expected to be disseminated in October 2013.

Portugal commented that there is a limited number of foresight studies which explore aspects such as the quality of food and access to food. These aspects should also be included, especially in the current context of changing socio-economic models and high unemployment. Ms Bock replied that food security should be studied together with sustainability and the economic situation, as these are all factors which will influence the future European diets and dietary habits.

The Chair asked if the HLG members could provide input for study. Ms Bock recalled that a "Foresight" study is an open process. Since DG SANCO is represented in the Steering group for the foresight study, it will be a good channel to bring in ideas from the HLG.

Slovenia asked how national differences in diet and health inequalities will be considered in the study. Ms Bock replied that national differences will be considered as much as possible within the time and budget limits of the study. The World Health Organisation (WHO) asked for clarification regarding the level of involvement of different areas in nutrition and different diseases reflected in the elaborated scenarios. Ms Bock pointed out that at the moment the study is broad and does not focus on particular diseases related to nutrition. However, at a later stage it could focus on certain aspects. Mr Roux invited the HLG members to contact him in case they would like to propose participants to the study workshop, or provide other input.

France underlined that it is important to explore in each scenario how it would affect social inequalities and that this is the kind of analysis France is interested in.

Belgium expressed its interest in foresight studies particularly exploring what the European diets will be in the long term, and stressed the importance of sustainability. Inequalities are linked to sustainability and the EU should be aware of the social impact it is causing within and outside Europe. The health of the planet and the health of the population should be considered jointly in future food strategies. Ms Bock confirmed that there are many aspects that could be looked at, including consumer behaviour.

The Chair concluded that the results will be particularly useful material for the discussion on the future of the Strategy, and also asked the Group to provide any input to the study to Philippe Roux.

5. PROMOTING HEALTH-ENHANCING PHYSICAL ACTIVITY: NEW DEVELOPMENTS ON THE SPORT POLICY SIDE

PRESENTATION BY MR MICHAL KREJZA, HEAD OF UNIT, DG EDUCATION AND CULTURE, UNIT E3

Mr Krejza informed that the Commission services were preparing a new EU policy initiative in the field of Health-Enhancing Physical Activity (HEPA). National and EU initiatives to promote HEPA had only had limited effect and renewed policy efforts were needed. At EU level, the 2007 White Paper on Sport was the base on which the EU Physical Activity Guidelines were developed and endorsed by Member States' Sport Ministers in 2008.

In essence, the Guidelines were recommendations for national guidelines and actions across sectors. Implementation so far could be described as "patchy" - good in some Member States and non-existent in others. In this respect, the 2011 Communication on sport called on the Member States and the European Commission to consider a Council Recommendation on HEPA, including a review and a coordination process.

Mr Krejza explained that the overall aim of the planned policy initiative on HEPA was to encourage the implementation of the EU Physical Activity Guidelines 2008 in the Member States and to ensure close cooperation between sectors involved in HEPA promotion. It built on evidence and consultations with experts, policy-makers and stakeholders. An essential part of the initiative should be the creation of a light monitoring framework, including indicators to follow the implementation of the Guidelines. These indicators and the related methodology were currently being developed with the help of experts. The proposed approach would use indicators on thematic groups of the Guidelines, would build to the largest extent possible on existing data and would hence lead to a larger but manageable burden of reporting by Member States. Mr Krejza gave concrete examples for thematic groups of Guidelines and corresponding indicators.

As to the process, Mr Krejza noted that DG Education and Culture was currently engaged in consultations. The Cypriot Presidency was planning to produce Council conclusions to support the initiative and its focus on monitoring in November 2012. In the meantime, the Commission services were preparing an Impact Assessment which should reach the Impact Assessment board in November 2012. On this basis, the European Commission should adopt a proposal for a Council Recommendation on HEPA in early 2013. The proposal would be presented to the HLG. Mr Krejza invited the HLG members to share their reactions, particularly on the proposed monitoring framework and indicators.

Mr Roux remarked that monitoring was an important aspect of the work of the HLG. Given that existing databases in cooperation with the WHO would be used, Mr Roux invited members to welcome the initiative as it reinforced existing policy synergy without carrying an additional burden.

Slovenia informed that their Ministry of Health was interested in the new development. The proposed indicators were similar to the ones developed by the WHO workshop - they were based on sound scientific evidence and responded to the needs of the Member States. The Slovenian representative cautioned against mixing sport and leisure physical activity. The representative also informed that the HEPA Strategy 2007–2013 in Slovenia had had weak implementation, mainly due to insufficient cooperation among sectors. Slovenia proposed adding a few indicators on inter-sectoral cooperation. In conclusion, Slovenia would support the policy initiative.

France pointed out that Member States had different administrative situations and therefore multi-sectoral realities. That was why it could be difficult to identify common indicators and to have reliable information on implementation. The different tools used to evaluate physical activity, e.g. questionnaires, led to different results, depending on the used method. France also cautioned that a lot of the financial resources for physical activity came from food companies, so public authorities should look at whether this in the end suited the goal of improving the general health of the individual.

Mr Roux welcomed the HEPA policy initiative on behalf of the HLG. Particularly the focus on monitoring was appreciated. It was a good starting point for encouraging cross-sectoral cooperation to promote HEPA.

The WHO recalled that they have a database, which is currently being updated. In order to keep it alive and relevant, the cooperation of the Member States was required. Mr Roux said that it could be beneficial to have a presentation at the next HLG meeting on the continuous cooperation with the WHO and the way to reactivate the National Focal Point process.

6. NATIONAL UPDATES ON DEVELOPMENTS IN THE MEMBER STATES

6.1. THE HEALTH IN ALL POLICIES APPROACH IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SCHOOL FRUIT SCHEME

PRESENTATION BY MRS MOJCA GABRIELČIČ, NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF PUBLIC HEALTH OF THE REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA

Ms Gabrielčič presented a study on the cross-sectoral collaboration in the School Fruit Scheme (SFS) in all 27 Member States, which is part of the Crossing Bridges Project funded by the EU Health Programme and coordinated by EuroHealthNet. The aim of the study was to measure and assess the links between different sectors before the SFS, and the impact of the SFS on cross-sectoral cooperation.

In 2011, a survey was developed and carried out. There were 40 responses in total: 27 from the agricultural sector, 10 from the public health sector and 3 from the education sector. The results of the survey look at the amount and quality of contact before launching the SFS, specific challenges during implementation (e.g. “for agriculture it is difficult to see how schools function”), and the level of understanding and political willingness for cooperation after the SFS.

The results show that the implementation of the SFS increased understanding of the necessity of cross-sectoral collaboration, readiness to collaborate with other sectors, the necessary skills and knowledge and the levels of trust between different public sectors. Furthermore, they suggest possible improvement of cooperation among different sectors in future schemes and programmes which rely on the same principles. The results of the survey were published in May 2012 in a Report, which concludes that the SFS is a good example of the "health in all policies" approach.

The Chair reflected that the results of this study are relevant in the discussions for the evaluation of the SFS.

Portugal pointed out that in cross-sectoral cooperation the local authorities should also be considered. Monitoring in Portugal showed need to decrease bureaucracy and the number of actors involved. Ms Gabrielčič confirmed that the results of the study also indicated the need to decrease bureaucracy and emphasised that balance is needed in terms of the actors involved. EuroHealthNet informed they have created a training module for successful inter-sectoral collaboration and a document detailing the practical outcomes of the project.

6.2. DATABASE ON SALT LEVELS IN BREAD

PRESENTATION BY MRS LILIANNE BRUGGMANN, THE EUROPEAN SALT ACTION NETWORK (CH, IE, BE, ES, WHO-EUROPE)

Ms Bruggmann presented the European Salt Action Network (ESAN) project for a database on salt levels in bread. The aim is to exchange experiences and knowledge via a simple monitoring tool on salt reduction in different food categories among ESAN members. The objectives are to have formation on a specific food category, to compare experience with other countries and to work towards the same target level in one food category. One country is responsible for one food category and the rest of the members send information to this lead country that collects and updates the information.

The working group on bread comprises Belgium, Ireland, Spain, Switzerland (lead country) and WHO Europe. They have worked on definitions of bread and bread categories, which could be different depending on culture. The Working group also looked at the available data, such as consumer data, as well as data on the product itself. Ms Bruggmann presented the Excel tool on bread for electronic collation of information, including salt consumption data and information on different categories of industrial and bakery breads. The Excel spreadsheet is being finalised and will be followed by a pilot test during the second half of 2012. ESAN is open to the HLG members. By the end of the year, a final decision will be made on whether to go forward with the electronic tool.

If the decision is positive, Switzerland - as the lead country - will collect data from more ESAN member countries. In June 2013, the database will be presented and discussed. At this point the inclusion of other food categories, such as cheese, meat and convenience foods will be considered, and possibly a tool will be developed for additional 2-3 food categories. The aim of the database is to share knowledge and information, to ensure Member States are working to achieve the same goals across the different food categories, as well as a certain level of harmonisation across the EU.

The Chair confirmed the HLG's interest in the results of this initiative and asked when they will be available. Ms Bruggmann replied that if a decision is made to go ahead, a summary report will be produced in March 2013.

Finland asked how the targets have been set and the product categories defined. The representative also pointed out that the creation and maintenance of the database could present a burden for the Member States, and suggested that the practical aspects should be discussed. Ms Bruggmann explained that within the food categories there are differences between the types of bread. Every Member State decides on listing its products according to its cultural context. Subsequently, subgroups could be created for products that countries have in common. She stressed the database would provide comparable data on salt levels and allow better monitoring of salt reduction by industry.

7. IMPLEMENTATION REPORT OF THE AUDIOVISUAL MEDIA SERVICE DIRECTIVE 2010/13/EU

PRESENTATION BY MS ANNE DELTOUR AND MS JOANNA WRONA,
DG INFORMATION SOCIETY, UNIT A1

Ms Deltour started by explaining that the Audiovisual Media Service Directive (AVMSD) covers linear television broadcasting services and video on demand (non-linear) services. As an internal market directive, it reconciles internal market objectives with public policy objectives, namely protection of minors, prohibition of incitement to hatred, and regulation of audio-visual commercial communications. The implementation report, published on 7 May 2012, concludes that the Directive is an appropriate tool but certain issues need to be further investigated, such as the technological development of connected TV and audio-visual commercial communication.

The monitoring results show the arising of new business practices, such as undue prominence in product placing, identification of sponsorship arrangements and split screen advertising, which raise legal issues. In 2013, there will be an update of interpretative communication on certain forms of advertising to address these issues.

The monitoring of the qualitative requirements for advertising concludes that there are very few infringements but certain problematic characteristics appear frequently, and the effectiveness of the Directive provisions regarding its objectives will be further monitored.

Regarding codes of conduct for inappropriate audio-visual commercial communications in children's programmes for sweet, fatty or salty foods and drinks, the report has found that:

- most Member States have transposed this provision or had relevant rules in place before the Directive was adopted;
- most Member States have self-regulatory rules;
- other Member States have statutory rules;
- certain Member States have a combination of self-regulatory and statutory rules;
- effectiveness must be further monitored and assessed.

The Chair asked about the follow up regarding the implementation report. Ms Wrona replied that there will be a full assessment in the next report and in the meantime a workshop could be organised for Member States and the industry.

France asked whether the Directive limits Member States to adopt restrictive measures on food advertising. Ms Deltour replied that the AVMSD sets minimal provisions that must be respected but Member States can choose to impose stricter measures as long as they comply with European law.

CONCLUSIONS OF THE CHAIR

- Regarding the proposed annex on the reduction of saturated fat to the Nutrients Framework, the comprehensive debate demonstrated that:
 - the proposal for a flexible structure is a basis on which Member States can build their national strategies;
 - the 5% reduction of saturated fat in four years target is indicative and further adaptations will be required for specific markets and products;
 - the document will form an Annex to the EU Framework for National Initiatives on Selected Nutrients;
 - this approach to saturated fat is not a substitute for the other elements of the framework and is a component of the comprehensive Strategy for Europe on Nutrition, Overweight and Obesity related Health Issues;
 - the initiative starts with already 20 active countries. The next step will consist of a first reporting on progress (before the end of the year). The Commission services will provide a questionnaire to the HLG before the summer break;
 - the issue will be put on the agenda of the High Level Group when a discussion is merited and when new elements are available.

The Group endorsed these conclusions.

- The Commission will circulate an updated questionnaire for the Salt Reduction Framework report to the HLG by 12 July 2012. The deadline for feedback is 20 September 2012.
- The Commission services will provide in early July a tool to present current and future activities focused on the reduction of saturated fat.

The next meeting will take place on 15 November 2012. It will be preceded by the joint meeting with the EU Platform for Action on Diet, Physical Activity and Health in the afternoon of 14 November 2012.