



**DIET, PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND HEALTH -
A EUROPEAN PLATFORM FOR ACTION
6 FEBRUARY 2014
10.00 – 17.00**

CHAIR: Mr John F. Ryan

MINUTES

1. INTRODUCTION BY THE COMMISSION

The meeting was opened by the Chair Mr John Ryan who welcomed the participants and introduced the agenda focussing on “Education and lifestyle modification”. Delegates were informed that the Joint Research Centre would, from now on, be responsible for the 'What is New' presentation. The Platform adopted today’s agenda.

The Chair asked if participants were happy to adopt the minutes from the previous Platform meeting (comments had been sent in from **European Food Information Council** the day before the meeting and would be considered). **International Baby Food Action Network (IBFAN)** noted that they had not received a copy of the minutes. The Commission vowed to correct that.

The Chair introduced the point of the continuation of the Working Group on Monitoring and Reporting that had been discussed at the previous Platform meeting. Three members (COPA-COGECA, FoodDrinkEurope and EuroHealthNet) have so far expressed interest in this. The Chair called for more volunteers. **IBFAN** commented that commitments should be related to core business, and that they believe those included in the agenda do not reflect this well. **IBFAN** noted that evaluation is difficult given the broad nature of the commitments. John Ryan responded that the external Evaluation Report has highlighted shortcomings in relation to the reporting of commitments. The actions of the Working Group would contribute further to improving this situation. John Ryan invited **IBFAN** to join the Working Group if they have concerns.

2. WHAT IS NEW, presentation by Joint Research Centre

Mr Jan Wollgast, Scientific Project Officer at JRC, provided the participants with an overview of recent scientific developments and publications in the fields of nutrition, obesity and physical activity. In his presentation he focused on education and childhood obesity and mentioned two upcoming events: the conference “Health in Europe, making it fairer” (18 March 2014) and “The 2014 EU Summit on Chronic Diseases” (3-4 April 2014).

IBFAN asked where this can be accessed online. Philippe Roux responded that the presentation will be added to CIRCA and distributed on the website (after checking copyright issues).

This was followed by a brief discussion around the fact that modelling studies should be based on scientific research in order to make scientifically valid claims about the impact on population of food reformulation. **IBFAN** noted that caution is needed when making claims about population impact and **BEUC** noted that voluntary industry measures on removal of trans fats may not impact the diets of the social groups more likely to eat a higher percentages of these foods (if for instance reformulated products are marketed at higher prices). This statement was supported by **EuroHealthNet**.

The Chair acknowledged that more developments in the area of modelling would be welcomed as it remains an inexact tool. He suggested that Modelling on Diet and CVD could be the basis of a possible presentation at a future meeting. He noted that this issue could be considered in the activities of the Working Group on Monitoring and Reporting.

3. UPDATE OF ACTION PLAN ON CHILDHOOD OBESITY, presentation by Ms Ursula O’Dwyer, Department of Health Ireland

The **Chair** introduced the Action Plan on Childhood Obesity (Action Plan) and underlined that it is an initiative of the High Level Group. The Action Plan directly answers a request by the Platform to have additional (political) guidance on where to focus its actions and commitments. Platform members should expect no surprises as the Action Plan follows and supports the implementation of the 2007 Strategy on Nutrition, Overweight and Obesity-related Health Issues. It builds on the participatory approach and discussions of the High Level Group on Nutrition and Physical Activity and of the Platform.

Ms Ursula O’Dwyer, Department of Health Ireland and member of the High Level Group on Nutrition and Physical Activity, updated the Platform members about the draft Action Plan (work process, objective, areas for actions, next steps). The aim is to have the document endorsed at the Greek Presidency Conference on “Nutrition and Physical Activity, from childhood to old age: Challenges and opportunities” (25-26 February in Athens).

Both **Ms O’Dwyer** and **the Chair** thanked the Platform members for their suggestions/inputs given in January and invited them to further contribute to the improvement and implementation of the Action Plan.

Ms O’Dwyer also informed the Plenary that a joint action on this issue will be developed.

The Chair opened the floor for questions.

FoodDrinkEurope mentioned that they would have liked stakeholders to have been more actively involved in the development of the Action Plan and inquired if it would be possible to see a copy of the draft before it is finalised by the Member States. **The Chair** noted that Platform members should expect no surprises from the Action Plan given that is based on the 2007 European Strategy. The eight identified areas of action are not new areas of work but rather headings for groupings of tools for implementation. Besides, being a High Level Group document, it was not subject to a formal consultation procedure as Commission documents

are. The Chair invited the Platform members, when submitting new commitments or restating old ones, to verify if these can be tied to the eight action areas of Action Plan. **Philippe Roux** added that the Action Plan has directly responded to the Platform's expectations and requests concerning the role of the High Level Group.

BEUC highlighted the fact that the aim of the Action Plan is to halt rather than reduce the rate of the childhood obesity and suggested that renewed impetus from governments is now needed given that too little progress has been made.

European Society of Paediatric Gastroenterology, Hepatology and Nutrition (ESPGHAN) asked if the Commission is taking into account food advertising and marketing reaching children through internet. They informed delegates that a working group on the monitoring of overweight children being admitted to hospital has been set up. They also inquired about the monitoring of the nutrition status and inequalities in children.

On the first point **the Commission** confirmed that the issue of new (social) media was taken into account. Stakeholders are still welcome to add their initiatives to the Action Plan. Social inequalities have been considered across all actions of the Action Plan. This was done on purpose so as to ensure that they are a horizontal a priority rather than targeted in isolation only by some of the actions. Pilot projects have been developed in specific EU regions to see how we may best promote healthy dieting in lower socio-economic groups. Regarding the last point, the Commission mentioned that stakeholders such as the WHO will be involved in the monitoring of the Action Plan.

World Federation of Advertisers asked whether industry stakeholders could have greater involvement in the drafting process. **The Chair** responded that the January consultation offered platform members the opportunity to comment. He underlined that the Action Plan is a Member State initiative and that the text will be made public after its endorsement in Athens.

Commenting on the industry's request to be more involved in the drafting **IBFAN** welcomed the confirmation that Member States are taking the lead and noted that an end to industry sponsorship in schools would be welcomed.

EuroHealthNet asked if the implementation of the Action Plan will be evaluated and if there will be opportunity to strengthen or update actions. **The Commission** explained that the Action Plan will have a midterm review to assess progress or adjust actions.

European Vending Association requested clarification of action area three relating to the restriction of vending machines in schools. They feel that the Action Plan ignores that vending machines can contain healthy options. Ursula O'Dwyer responded that it is the Member States choice to enact restrictions on vending machines or the food included in them; and that clear labelling of foods should be encouraged to allow customers to make a more informed choice.

For the sake of transparency, **the Chair** circulated hard copies of the current Annex to the draft Action Plan with the request for the members to verify whether their current commitments had been correctly included or if any other ideas should. Further comments should be received before the Athens meeting. Platform members will have an opportunity to dialogue directly with the Member States on 10 June, on occasion of the High Level Group and Platform Joint Meeting.

4. STATE OF PLAY ON COMMITMENTS, presentation by the Commission

Mr Liam Durack, European Commission, presented the state of play on Platform commitments. Currently, there are 274 commitments in the Platform database (137 active and 137 non-active). In 2013 there were 13 new commitments (five are for Advocacy; two for Physical Activity; two for Marketing and Advertising; two for Education, one each for Food labelling and Reformulation) and six new commitments have been submitted in 2014 (two of these are joint actions). Seven Platform members will need to submit new commitments in 2014 in order to remain part of the Platform. Mr Durack concluded by encouraging the Platform members to submit new commitments. He finally urged the Plenary to send the Monitoring Reports for 2013 at the latest by 12 February 2014.

The Chair opened the floor for discussion.

IBFAN (referring to the list circulated) asked how to submit new commitments and how comments on commitments made by others in support of the Action Plan could be presented. **The Chair** suggested these comments to be submitted to the Commission.

In responding to a question asking if further commitments could be linked to the Action Plan, **Mr Philippe Roux** welcomed such additional commitments that would then be scrutinised and monitored closely via the current Platform monitoring mechanism. With regard to the submission of new commitments related to the Action Plan, **Mr Artur Furtado** pointed out that these initiatives should have a strong focus on the topics of the Action Plan. All Platform Members were asked to consider whether current or future commitments were suitable to be included in the Action Plan.

FoodDrinkEurope asked if it was possible to have a breakdown of commitments by Member State. **The Chair** responded that these are still in the process of finalisation.

5. ACTIVE COMMITMENTS IN THE FIELD OF EDUCATION

5.1 OVERVIEW OF COMMITMENTS IN THE FIELD OF EDUCATION, presentation by IBF International Consulting

Mr John Griffiths, IBF International Consulting, provided an overview of the commitments in the field of “education and lifestyle modification” (based on the status of the Platform at beginning of February 2014). In total there are 95 commitments in the field of education: 47 non-active and 38 active commitments, with two new actions in 2013. The number of commitments in this field has dropped from 71 in 2010 to 38. The majority is from FoodDrinkEurope (22 commitments). Currently there are two joint commitments, both by European Food Information Council and European Federation of the Associations of Dietitians. Children and adolescents form the largest target group (14 commitments); of these, nine operate in only one country, one operates in 30 countries. The second largest target group are health professionals with ten commitments. Education accounts for 29% of the total number of the commitments. However, the number of commitments in this area is declining (from 71 in 2010 to 38 in 2013) and a high proportion (45%) of the active commitments operates only in one country.

The Chair underlined that there seems to be an opportunity in extending the geographical scope of the commitments. **Mr Griffiths** added that the analysis of the Monitoring Reports for the Annual Report of this year would also look at the commitment by Member State. These could highlight opportunities for more or broader joint action.

Mr Artur Furtado suggested that, where possible, Platform Members should focus new commitments on low socio-economic groups. **The Chair** confirmed that health inequalities are an important issue, which is currently being discussed in the Commission. **Mr Griffiths** added that there is a section on health inequalities in the guidelines prepared for the Platform members last year.

5.2 PLATFORM COMMITMENTS IN THE FIELD OF EDUCATION

5.2.1 EPODE FOR THE PROMOTION OF HEALTH EQUITY, presentation by EPODE

Mr Rualt Du Plessis, Coordinator of EPHE (the EPODE¹ for the Promotion of Health Equity) and **Ms Pauline Harper**, Director Advisory of EPODE European Network and EPODE International Network, presented details of two projects with the objective of strengthening community based programs in Europe. The EPHE project aims to reduce health inequalities in relation to diet and physical activity and is currently developing interventions to reduce inequalities in health by considering energy balance related behaviours. The OPEN project aims to understand how to develop effective interventions for children in low socio-economic status families and is running until 2016.

The Chair opened the discussion asking for the presenters to elaborate on difference between TV time and screen time. They indicated that screen time includes computers, games consoles, mobile phones, etc. Picking up on the presentation point on promotion on social media, **Mr Philippe Roux** recalled that Facebook is not supposed to be accessible to small children. The presenters acknowledge that and indicated that their project targets families (4 million of them) via Facebook and that Facebook is an appropriate tool to reach parents within this group.

Several members asked for clarifications on EPODE, especially on the financial support it receives from Coca-Cola. EPODE responded that their work involves multi-stakeholder support and that all partners adhere to their partner engagement charter. **Mr Philippe Roux** reminded that there is a standing agreement that all commitments associated with the Platform must not be branded. This includes the product and the organisation, indeed the only place that the company name should appear is perhaps in CSR reports.

Association of European Cancer Leagues and **EuroHealthNet** enquired as to how the projects will be evaluated, especially in relation to reducing health inequalities, and asked about the handling of the personal data of participants. EPODE replied that they have developed their own evaluation questionnaire and that they are measuring the impact on inequalities using a number of measures, in collaboration with the University of Amsterdam.

The Chair asked when the evaluation will be made available. EPODE answered that the evaluation will take place in May, with the results being expected in September. **IBFAN** noted that they would like the opportunity to provide comments on this evaluation. The Chair

¹ 'Ensemble Prévenons l'Obésité Des Enfants' (EPODE, Together Let's Prevent Childhood Obesity).

indicated that the Platform would be interested in hearing about the evaluation. In addition, the Chair suggested that EPODE draft a written reply to address all the questions posed today and that this will be circulated to all.

5.2.2 IMPROVING MEDICAL AND HEALTH PROFESSIONAL SKILLS TO COUNTERACT OBESITY, presentation by the International Association for the Study of Obesity

Mr Mohamad Qutub, Education Manager at IASO, presented their Platform commitment "Improving medical and health professional skills to counteract obesity". The focus was on the development of their online professional education and development, called SCOPE (Specialist Certification of Obesity Professional Education), targeted at health professionals. This programme coordinates a number of accredited courses running throughout Europe and the world and provides certification when modules have been completed. SCOPE charges for E-learning modules and drew delegates attention to the testimonials and survey responses available on the website.

The Chair opened the floor for questions.

EUFIC asked how the modules were developed. **Mr Qutub** stated that their Education and Management Task Force receives recommendations or studies from other international associations and builds the modules upon that input.

European Network for Prevention and Health Promotion in Family Medicine and General Practice asked about the price of the courses and then suggested to take into account a possible partnership with the massive online open-courses provided by some US and European universities. **Mr Qutub** responded that they have member and non-member rates and that possible partnerships in this field would require efforts and long discussions; for the moment they are focusing on making the programme self-sustainable.

5.2.3 THE NESTLÉ HEALTHY KIDS PROGRAMME IN EUROPE AND ITS LOCAL IMPLEMENTATION IN SPAIN WITH THAO, presentation by Nestlé and THAO Fundacion

The presentation was given by **Ms Cécile Duprez-Naudy** (Nestlé Healthy Kids Global Programme Coordinator), who provided a general overview, and by **Dr. Rafael Casas** (Scientific Director, THAO Foundation), who focused on the implementation of the Programme in Spain.

The objective of the Global Programme is to raise nutrition and health knowledge and promote physical activity among school-aged children around the world. The Programme is subject to annual independent monitoring and evaluation and any personal data collected by the partners is not made available to Nestlé. The Nestlé Healthy Kids Programme builds on existing projects and operates in 16 Member States and seven other European countries. In 2013 the number of children benefitting from the programmes had reached just over 3.25 million and 58 partners were involved in delivering the initiative.

THAO presented details of their program to prevent childhood obesity in Spain. This program focusses on physical activity, diet, sleep and psychological and emotional aspects, and is based on EPODE methodology. The programme was launched in Spain in 2007, and has been developed through municipalities in order to promote healthy lifestyles in children (from birth to 12 years). **IBFAN** said that by collaborating with companies that market baby foods in a project targeting this age group, Epode/Thao is breaching not only WHO recommendations on marketing of foods to children but also the International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes and subsequent relevant WHO Resolutions.

Dr. Rafael Casas explained that the project is based on a public-private partnership approach. In 2013, 75 municipalities and eight autonomous regions were actively involved providing access to 150,000 children.

The Chair asked on the nature of the delivery mechanisms of the programme. The presenters replied that teaching resources were provided to schools and materials were also made available for parents, kindergartens, and for other settings such as sports and health facilities.

Questions from the floor focused on the evaluation findings, variables and validity. In terms of the overall findings **Ms Duprez-Naudy** stated that initial results indicate positive findings so far as overweight and obesity are concerned (result to be published in March). On variables and proof that results are linked to the THAO Programme, **Dr. Casas** noted that differences between the control group and the intervention group were noticed. On validity, he pointed out that they have been focusing on the determinants that could be measured, i.e. on the ones that could be changed: whereas, for example, it would be difficult to change BMI levels in a period of two school years, reducing TV time or drinking more water could be achievable and measureable objectives.

On another question concerning links with corporate funding and the issue of branding, **Ms Duprez-Naudy** stated that the Nestlé logo and name does not appear on materials children receive. However, at the meeting it was noticed that the THAO material present on YouTube – not only the posters in classrooms, but also T Shirts worn by children – are branded with the logo of partners (including Nestlé). THAO responded that children's materials did not include these banners, but acknowledged that general promotional materials did. Nestlé promised to withdraw any branding from THAO materials.

After the meeting Dr. Rafael Casas from THAO provided further details on this point. These have been shared with the Platform members.

5.2.4 EASO AND ITS EDUCATION ACTIVITIES, presentation by the European Association for the Study of Obesity

Ms Dana Müllerová, member of the Prevention and Public Health Task Force of EASO, presented an overview of its education activities. The main objectives of EASO are to raise awareness of obesity, to develop and promote education to prevent obesity and to communicate and cooperate with relevant stakeholders in a multidisciplinary approach.

Ms Müllerová continued by presenting more in detail the key actions of EASO, including projects co-funded by the 7th Framework Programme (e.g. Dorian, Spotlight and Moodfood) and the work of the European Journal of Obesity.

One key area of their action is education, with the European Congress on Obesity to be held in May, training courses and workshops, specialist meetings and the development of guidelines. Since 2005, EASO promotes research by awarding young investigators with a prize for the Best Thesis, summer schools and exchange of ideas via social media.

A new initiative will be officially launched this year: the European Patient Council, gathering patient and medical representatives from 15-20 countries and aiming to facilitate better collaboration and to promote the needs and views of overweight patients.

The Chair welcomed the European Patient Council initiative and asked for EASO to present details of their patient council when the resource centre is fully developed.

Association of European Cancer Leagues enquired on how education is being provided. EASO responded that they are involved in many different specialist activities and workshops through the national society of obesity (e.g. health professionals are provided with guidelines for obesity management).

6. OTHER INITIATIVES IN THE FIELD OF EDUCATION

6.1 I.FAMILY PROJECT, presentation by University of Bremen

“I.Family” is a FP7 co-funded study that is investigating and reporting on the determinants of food choice, lifestyle and health in European children, adolescents and their parents. **Prof. Wolfgang Ahrens** from the University of Bremen, the coordinator of the project, explained to the audience that the project builds on the IDEFICS project. It will help to identify the reasons why young people in Europe eat the way they do and how this influences lifelong health. The conclusions so far point to the fact that even small improvements in the lifestyle of children can lead to substantial changes in their probability of becoming obese.

The Chair enquired about the link between this project and health policy. University of Bremen responded that the FP7 project has a Stakeholder Advisory Board through which the results are disseminated and discussed.

European Federation of the Associations of Dietitians queried the role of parents in the development of childhood obesity. University of Bremen responded that they would be willing to receive ideas on how parent groups could be involved in the project as stakeholders.

The Chair enquired as to whether this project addresses social inequalities. The University of Bremen responded that this issue is an overarching theme and that results show that socio-economic status is the greatest risk factor in the development of obesity.

6.2 PILOT PROJECT ON THE PROMOTION OF FRUIT AND VEGETABLES CONSUMPTION IN ROMANIA, BULGARIA AND SLOVAKIA, presentation by Agence Babel

The Commission has several pilot projects that look into specific issues. Agence Babel is coordinating a pilot project (June 2012 to June 2014) that aims to test different approaches aimed at increasing the consumption of fresh fruit and vegetables in particular in local communities in EU NUTS2 regions with primary household income below 50% of the EU

average. **Ms Rosie Clifton Van Vliet**, Project Manager at Agence Babel, mentioned that the particularity of the project's approach is not focusing on nutritional information materials but rather on enjoyment, discovery and pleasure. The project is being implemented in three countries (Bulgaria, Slovakia and Romania) and the three target groups are children, pregnant women and elderly people.

Ms Katarina Belkova, Managing Director of Forte Communications (the local contact point in Slovakia) presented the project implementation in Slovakia. In 12 months the project reached 4,000 persons through cooking lessons, organised in cooperation with schools, women in need centres and elderly homes.

The Chair thanked Ms Clifton Van Vliet and Ms Belkova for the presentation and asked to be informed on the outcomes of the project evaluation.

6.3 THE MENU FACTORY – OR HOW TO MAKE FRENCH PEOPLE’S LIVES SIMPLER AND GET THEM TO ADOPT GOOD EATING HABITS, presentation by the French National Institute for Prevention and Health Education

Ms Annick Gardies, Director Information and Communication of INPES, the French National Institute for Prevention and Health Education, presented the initiative “The Menu factory”. This recent initiative is part of the French National Nutrition Health Programme (PNNS) launched in 2001 with the general aim to improve the health of the population and get them to adopt good eating habits. The presentation provided details of a free website that provides meal planning for users. Customised menus are created based on user preferences. The project has developed a database of more than 2,000 healthy and low cost recipes.

After the presentation **the Chair** opened the floor to discussion.

Standing Committee of European Doctors asked whether different types of diets (e.g. vegetarian) were considered in the menu planner. INPES responded that these will be taken into account in future versions.

FoodDrinkEurope enquired as to whether menu plans take into account different age groups and the impact age has on consumption patterns. INPES responded that the menus represent an average and are not tailored to (age) specific groups. France has a nutritional barometer study and will consider the impact of this website in forthcoming rounds.

7. STAKEHOLDER INITIATIVES IN ALL AREAS

7.1 POHEFA (POLICY, HEALTH & FAMILY LEARNING), presentation by South Denmark European Office

The Chair informed the Platform members that due to the delays of the presentations, **Ms Henriette Hansen** of South Denmark European Office had to leave. The presentation will be postponed to a future Platform meeting.

8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Chair informed the group that the next meeting of the Platform will be in the morning of **10 June 2014**, when the members will discuss Advocacy and Information Exchange. In the afternoon the annual Joint Meeting with the High Level Group on Nutrition and Physical Activity will take place.

9. CONCLUSION

The Chair concluded the following:

- The open discussion and all the contributions from the Platform members to the Action Plan were much welcomed. The members will be informed about the next steps and are encouraged to further contribute to this important initiative.
- The members were invited to increase their commitments for 2014; a focus on actions supporting the Action Plan and targeting low socio-economic groups and children would be the most welcomed.
- Those members that still need to submit their Monitoring Report for their active commitments in 2013 are invited to do this at the latest by 12 February 2014.
- The Working Group on Monitoring and Reporting will continue in 2014 and several members volunteered to participate (all others were invited to express their interest to join). In this light the Commission will send a reminder asking the members if they want to join the Working Group.
- The next Platform meeting will take place on Tuesday 10 June 2014 and will focus on “Advocacy and Information Exchange”. At that meeting also the draft Annual Report 2013 will be presented and discussed. This half day meeting will be followed in the afternoon by the annual Joint Meeting with the High Level Group on Nutrition and Physical Activity.