



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

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INFORMATION NOTE

From : General Secretariat

To : Delegations

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Subject : Council conclusions on obesity, nutrition and physical activity
– Outcome of proceedings

The Council conclusions annexed hereto were adopted at the EPSCO Council on 3 June 2005.

COUNCIL CONCLUSIONS
on Obesity, Nutrition and Physical Activity

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

1. RECALLS that Article 152 of the Treaty states that a high level of human health protection shall be ensured in the definition and implementation of all Community policies and activities, and that Article 153 of the Treaty states that consumer protection requirements shall be taken into account in defining and implementing other Community policies and activities;
2. RECALLS that one of the objectives of the programme of Community action in the field of public health (2003-2008) is to promote health and prevent disease through addressing health determinants across all policies and activities, in particular by preparing and implementing strategies and measures, including those related to public awareness, on life-style related health determinants, such as nutrition, physical activity;
3. RECALLS the Council Resolution of 14 December 2000 on health and nutrition ¹, the Conclusions of the Council and the Ministers for Health of the Member States, meeting within the Council on 15 May 1992, on nutrition and health ², the Resolution of 3 December 1990 concerning an action programme on nutrition and health ³, the Council Conclusions of 2 December 2002 on obesity ⁴, the Council Conclusions of 2 December 2003 on healthy lifestyles ⁵, as well as the Council Conclusions of 2 June 2004 on promoting heart health;

¹ OJ C 20, 23.1.2001, p. 1.

² OJ C 148, 12.6.1992, p. 2.

³ OJ C 329, 31.12.1990, p. 1.

⁴ OJ C 11, 17.1.2003, p. 3.

⁵ OJ C 22, 27.01.04, p. 1.

4. RECALLS the European Union's support for the adoption of the Global Strategy on Diet, Physical Activity and Health at the World Health Assembly of May 2004, and recognises the strength of the evidence contained in the report "Diet, Nutrition and the Prevention of Chronic Diseases" ⁶ which underpins the measures proposed in the Global Strategy;
5. RECOGNISES the major and growing contribution of unhealthy lifestyles to the burden of a significant number of chronic diseases;
6. RECOGNISES the potential which the promotion of healthy diets and physical activity has for reducing the risk for a number of diseases and conditions, such as obesity, hypertension, heart disease, diabetes, stroke, osteoporosis and certain forms of cancer and in addition considerably improving the quality of life;
7. RECOGNISES the beneficial effects of healthy diets and physical activity in the prevention and treatment of chronic diseases with regard to both the citizens and the national health care systems;
8. NOTES WITH CONCERN the rise in obesity prevalence rates throughout the European Union, and particularly among children, as well as the negative consequences thereof for cardiovascular health and type 2 diabetes amongst others;
9. RECOGNISES the importance of addressing inequalities that may exist within Member States regarding obesity, diet and physical activity;
10. RECOGNISES that obesity is a multi-causal condition which requires a comprehensive preventive approach, including multi-stakeholder efforts at local, regional, national, European and global levels;

⁶ Diet, Nutrition and the Prevention of Chronic Diseases, Report of a joint WHO/FAO Expert Consultation, WHO Technical Report Series 916, 2003.

11. RECOGNISES that it is necessary to ensure the involvement of all stakeholders in order to build up social awareness for the importance of healthy diets and physical activity, particularly with regard to children, and to counteract misleading forms of advertising;
12. WELCOMES the recent launch by the Commission of the European Platform for Action on Diet, Physical Activity and Health as an important step forward in this regard, which is expected to contribute to pursuing healthy nutrition and physical activities and to halting current obesity trends through determined action by the stakeholders represented in the Platform, and ENCOURAGES Member States to launch as appropriate initiatives within the context of their overall national strategy and to work in synergy with the European Platform;
13. STRESSES the importance of strengthening links between efforts to promote healthy diets and physical activity and other Community policies, such as the agriculture, transport, environment, culture, education and consumer policy areas. Whenever new or revised Community legislation with an impact on nutrition and physical activity is prepared, synergies should be sought with the objectives pursued through health policy measures. Moreover, addressing the obesity epidemic and promoting healthy diets and physical activity should be mainstreamed into the agenda of other relevant Councils;
14. RECOGNISES that physical activity is considered to be an integral part of a healthy lifestyle and that learning to enjoy sport and physical activity at school and during leisure time, as well as starting education about healthy living at an early age is of utmost importance;
15. WELCOMES in this context the Commission's intention to present a Green Paper on nutrition, physical activity and health later this year, and to prepare for 2006 a Commission Communication integrating the results of the public consultation exercise initiated with the Green Paper;

16. CALLS UPON the Member States and, where appropriate, the European Commission to conceive and implement initiatives aimed at promoting healthy diets and physical activity, including:
- 1) enabling citizens to make healthy dietary choices, and ensuring that healthy dietary options are available, affordable and accessible;
 - 2) fostering citizens' knowledge on the relationship between diet and health, energy intake and output, on diets that lower risk of chronic diseases, and on healthy choices of food items;
 - 3) ensuring that consumers are not misled by advertising, marketing and promotion activities, and that especially the credulity of children and their limited experience with the media is not exploited;
 - 4) enabling health professionals, including dietary experts, as well as other professionals having a recognised qualification in this field, to give, on a routine basis, practical advice to patients and families on the benefits of optimal diets and increased levels of physical activity, as well as contribute to the exchange of best practices in this field;
 - 5) encouraging stakeholders who are in a position to support the promotion of healthy diets (e.g. food producers, food processors, retailers, caterers) to take initiatives to this end, for example through voluntary action or agreements;
 - 6) mainstreaming of nutrition and physical activity into all relevant policies at local, regional, national and European levels, such as policies aimed at reducing the harmful effects of excessive alcohol consumption, as well as creating the necessary supporting environments;
 - 7) monitoring the trends of healthy nutrition and physical activity in the population and further developing research and the scientific basis for actions in the field through, amongst others, the exchange of best practices at European level;

- 8) fostering education on, and the supply of healthy dietary choices at schools, especially with respect to the excessive intake of energy-dense snacks and sugar-sweetened soft drinks, and encouraging children and adolescents to exercise on a regular daily basis;
- 9) developing nutrition and physical education activities for children as an integrated part of health education in general, which should also focus on issues like combating smoking, excessive alcohol consumption, or the use of drugs, as well as promoting sexual health and mental health;
- 10) encouraging employers to offer healthy choices at workplace canteens, and to provide as appropriate facilities which encourage the practice of physical activity, and
- 11) fostering the development of urban environments that are conducive to physical activity, including the provision of safe cycling and walking paths.

