



**DIET, PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND HEALTH -
A EUROPEAN PLATFORM FOR ACTION
10 JUNE 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 F. Ryan** who welcomed the participants and introduced the agenda focussing on two main topics: the draft Annual Monitoring Report 2014 and commitments in the field of “Advocacy and Information Exchange”. Delegates were reminded that today’s meeting was only a half-day session (the afternoon session being dedicated to the annual Joint Meeting with the High Level Group on Nutrition and Physical Activity).

The draft agenda of the day was adopted. The Platform members were asked if they had comments on the draft minutes of the previous Platform meeting and the minutes of the previous meeting were adopted with the integration of amendments by **EUFIC** and **IBFAN**.

2. ANNUAL MONITORING REPORT 2014, presentation by IBF

Mr John Griffiths, IBF, presented the draft Annual Report covering the key findings of Platform members’ activities of 2013.

In 2013 there were in total 134 commitments but for 10 of them no monitoring report was submitted. The total number of commitments has remained relatively stable but the number of new commitments (13) has now decreased compared to previous years. More commitments have been involving more than one Platform member and this approach should be further developed.

This year’s draft report contains three new chapters: a chapter on the commitments by Member States, a chapter on case studies and a specific chapter on analysis and recommendations. A new feature is a series of text boxes throughout the report entitled ‘Critical analysis and recommendations’.

- Chapter 3 provides the reader with a review of Platform commitments for 2013 by activity status. The qualitative assessment of the commitments indicated that the relevance of commitments to the objectives of the Platform is high, and that in most cases clear objectives are set. Several Platform members inquired about the measurement of relevance and impact. **Mr Griffiths** underlined that the monitoring

reports for 2013 showed an improvement in the quality of monitoring of outputs and outcomes/impact, but that the reporting process still needed to be improved to better capture the achievements of the commitments in terms of impact and outcome. This is an issue that continues to be addressed by the Working Group on Monitoring and Reporting.

- Chapter 4 provides a review of Platform commitments by activity type. Referring to questions from the Platform members, IBF drew the attention to the fact that it is not always easy to identify whether a Platform member is a for-profit or not-for-profit organisation, as there is no information of Platform members on their funding sources. This could be solved by asking the members to provide this information in the monitoring form. Concerning the geographical spread of the commitments **the Chair** noted a trend from the local/national to the European level.
- Chapter 5 provides information on the total number of commitments that were active in 2013 in each of the Member States and broken down by target audience and activity type. All Member States have significant numbers (40-50) of commitments. **The Commission** welcomed that all Member States have commitments and that there are no big differences between the Member States. The breakdown of commitments between Member States was considered an excellent tool to evaluate where efforts have to be made. Considering the number of commitments by target groups, it was noted that none of the commitments seem to specifically focus on vulnerable groups. Several Platform members expressed their concern about encouraging more commitments targeting vulnerable groups as in their view the private sector cannot replace government action in this field. **European Heart Network** and **Nestlé** proposed to see how existing commitments by their nature already vulnerable groups. **The Chair** pointed out that addressing the specific concerns of vulnerable groups and health inequalities is an important topic. It bears relation to several of DG SANCO policies and should be developed with a pragmatic approach. He suggested discussing this issue further in the future. **Mr Griffiths** proposed to add additional questions on targeting vulnerable groups in the monitoring form.
- Chapter 6 contains six case studies, one for each field of activity, chapter 7 provides an analysis of the Platform activities of 2013 and chapter 8 presents conclusions and recommendations on issues such as the financial resourcing of commitments, new commitments, joint commitments and target audiences not currently addressed, the need for new Platform members and new commitments and addressing the needs of vulnerable groups.

The Chair rounded up the discussion by saying that in order to ensure the long term viability of the Platform more commitments should be submitted, especially in the field of physical activity and with the aim of reaching vulnerable groups; in addition, the geographical reach of commitments should be extended as much as possible to cover the EU28. He informed the participants that the draft Annual Report 2014 will be sent to the Platform members after the meeting for comments and input, and will be discussed again at the next plenary meeting in September.

3. COMMITMENTS IN THE FIELD OF ADVOCACY AND INFORMATION EXCHANGE

3.1 OVERVIEW OF COMMITMENTS, presentation by IBF

Mr John Griffiths, IBF, provided an overview of the 52 commitments in the field of advocacy and information exchange, i.e. 19% of all commitments. Of these, 24 remain active (20% of all active commitments), 27 are non-active (completed) and one is non-active (discontinued). Of a total of ten new actions for 2014, six were submitted on advocacy and information exchange (including one joint commitment). Currently there are two joint initiatives within this activity type, by the European Association for the Study of Obesity and the European Food Information Council, and by the European Public Health Alliance and Freshfel Europe.

3.2 ACTIVE COMMITMENTS

3.2.1 EPHA'S COMMITMENT TOWARDS NUTRITION AND EQUITY-SENSITIVE EU POLICIES THROUGH ADVOCACY AND INFORMATION EXCHANGE, presentation by Dorota Sienkiewicz, European Public Health Alliance

Ms Dorota Sienkiewicz, **European Public Health Alliance (EPHA)** presented five commitments in the field of advocacy and information exchange. Two are ongoing commitments and three are new commitments (2013-2014). In the light of the possible link between the commitment 'Analysis of the industry's commitments to the Platform against public health objectives' and the monitoring process of the Platform, **Mr Philippe Roux** encouraged EPHA to join the Working Group on Monitoring and Reporting to share the results. Ms Sienkiewicz mentioned that a participation in the Working Group was not foreseen and that the draft results of the commitment would be available by November 2014. The discussion that followed focused mainly on the importance of objective and independent monitoring. FoodDrinkEurope asked EPHA how they would ensure objectivity in making an analysis of industry's commitments and questioned whether such a commitment would be in line with the objectives of the Platform, i.e. building trust among stakeholders in the joint fight against obesity and NCDs. EPHA replied that objectivity is ensured through the NGO health community within EPHA's membership. The **European Snack Association** asked if this commitment could be opened up to a joint commitment in a partnership with industry. EPHA noted that it was not considering a joint commitment with industry. Mr Philippe Roux suggested that the results of this commitment should be discussed at a future Platform meeting.

3.2.2 THE CHALLENGE OF ADVOCACY AND COMMUNICATION FOR FRESH FRUIT AND VEGETABLES/ MOVING DECISION MAKERS AND CONSUMERS FROM AWARENESS INTO ACTION, presentation by Philippe Binard, Freshfel Europe

In his presentation **Mr Philippe Binard**, **Freshfel Europe**, provided details on the active commitments in the field of advocacy and information exchange. He presented the Consumption Monitor, a tool to demonstrate trends and to raise awareness amongst public authorities (but that also receives a lot of attention in the professional and general media). While there seems to be good awareness on the subject, the translation into action and a real change of attitudes is difficult, as is revealed by the decline in the consumption of fresh fruit and vegetables reported by the Consumption Monitor. Therefore Freshfel Europe has

identified several different areas to be addressed by the private sector and the public authorities with the aim of reversing this trend and promoting consumption of fresh fruit and vegetables.

The Chair asked which fruit and vegetables data was captured by the Consumption Monitor and inquired on the difficulties in promoting the consumption of fresh fruit and vegetables. Mr Binard explained that data was gathered on virtually all fresh products (imported products only accounting for 2% of the fresh vegetables supply and 20% of the fruit supply). Important changes in lifestyle have taken place in European societies and this means that new consumption and education contexts (such as trains, planes, schools and homes) have to be taken into consideration.

The Chair underlined the importance of the cooperation with **EPHA** on the School Fruit Scheme. Referring to a question by the **European Federation of Associations of Dietitians**, Mr Binard explained that one of the problems was the lack of information on the consumer needs and habits in the sector. The **European Association of Communications Agencies** offered help in this matter. **The Chair** welcomed this offer.

Other issues raised by participants included addressing public procurement policies, the price perception by consumers and the possibility to integrate frozen and canned fruit and vegetables in the promotion activities. The Chair concluded this discussion by noting that it provided ideas for possible joint activities.

4. VIEWS ON A REPORT ON CVD AND DIETARY FATTY ACIDS, presentation by Professor Jan Ivar Pederson, University of Oslo

On the invitation of the European Heart Network, **Professor Pederson, University of Oslo**, discussed the March 2014 paper on ‘Association of Dietary, Circulating, and Supplement Fatty Acids With Coronary Risks: A Systematic Review and Meta-analysis’. This study has received high publicity and attention in the media and was used to downplay the importance of saturated fatty acids in the prevention of coronary heart diseases.

Professor Pederson presented his critical views on this report. He addressed its errors and omissions, selection bias, conceptual shortcomings and inadequate discussion. Professor Pederson noted that there had been failures in the supervision and review process of the paper. The conclusions in it essentially repeat the findings of two earlier large reviews (Skeaff & Miller 2009, Siri-Tarino et al. 2010) and no significant new results have been added. Further, it ignores strong evidence from other large studies that replacing polyunsaturated fatty acids and saturated fatty acids is associated with reduced CHD risk (and lower plasma cholesterol). Because of its shortcomings, the paper will be inconsequential to the generally accepted dietary recommendations and guidelines. Nevertheless, it has created massive confusion among the public.

5. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Platform was informed of the planned meetings of the Working Group on Monitoring (24 September and 24 October). The following seven members have expressed their interest in joining: EFAD, EASO, IBFAN, EuroCommerce, COPA-COGECA, FoodDrinkEurope and EuroHealthNet.

The Milan EXPO will run from 1 May to 31 October 2015 under the theme “Feeding the planet, Energy for Life”. The Commission will share a pavilion with the European Parliament and events can be organised outside.

The Commission has received a request from a student of the Maastricht University to follow the meetings of the Platform as an external observer. Following the approval by the Platform members, the Commission informed the University of Maastricht that the Platform could welcome the student as an observer within the scope of a research project. A response is awaited.

6. CONCLUSION

The Chair concluded the following:

- The draft Annual Report will be send to all Platform members for input.
- Commitments addressing vulnerable groups are particularly important.
- Platform members are invited to send proposals for the agenda of the next meeting.

The next meeting of the Platform will be on **25 September 2014**, where the members will discuss Food **Reformulation**. The meeting will also reserve time for a final discussion and agreement on the **draft Annual Report 2014**.