Opinion of the **High Level Group on Nutrition and Physical Activity**

The members of the High Level Group recognise that

- the current high prevalence of overweight and obesity in children is a major and pressing public health challenge,

- obesity in children has a strong positive relationship with obesity in adults,

- the economic consequences of obesity related non-communicable diseases are estimated at around 7% of national health budgets across the EU each year,

- improving and maintaining good oral health remains a challenge, especially in low socio-economic groups.

The members of the High Level Group note that

- one of the aims of the School Fruit, Vegetables and Milk Scheme is improving children's eating habits,

- improving children's eating habits has a long-term beneficial health role, as lifestyle habits are formed in childhood.

The members of the High Level Group see an opportunity in the provision of article 23 (6)[1] of the Regulation 2016/791[2] to call the Member States' national health authorities to take another step in creating a healthier school environment for children by convincing agriculture authorities[3] to

only fund the distribution of **products with no added sugars**[4] **under the School Fruit, Vegetables and Milk Scheme**[5].

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[1] Article 23 (6) "…any Member State may, after obtaining the appropriate authorisation from its national authorities responsible for health and nutrition in accordance with its national procedures, decide that eligible products referred to in paragraphs 4 and 5 may contain limited quantities of added sugar, added salt and/or added fat".

[2] Regulation (EU) 2016/791 amending Regulations (EU) No 1308/2013 and (EU) No 1306/2013 as regards the aid scheme for the supply of fruit and vegetables, bananas and milk in educational establishments.

[3] In charge of the Scheme.

[4] As defined in the Added Sugars Annex of the EU Framework for National Initiatives on Selected Nutrients.

[5] This clear objective may require a stepwise approach not to compromise the promotion of the Scheme.