

MIDDAY EXPRESS

*News from the Press and Communication Service's midday briefing
Nouvelles du rendez-vous de midi du Service Presse et Communication*

15/11/2012

Governments and stakeholders join forces against rising obesity levels

The Platform for action on Diet, Physical Activity and Health and the High Level Group on Nutrition and Physical Activity met yesterday on the occasion of the annual joint discussion and follow up of the Strategy for Europe on Nutrition, Overweight and Obesity Health-Related Issues. Representatives of the 27 Member States and stakeholders discussed current issues regarding the fight against obesity given its link to non-communicable diseases. As obesity levels are increasing throughout the EU, work by the Platform's stakeholders aimed at implementing the EU strategy becomes increasingly important. There are more than 300 commitments already undertaken by the food industry, public health advocates, non-government organisations, advertisers and the medical profession in the framework of the Platform as well as several national strategies by government organisations. These range from awareness campaigns to advocacy and consumer actions on the importance of healthy diets and physical activity to advertising restrictions, labelling requirements and other specific actions. At their joint meeting, stakeholders and government representatives agreed to keep up the momentum in this work. This was demonstrated, for example, by new initiatives announced on this occasion such as a voluntary commitment of the EU food industry on front-of-pack GDA (Guideline Daily Amount) labelling of food, the addition by advertisers of nutrition criteria in defining foods not to be advertised to children as well as the results of Member States efforts to reduce salt in food as a follow up to Council Conclusions of 2010. This work is increasingly relevant to the worldwide efforts to prevent non communicable diseases which are responsible for 63% of all deaths in the world and are linked to risk factors such as unhealthy diets and physical inactivity.