



# Thematic Network 2018

*Stimulating fresh fruit and vegetable consumption for healthier European consumers*

*Joint Statement*



## Preamble

In 2018 Freshfel Europe has led a Thematic Network as part of the EU Health Policy Platform, which is coordinated by the European Commission, DG SANTE. Freshfel Europe's Thematic Network is entitled '*Stimulating fresh fruit and vegetable consumption for healthier European consumers*'.

The objective of the Thematic Network was to develop a Joint Statement consolidating best practices of communicating fruit and vegetable consumption needs and of how to encourage fruit and vegetable consumption in a changing lifestyle environment in Europe.

Freshfel Europe has developed the Joint Statement in collaboration with key health and agri-food related stakeholders throughout 2018. This Joint Statement is therefore a common position of these stakeholders and represents a joint call to action for continued and improved work on stimulating fresh fruit and vegetable consumption throughout Europe to prevent the onset of non-communicable diseases.

This Joint Statement comprises of a set of two papers. The first paper frames and contextualize the current situation of fresh fruit and vegetable consumption in Europe and the second paper provides recommendations for future action.

A full list of stakeholders who have endorsed this Joint Statement is available at the end of document. These endorsing stakeholders advocate the general provisions of the document.

More information about Freshfel Europe's Thematic Network is available on the [EU Health Policy Platform](#) or via the Freshfel Europe secretariat.

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# Thematic Network 2018

*Stimulating fresh fruit and vegetable consumption for healthier European consumers*

*- Part 1: Framing Paper -*





## Introduction

In 2018 Freshfel Europe is leading a Thematic Network as part of the EU Health Policy Platform, which is coordinated by the European Commission, DG SANTE. Freshfel Europe's Thematic Network is entitled '*Stimulating fresh fruit and vegetable consumption for healthier European consumers*'.

The objective of the Thematic Network is to develop a Joint Statement consolidating best practices of communicating fruit and vegetable consumption needs and of how to encourage fruit and vegetable consumption in a changing lifestyle environment in Europe. Freshfel Europe will develop the Joint Statement in collaboration with key health and agri-food related stakeholders throughout 2018. Once finalised, the Joint Statement will be open for endorsement by stakeholders.

The Joint Statement will comprise of a set of two papers. The first paper will frame and contextualize the current situation of fresh fruit and vegetable consumption, and the second will formulate recommendations for future action. These two papers will be complemented with visual material in the form of infographics.

This first framing paper is divided into three parts:

1. The link between fresh fruit and vegetables and health
2. Understanding fresh fruit and vegetable consumption trends
3. The way forward for healthier European consumers

More information about Freshfel Europe's Thematic Network is available on the [EU Health Policy Platform](#) or via the Freshfel Europe secretariat.



EUROPEAN FRESH PRODUCE ASSOCIATION A.I.S.B.L

Rue de Trèves 49-51, bte 8 - 1040 Brussels - Belgium Tel: +32 (0)2 777 15 80 Fax: +32 (0)2 777 15 81  
e-mail: [info@freshfel.org](mailto:info@freshfel.org) - [www.freshfel.org](http://www.freshfel.org)

## The link between fresh fruit & vegetables and health

In 2004, the WHO Global Strategy on Diet, Physical Activity and Health outlined the emerging challenge of the shift in the major cause of death and disease globally, namely due to non-communicable diseases (NCDs)<sup>1</sup>. The four major NCDs, cardiovascular disease, chronic respiratory disease, cancer and diabetes, are now the leading cause of death globally, and have not only health, but also social and economic repercussions.

In 2013, those dying from NCDs in Europe resulted in the loss of around 3.4 million potentially productive life years<sup>2</sup>. Based on average annual earnings of Europeans, this equates to a potential economic loss of an estimated EUR 115 billion each year<sup>3</sup>. This includes the economic loss of people living with NCDs, who are unable to be employed part or full-time and contribute to economic growth and who have a higher rate of absenteeism and presenteeism, as well as the often lower labour market participation and productivity of carers.

Regular consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables plays a vital role in a diversified, healthy, nutritious and sustainable diet<sup>4</sup> for the prevention of NCDs. In 2003, the World Health Organisation (WHO) issued guidelines for population nutrient intake goals. These included a minimum of 400g of fruits and vegetables per day<sup>5</sup>. This 400g/per capita/per day intake is not a goal to reach, but a marker to delineate those eating below the recommended minimum level for a healthy diet. The WHO Global Strategy on Diet, Physical Activity and Health emphasizes insufficient intake of fruit and vegetables to be a direct cause of NCDs, and that eating a diversity of fruit and vegetables as part of a daily diet not only can prevent the onset of NCDs, but can also ensure an adequate intake of many micronutrients, dietary fibres and essential non-nutrient substances<sup>6</sup>.

This conclusive recognition by the WHO is also supported by scientific studies from across Europe indicating the undisputed health and nutrition benefits of a diet rich in fruit and vegetables. Despite this, the sector remains highly restricted in its communication to advocate the many assets of fresh produce in nutritional and health claims. Article 10(3) of Regulation (EC) No 1924/2006 on nutrition and health claims made on foods refers to the possibility to make general non-specific health claims. However such claims are difficult for fruit and vegetables as each individual product (type and variety) would need a specific and scientific-based claim. This means that a health claim, for example 'fruit and vegetables are good for health' cannot be made. Limited margins in the sector for investment into research for claims further restricts the ability to communicate the products' health benefits.

<sup>1</sup> WHO (2004), *WHO Global Strategy on Diet, Physical Activity and Health*, Geneva: World Health Organization, <http://www.who.int/iris/handle/10665/42559>

<sup>2</sup> OECD/EU (2016), *Health at a Glance: Europe 2016: State of Health in the EU Cycle*, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264265592-en>.

<sup>3</sup> OECD/EU (2016), *Health at a Glance: Europe 2016: State of Health in the EU Cycle*, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264265592-en>.

<sup>4</sup> WHO/FAO (2002), *Diet, Nutrition and the Prevention of Chronic Diseases – WHO Technical Report Series*, Geneva: World Health Organization, [http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/42665/WHO\\_TRS\\_916.pdf?sequence=1](http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/42665/WHO_TRS_916.pdf?sequence=1)

<sup>5</sup> WHO (2003), *WHO Technical Report Series 916 – Diet, Nutrition and the Prevention of Chronic Disease: Report of a Joint WHO/FAO Expert Consultation*, Geneva: WHO.

<sup>6</sup> WHO (2004), *WHO Global Strategy on Diet, Physical Activity and Health*, Geneva: World Health Organization, <http://www.who.int/iris/handle/10665/42559>

The overweight and obesity epidemic is a major challenge for society. In EU Member States the WHO estimates that overweight affects 30-70% and obesity affects 10-30% of adults<sup>7</sup>. The WHO additionally estimates that over 60% of children who are overweight before puberty will remain overweight in early adulthood, which is a major risk factor for the onset of type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular diseases and many cancers<sup>8</sup>. Rising rates of overweight and obesity, including childhood obesity, which is primarily attributable to poor diet and physical inactivity or sedentarism, initiated the establishment of the EU Platform for Action on Diet, Physical Activity and Health<sup>9</sup> in March 2005. Composed of European-level umbrella organisations, the Platform aims to encourage stakeholders to engage in action-oriented voluntary commitments to halt the obesity epidemic, including food reformulation, reducing marketing to children of foods high in fat, salt and sugar and physical activity promotion. One of the main Platform actions is the promotion of consumption of fruits and vegetables. After the establishment of the Platform, a White Paper was adopted on 'A Strategy on Nutrition, Overweight, and Obesity-related health issues'<sup>10</sup>, which highlighted the significance of fruit and vegetables in European policy-making in terms of production and consumption. Now European Commission is establishing a new Steering Group on Health, Promotion, Disease Prevention and Management of Non-communicable Diseases to advise the Commission and focus on the exchange of best practices to reduce NCDs in Member States.

The EU has signed up to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which comprise of 17 goals and 169 associated targets to increase sustainable development globally. Accordingly, the EU has committed to implement the SDGs both in its internal and external policies to help foster sustainable development at Member State and regional levels across Europe. Increasing fruit and vegetable consumption is key to achieving many of these goals. This includes SDG 2, which aims to achieve improved nutrition by 2030, and SDG 3.4, which aims to reduce by one third premature mortality from NCDs through prevention, treatment and promotion of mental health and wellbeing. Increasing fruit and vegetable consumption is also relevant to achieving SDG 12.8 to ensure awareness of sustainable development and lifestyles. Fruit and vegetable production and consumption has the lowest environmental impact out of all the food groups and at the same time has the highest consumption recommendation. Therefore, fruit and vegetables are one of the most sustainable food groups to be included in diets and lifestyles.

Due to the high-profile and importance of the SDGs, fruit and vegetable consumption continues to be high on the agenda for international and European policy making. On 1 April 2016 the United Nations General Assembly agreed on a resolution proclaiming the UN Decade of Action on Nutrition from 2016 to 2025 to ensure universal access to healthier and more sustainable diets for all people to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Here, healthy diets and nutrition education

<sup>7</sup> WHO Regional Office for Europe (2017), *Data and Statistics*, <http://www.euro.who.int/en/health-topics/noncommunicable-diseases/obesity/data-and-statistics>

<sup>8</sup> WHO Regional Office for Europe (2017), *Data and Statistics*, <http://www.euro.who.int/en/health-topics/noncommunicable-diseases/obesity/data-and-statistics>

<sup>9</sup> European Commission (2018), *EU platform for action on diet, physical activity and health*, Brussels: European Commission, [https://ec.europa.eu/health/nutrition\\_physical\\_activity/platform\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/health/nutrition_physical_activity/platform_en)

<sup>10</sup> European Commission (2007), *White Paper on A Strategy for Europe on Nutrition, Overweight and Obesity related health issues*, Brussels: European Commission, [http://ec.europa.eu/health/archive/ph\\_determinants/life\\_style/nutrition/documents/nutrition\\_wp\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/health/archive/ph_determinants/life_style/nutrition/documents/nutrition_wp_en.pdf)

are also addressed<sup>11</sup>. Furthermore, the WHO European Food and Nutrition Action Plan 2015-2020, adopted in 2014, additionally addresses insufficient fruit and vegetable consumption by setting out priority actions using a health-in-all-policies approach.

The European fruit and vegetable sector has additionally focused efforts on increasing consumption in the last 15 years. Most significantly the EGEA conference, a unique international scientific conference on nutrition and health with a specific focus on fruit and vegetables, addresses the importance of the link between health and fruit and vegetable consumption. Part of the European programme 'FRUIT & VEG 4 HEALTH', the conference aims to promote improved health by better food practices and policies to ensure adequate consumption of fruits and vegetables. Since its inception in 2003 the EGEA conference has brought together scientists, health professionals, communication experts, policy makers and fruit and vegetable professionals, to discuss the role of fruit and vegetables in preventing the health and social burden of NCDs and obesity. Organized by Aprifel (Agence pour la Recherche et l'Information en Fruits et Légumes), and now in its 8<sup>th</sup> edition, the EGEA Conference continues to act as a forum for dialogue for health and fresh produce experts to conceive solutions to increase fruit and vegetable intake across Europe.

For the European fruit and vegetable sector, each edition of the EGEA conference acts as a catalyst for understanding the health benefits and the importance of fruit and vegetables in the diets of Europeans and ensuring that this is translated into action on the ground within the food and health sectors. For example, the last EGEA Conference in Milan in 2015 called for urgent coherent policies that promote healthy eating in information and education and the food environment. Among many actions, these included incorporation of nutrition in national education systems' curricula, adoption of nutrient profiles at EU level, the use of public procurement as a tool to enhance fruit and vegetable consumption, municipalities ensuring the availability of fresh produce and support of research in fruit and vegetable production.

It is evident that global and European policy attention to the relationship between fruit and vegetable consumption and health is growing, and increasingly efforts are being mobilised to stimulate fruit and vegetable consumption at European and Member State levels. Beyond these global initiatives and awareness making actions made by Europe's policy makers and the fruit and vegetable sector, many health organizations are calling for robust actions to promote and increase fresh fruit and vegetable consumption in Europe. Initiatives from the health sector include:

- The Association of European Cancer Leagues' European Code Against Cancer<sup>12</sup>, which provides 12 ways to reduce cancer risks, including to have a healthy diet comprising of plenty of whole grains, pulses, fruits and vegetables;
- The World Cancer Research Fund<sup>13</sup> recommendation of eating a diet high in all types of plant based foods, including at least five portions or servings (at least 400g or 15oz in total) of a

<sup>11</sup> UNSCN (2018), *The UN Decade of Action on Nutrition 2016-2025*, UNSCN, <https://www.unscn.org/en/topics/un-decade-of-action-on-nutrition>

<sup>12</sup> Association of European Cancer Leagues (2018), *European Code Against Cancer Communication Toolkit*, Brussels: Association of European Cancer Leagues, <https://www.europeancancerleagues.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/general-communication-toolkit.pdf>

variety of non-starchy vegetables and fruit every day. The World Cancer Research Fund voices that “a comprehensive package of policies is needed to enable and encourage people to eat enough wholegrains, vegetables, fruit and beans, including policies that influence the food environment, the food system and behaviour change communication across the life course”<sup>14</sup>;

- The 2017 European Heart Network (EHN) paper on ‘Transforming European food and drink policies for cardiovascular health’ calls for an intermediate population goal of more than 400g/day and a long term goal of more than 600g/day intake of fruits and vegetables<sup>15</sup>. In this paper EHN also states that a cardiovascular health-promoting diet means a shift to a more plant-based diet. This includes fruits and vegetables in abundance;
- The ‘Educational guide on nutrition and diabetes in schools’<sup>16</sup> developed by the International Diabetes Federation in 2015 recommends the consumption of at least two cups of fruits and vegetables each day, and
- The 2016 European Guidelines on Cardiovascular Disease Prevention in Clinical Practice<sup>17</sup> produced by the European Society of Cardiology recommends a healthy diet as a cornerstone of cardiovascular disease prevention and encourages the intake of  $\geq 200$ g of fruit and  $\geq 200$ g of vegetables per day.

Despite these initiatives and the robust information supporting the need to increase consumption of fruit and vegetables across the Union, efforts made so far at global, national, regional and local levels by both public and private stakeholders are still insufficient. Effective and long term solutions to increase fresh fruit and vegetable consumption are lacking to help tackle the burden of NCDs.

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<sup>13</sup> World Cancer Research Fund International (2018), *Eat wholegrains, vegetables, fruit and beans*, London: World Cancer Research Fund International, <https://www.wcrf.org/dietandcancer/recommendations/wholegrains-veg-fruit-beans>

<sup>14</sup> World Cancer Research Fund International (2018), *Recommendations and public health and policy implications*, London: World Cancer Research Fund, <https://www.wcrf.org/sites/default/files/Cancer-Prevention-Recommendations-2018.pdf>

<sup>15</sup> European Heart Network (2017), *Transforming European food and drink policies for cardiovascular health*, Brussels: <http://www.ehnheart.org/publications-and-papers/publications/1093:transforming-european-food-and-drinks-policies-for-cardiovascular-health.html>

<sup>16</sup> International Diabetes Federation (2015), *Educational guide on nutrition and diabetes in schools*, <https://www.idf.org/e-library/education/148-educational-guide-on-nutrition-and-diabetes-in-schools.html>

<sup>17</sup> European Heart Journal, Volume 37, Issue 29, 1 August 2016, Pages 2315-2382, <https://academic.oup.com/eurheartj/article/37/29/2315/1748952>



## Understanding fresh fruit & vegetable consumption trends

Despite the proven link between the health benefits of fruit and vegetable consumption, there is no sign of increased European fruit and vegetable intake since 2009. European consumers are aware of the health benefits of fruit and vegetables, and state that increasing their intake of fruit and vegetables is the number one change that they are ready to do for a healthier diet<sup>18</sup> as they perceive a healthy diet to comprise of a balanced diet, eating lots of fruits and vegetables, and avoiding fatty foods<sup>19</sup>.

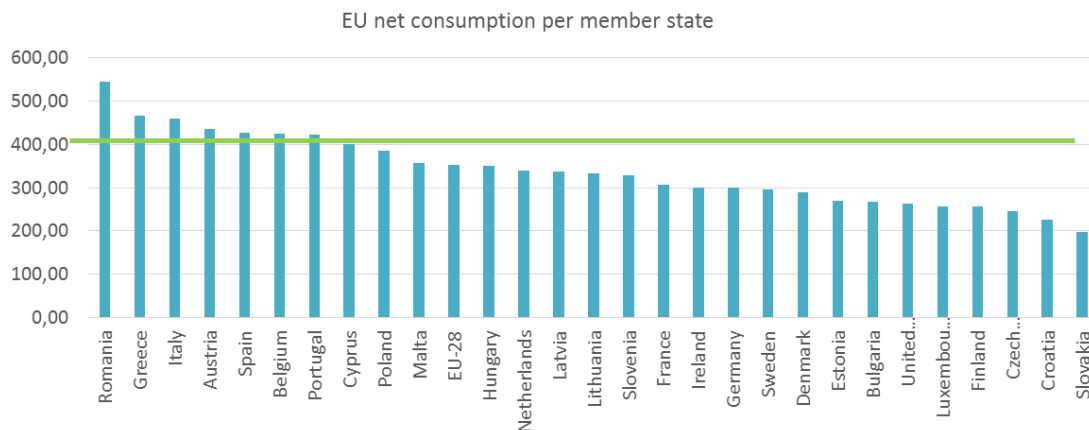


Figure 1: EU net consumption per capita per day by Member State

This general awareness is not converted into action, and fruit and vegetable consumption remains low across Europe. 22 out of the current 28 EU Member States do not meet the WHO recommendation of consuming a minimum of 400g of fruit and vegetables per capita per day (see Figure 1 above)<sup>20</sup>. In addition, the long-term consumption trend, as seen in Figure 2, is not a dynamic positive trend. From 2012 to 2014, the net aggregate consumption per capita per day showed an increasing trend, however in more recent years the consumption of fruit and vegetables throughout Europe has stagnated. In 2014 citizens in the EU-28 only consumed on average 353.07g of fresh fruit and vegetables per capita per day, amounting to 192.27g of fruit and 160.80g of vegetables per day<sup>21</sup>. As per the WHO recommendations to have a healthy population now and into the future all EU Member States should be consuming well beyond 400g of fruit and vegetables per capita per day.

<sup>18</sup> Eurobarometer (2006), *Special Eurobarometer 246 - Health and food*.

[http://ec.europa.eu/commfrontoffice/publicopinion/archives/ebs/ebs\\_246\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/commfrontoffice/publicopinion/archives/ebs/ebs_246_en.pdf)

<sup>19</sup> Eurobarometer (2006), *Special Eurobarometer 246 - Health and food*.

[http://ec.europa.eu/commfrontoffice/publicopinion/archives/ebs/ebs\\_246\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/commfrontoffice/publicopinion/archives/ebs/ebs_246_en.pdf)

<sup>20</sup> Freshfel Europe (2017), *Freshfel Fruit and Vegetable Production, Trade, Supply and Consumption Monitor in the EU-28*, Brussels: Freshfel Europe.

<sup>21</sup> Freshfel Europe (2017), *Freshfel Fruit and Vegetable Production, Trade, Supply and Consumption Monitor in the EU-28*, Brussels: Freshfel Europe.

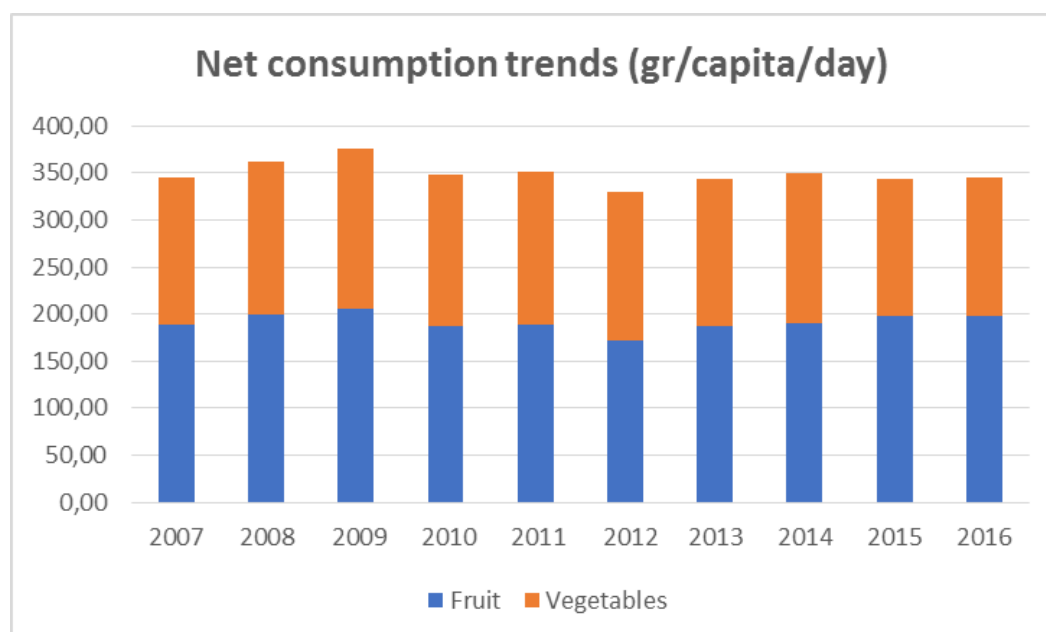


Figure 2: EU net consumption per capita per day 2007-2016

The under consumption of fresh fruit and vegetables throughout Europe is also reflected in the most recent data from the European Health Interview Survey. In 2014 in the current EU-28 34.4% of the population aged 15 or over did not consume any fruit or vegetables on a daily basis<sup>22</sup>. Only 51.4% consumed one to four portions of fruit and vegetables per day, while a mere 14.1% consumed more than five portions a day<sup>23</sup>. These data further demonstrates that over 85% of Europeans are not consuming enough fresh fruit and vegetables for a healthy and balanced diet.

Consumption levels are determined by multiple demographic factors and behavioural traits. Gender is a determinant of consumption, where women consistently consume more fruit and vegetables than men across Europe<sup>24</sup>. Age also highly affects consumption levels, with people aged 60 years or older meeting dietary recommendations of fruit and vegetable consumption compared to all other age groups who consistently do not<sup>25</sup>. Furthermore, education level is a determinant, whereby higher levels of education correlate with higher consumption levels. Studies also highlight the impact of socio-economic status on healthy diets, including on nutrient intake and fruit and vegetable consumption. Generally, people with higher socio-economic status have a higher fruit and vegetable intake and overall healthier diets than those with lower socio-economic status<sup>26</sup>.

Low consumption trends may also be explained in the medium-term by a trend towards lower relative overall household expenditure on food. Changing lifestyles, including an increasing number of those who are time-poor, have resulted in an increasing share of food consumed in out-of-home

<sup>22</sup> Eurostat (2017), *European Health Interview Survey – Daily consumption of fruit and vegetables by sex, age and educational attainment level*, [http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=hlth\\_ehis\\_fv3e&lang=en#](http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=hlth_ehis_fv3e&lang=en#)

<sup>23</sup> Eurostat (2017), *European Health Interview Survey – Daily consumption of fruit and vegetables by sex, age and educational attainment level*, [http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=hlth\\_ehis\\_fv3e&lang=en#](http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=hlth_ehis_fv3e&lang=en#)

<sup>24</sup> Thorshaug, M. & Bergquist, J. (2017), *Consumption of fruit and vegetables in Europe*, Oslo: Kantar TNS.

<sup>25</sup> Thorshaug, M. & Bergquist, J. (2017), *Consumption of fruit and vegetables in Europe*, Oslo: Kantar TNS.

<sup>26</sup> Konttinen, H., Sarlio-Lahteenkorva, S., Silventoinen, K., Mannisto, S., & Haukkala, A. (2013), *Socio-economic disparities in the consumption of vegetables, fruit and energy dense foods: The role of motive priorities*. *Public Health Nutrition*, 16(5), 873-882.

settings compared to in-home consumption where fruits and vegetables are traditionally consumed. Further to this, individual dietary choice is influenced by marketing practices in the food environment, where competition by other branded agri-food products directs consumer choice<sup>27</sup>.

Barriers to consumption are not only real, but also perceived misconceptions that hamper increases in consumption. For example, willpower has been shown to be the most commonly reported perceived barrier to consumption, followed by price and hedonics<sup>28</sup>. It is often perceived that fruits and vegetables are expensive food items, however when measured on the basis of edible weight or portion size, they are less expensive than most energy-dense nutrient-poor foods<sup>29</sup>. Further to this, many Member States have already used fiscal measures, such as lowered VAT rates on fruits and vegetable, to combat product (and perceived product) price. Ireland, Malta and the UK all have a zero VAT rate on fruits and vegetables, while a further 16 Member States have set the VAT rate at or under 10%<sup>30</sup>.

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<sup>27</sup> A French, S. (2003), *Pricing Effects on Food Choices*, 133(3), 841S-843S.

<sup>28</sup> McMorrow, L. et al. (2017), *Perceived barriers towards healthy eating and their association with fruit and vegetable consumption*, *Journal of Public Health*, 39(2), 330-338.

<sup>29</sup> Carlson, A. & Frazao, E. (2012), *Are healthy foods really more expensive? Depends on how you measure the price*, Report No. 96: Economic Information Bulletin.

<sup>30</sup> EPHORT Consortium (2018), *Supporting the mid-term evaluation of the EU Action Plan on Childhood Obesity – The Childhood Obesity Study*, European Commission: Brussels

## The way forward for healthier European consumers

Stimulating consumption of fruit and vegetables from its current low levels across Europe is vital to prevent the continued rise of NCDs. This will not only improve the overall wellbeing of EU citizens, but will also decrease the substantial economic burden on health and social systems and promote the productivity and growth of the European economy. Less than three per cent of the EU agricultural budget is currently dedicated to the fruit and vegetable sector. This is not representative of fruit and vegetables' fundamental role in ensuring an active and productive workforce and a healthy economy. It remains to be seen whether this small amount is altered in the latest Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) reform.

On a positive note, over the last decade fruit and vegetable consumption has been recognised in EU level policy making, where the European Commission, Member States and stakeholders have increasingly supported increased fruit and vegetable consumption as part of the solution to a healthier Europe. This includes:

- The continued work, including voluntary commitments, of the members of the EU Platform on Diet, Physical Activity and Health<sup>31</sup> since 2005 to promote healthy lifestyles;
- The adoption of the White Paper 'A Strategy on Nutrition, Overweight, and Obesity-related health issues'<sup>32</sup> in 2007;
- The work of the High Level Group on Nutrition and Physical Activity<sup>33</sup> to strengthen Member State's ability to prevent NCDs;
- The shared commitment under the EU Action Plan on Childhood Obesity 2014-2020<sup>34</sup> by Member States to set out priority areas for action to address childhood obesity;
- 2014 Council conclusions on nutrition and physical activity<sup>35</sup>;
- 2017 Council conclusions to contribute towards halting the rise in Childhood Overweight and Obesity<sup>36</sup>, and
- The recent adoption of Council conclusions on Healthy Nutrition for Children: The Healthy Future of Europe in June 2018.

European children, the future of Europe, have been targeted by EU policy to increase consumption. The EU-subsidised EU School Fruit, Vegetables and Milk Scheme, initially launched in 2009 as the

<sup>31</sup> European Commission (2018), *EU platform for action on diet, physical activity and health*, Brussels: European Commission, [https://ec.europa.eu/health/nutrition\\_physical\\_activity/platform\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/health/nutrition_physical_activity/platform_en)

<sup>32</sup> European Commission (2007), *White Paper on A Strategy for Europe on Nutrition, Overweight and Obesity related health issues*, Brussels: European Commission. [http://ec.europa.eu/health/archive/ph\\_determinants/life\\_style/nutrition/documents/nutrition\\_wp\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/health/archive/ph_determinants/life_style/nutrition/documents/nutrition_wp_en.pdf)

<sup>33</sup> European Commission (2018), *High Level Group on Nutrition and Physical Activity*, Brussels: European Commission, [https://ec.europa.eu/health/nutrition\\_physical\\_activity/high\\_level\\_group\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/health/nutrition_physical_activity/high_level_group_en)

<sup>34</sup> European Commission (2014), *EU Action Plan on Childhood Obesity 2014-2020*, Brussels: European Commission, [https://ec.europa.eu/health/sites/health/files/nutrition\\_physical\\_activity/docs/childhoodobesity\\_actionplan\\_2014\\_2020\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/health/sites/health/files/nutrition_physical_activity/docs/childhoodobesity_actionplan_2014_2020_en.pdf)

<sup>35</sup> Official Journal of the European Union (2014), *Council conclusions on nutrition and physical activity (2014/C 213/01)*, Brussels: European Commission, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX%3A52014XG0708%2801%29&rid=14>

<sup>36</sup> Official Journal of the European Union (2017), *Council conclusions to contribute towards halting the rise in Childhood Overweight and Obesity*, Brussels: European Commission, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ%3AC%3A2017%3A205%3A0046%3A0052%3AEN%3APDF>



School Fruit and Vegetables Scheme, continues to provide school aged children with fruit and vegetables to encourage good healthy eating habits from an early age. The scheme helps shape healthy eating habits and provides children with necessary nutrients at school. Besides provision of fruit and vegetables, the scheme also requires participating Member States to include educational and awareness-raising initiatives in their national strategies to further reinforce the role of fruit and vegetables in a healthy, balanced and sustainable diet. Currently €150 million is allocated to the scheme for fruit and vegetables per school year. However this is planned to be reduced to €130 million in the forthcoming CAP reform. European budget has also been dedicated to the general promotion of fruits and vegetables. In 2018 the Annual Work Programme for the EU-funded information provision and promotion measures concerning agricultural products included for the first time a specific budget allocation for the promotion of fruit and vegetables. In the Annual Work Programme under multi programmes (at least two organisations from two Member States) in the internal market, €8 million was dedicated to programmes increasing the consumption of fruits and vegetables and in the context of balanced and proper dietary measures. In 2017 the Tartu Call for a Healthy Lifestyle – Joint Actions to Promote Health Lifestyles<sup>37</sup> referred to EU School Fruit, Vegetables and Milk Scheme and the Annual Work Programme in actions 5 and 6.

Despite the political recognition and these two concrete EU-wide and EU-financed measures, consumption levels of fresh fruit and vegetables remain low across Europe. Dialogue between stakeholders and actors at all levels has so far been insufficient to alter fresh fruit and vegetable consumption. The intention to increase consumption now needs to translate into concrete actions that will make a positive change to fresh fruit and vegetable consumption levels, both in the short and in the long term.

Consumption trends will only change with additional multi-level and multi-sectoral approaches. Best practices must be used for communicating the benefits of fresh fruit and vegetable consumption to those who do not consume the recommended level or above and for including fruit and vegetables in the diets of EU consumers in a changing environment. This includes changes in policy coupled with changes within the fresh produce sector itself, including marketing and advertising measures, fiscal incentives, and creating healthier retail and public institution food environments.

The next part of Freshfel Europe's Joint Statement will address recommendations for future action on stimulating consumption of fresh fruit and vegetables for healthier European consumers, including consolidation of best practices.

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<sup>37</sup> European Commission (2017), *Tartu Call for a Healthy Lifestyle – Joint Actions to Promote Healthy Lifestyle*, Brussels: European Commission. [https://ec.europa.eu/sport/sites/sport/files/ewos-tartu-call\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/sport/sites/sport/files/ewos-tartu-call_en.pdf)



# Thematic Network 2018

*Stimulating fresh fruit and vegetable consumption for healthier European consumers*

*- Part 2: Recommendations Paper -*



## Introduction

This second paper of Freshfel Europe's Thematic Network on '*Stimulating fresh fruit and vegetable consumption for healthier European consumers*' offers recommendations for future action on measures to stimulate and increase fresh fruit and vegetable consumption across Europe with respect to current consumption patterns and existing measures across Europe as illustrated in Part 1 of the Joint Statement.

Regular consumption of fresh fruit and vegetables plays a crucial role in the prevention of non-communicable diseases (NCDs). To bring about the desired increase in consumption of fresh fruit and vegetables multi-level and multi-sectorial approaches are needed and include changes in policy as well as changes at industry level.

The recommendations outlined in this paper have been collated from contributing agri-food and health organisations and companies. They address aspects of the fresh fruit and vegetable supply chain and beyond from agricultural production to marketing techniques at retail level. The large variety of recommendations has the possibility to reach different regions and population groups and ensure that fresh fruit and vegetable consumption is stimulated across Europe and over the long-term.

Recommendations have been accompanied by best practices<sup>38</sup>. In this paper best practices are successful initiatives that have contributed to the stimulation of fresh fruit and vegetable consumption in either:

- a) directly increasing consumption of fresh fruit and vegetables, or
- b) raising awareness of the importance of consuming fresh fruit and vegetables.

The recommendations have been categorised into five types of action:

1. Economic action
2. Social action
3. Environmental action
4. Communication action
5. Cooperative action

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<sup>38</sup> Best practices included in this paper are not the same 'best practices' published on the European Commission's [Best Practice Portal](#) and have not been selected for any purpose other than to clearly illustrate the recommendation in a similar circumstance.

## Economic Action

Economic action is fundamental to stimulating fresh fruit and vegetable consumption. Financial incentives have both short and long term effects in creating positive changes to consumption levels.

1. The fruit and vegetable sector should be continually supported through policy, such as the Common Agricultural Policy, to safeguard a continuous adequate supply of fresh fruit and vegetables to consumers to ensure a healthy European population. Less than three per cent of the EU agricultural budget is currently dedicated to the fruit and vegetable sector despite its positive health benefits and its significant contribution to the economic value of agricultural output at around 20 per cent.
2. Fresh fruit and vegetables should be subject to zero tax (Value Added Tax).

### **BEST PRACTICE – Zero VAT on fruit and vegetables**

Three Member States have specified a zero VAT rate for fresh fruit and vegetables: Ireland, Malta and the UK to limit additional price increases burdened by the consumer at point of purchase.

3. Fresh fruit and vegetables should be subsidised to increase affordability and thus accessibility to all demographic groups<sup>39</sup> due to their health-promoting value. The effect of subsidies on consumption levels is heightened by combining them with taxation on targeted food and beverages, in particular those high in saturated fats, salt, trans fatty acids and/or free sugars<sup>40</sup>.

### **BEST PRACTICE – Hungarian public health product tax**

In 2011 Hungary introduced the [public health product tax](#). Developed by the Hungarian Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Finance with support of the WHO, the tax is a levy raised on food products containing unhealthy levels of sugar, salt and other ingredients to reduce their consumption and promote healthy food choices. Simultaneously the tax mobilizes revenue for public health services to offset the health care costs of diet-related illnesses.

4. Nutrient profiles should be adopted at EU level to ensure that fiscal policies to stimulate fresh fruit and vegetable consumption correctly identify categories of food subject to the policy<sup>41</sup>. This will facilitate Member States in implementing fiscal policies in the long term.
5. Vouchers should be made available to low-income consumers to increase access to fruit and vegetables. Voucher systems specifically for fresh fruit and vegetables can reduce the impact of inequalities, including socio-economic status, which can lead to low fruit and vegetable consumption levels.

<sup>39</sup> WHO (2015), *Fiscal Policies for Diet Prevention of Non-communicable Diseases*, Geneva: WHO

<sup>40</sup> WHO (2015), *Fiscal Policies for Diet Prevention of Non-communicable Diseases*, Geneva: WHO

<sup>41</sup> WHO (2015), *Fiscal Policies for Diet Prevention of Non-communicable Diseases*, Geneva: WHO



**BEST PRACTICE – UK Healthy Start scheme and Rose Vouchers Project**

Low income families in the UK have access to different voucher systems, including [Healthy Start](#) and the [Rose Vouchers Project](#), which enable increased accessibility to fresh fruit and vegetables. Both schemes offer vulnerable groups free vouchers, which can be exchanged for fresh fruit and vegetables.

6. Guidelines should be set nationally for retailers and other outlets where food is sold to increase the availability of healthier foods including fruit and vegetables<sup>42</sup>. This includes location, production selection, prices and other in-shop promotions.

**BEST PRACTICES – NFU Horticulture ‘Fit for the future’ guidelines**

The NFU’s 2016 ‘[Fit for the Future](#)’ report includes specific guidelines for actions at retail level to stimulate fruit and vegetable consumption. Recommendations include improving shelf labels, increasing staff knowledge on healthy food choices and nutrition, improving the position of fruit and vegetable products on shelves and introducing ‘chilled’ checkouts to enable fresh products to be sold at point of purchase for immediate consumption.

7. Research on fruit and vegetable varieties should be adequately funded across Europe to enable farmers to increase production and competitiveness of a large variety of fruit and vegetables, especially of micronutrient rich varieties. To achieve this coordination between the CAP and research and innovation policy should be enhanced through the [EIP-Agri network](#).
8. Research on issues specific to fruit and vegetables should be adequately funded in the future Horizon Europe programme to ensure targeted research and innovation within the sector.

**BEST PRACTICES – EUFRUIT project**

The [EUFRUIT project](#), which launched in 2015 encompassing 21 partners from 12 Member States, has created a dedicated database of all current research on fruit and vegetables throughout Europe. The project aims to overcome fragmentation in the sector by improving knowledge sharing throughout the supply chain to enhance implementation of research findings at policy level through the dissemination of knowledge and best practices among partners.

9. Adequate funding for research and innovation projects focusing on increasing accessibility and availability of fruit and vegetables to specific demographics, especially disadvantaged and vulnerable groups, should be made available through the Horizon Europe programme.

<sup>42</sup> WHO (2014), *European Food and Nutrition Action Plan 2015-2020*, Copenhagen: WHO, [http://www.euro.who.int/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0008/253727/64wd14e\\_FoodNutAP\\_140426.pdf](http://www.euro.who.int/_data/assets/pdf_file/0008/253727/64wd14e_FoodNutAP_140426.pdf)  
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**BEST PRACTICES – My Healthy Family**

[My Healthy Family](#) was an EU pilot project carried out in Hungary and Poland in 2015. Funded by the European Commission and the European Parliament, the project aimed to encourage vulnerable population groups, especially children, the elderly and pregnant women, to eat more fruit and vegetables. Activities included free fruit and vegetable distribution and getting well known chefs to share recipes and nutritional information and

10. Innovation within the fruit and vegetable sector should be financially supported to match societal expectations and lifestyle changes, such as current consumption trends, to reflect the needs of consumers.

**BEST PRACTICES – Alberts Smoothie Station**

Alberts, a Belgian start-up, invented their [Alberts Smoothie Station](#) to provide consumers personalized healthy snack options on the go. The vending station prepares fruit and vegetable smoothies out of raw frozen fruit and vegetables and pure water to create a healthy snack.

## Social Action

Social action to stimulate the consumption of fruit and vegetables is fundamental to changing eating habits over the long term across different demographics. Social action often involves directly empowering consumers with the necessary skills to make healthy diet choices through education and knowledge transfer.

11. European national public authorities should play a role in informing consumers about the importance of fresh fruit and vegetable consumption.

### **BEST PRACTICE – National Plan for Health and Nutrition**

The French [National Plan for Health and Nutrition](#) (PNSS), which was initiated in 2001, aims to improve the health of the French population by addressing nutrition. PNSS provides recommendations for a healthy diet and lifestyle, such as the [5-a-day](#) fruit and vegetable consumption message, and provides incentive tools and mechanisms to support actions for good nutrition.

12. National education systems should incorporate nutrition education, especially focusing on fresh fruit and vegetable consumption and its health benefits, in their standard curricular for early childhood education and care as well as primary and secondary students.

### **BEST PRACTICE – Incredible Edibles**

[Incredible Edibles](#) is a healthy eating educational programme for primary school children across Ireland. Developed in 2008 and supported by Bord Bia the fresh produce industry and implemented by Agri Aware, the interactive programme informs school children about how fresh produce is grown, its origin and the role it plays in a healthy balanced diet through creating a school fruit and vegetable garden. In 2018 48,000 pupils from 1,220 schools took part in the programme.

13. The [EU School Fruit and Vegetable Scheme](#) should be continued in the long term in each successive Multiannual Financial Framework and operate in addition to national curricular on fruit and vegetables. The scope of the School Scheme should be extended to include all school children and should incorporate at-home learning with parents to reinforce healthy eating and diet choice.

### **BEST PRACTICE – FOOD DUDES**

The [Food Dudes Healthy Eating Programme](#), the School Fruit and Vegetable Scheme in Ireland has been operating since 2007 with over 3,300 schools and almost 1 million students participating. The programme has increased fruit and vegetable consumption in the short and long term with children bringing in to school and consuming more fruit and vegetables overall following participation in the programme. A new programme was launched in 2018 to include new varieties of produce, tasting days, eco-friendly rewards and supporting materials such as DVDs and a multilingual website.

14. EU Member States should be given the possibility to share and discuss EU School Fruit and Vegetable Scheme best practices to enable efficient and effective implementation of the schemes across the Union, such as through the [Joint Meeting of Member States and Stakeholders](#) on the EU School Fruit, Vegetable and Milk Scheme.
15. Local community organisations and networks, whether general community organisations or specific to vulnerable groups of people, should offer demonstrations on where and how to access fresh produce as well as how to prepare and consume fruit and vegetables, especially through at-home preparation, and providing nutrition and diet information<sup>43</sup>.

**BEST PRACTICE – Jamie’s Ministry of Food community based cooking**

The [Ministry of Food](#), developed by celebrity chef Jamie Oliver, provides an eight week course on basic kitchen and food skills to encourage healthier eating habits. First established in the UK and now operating globally, the programme has been independently evaluated, showing that it has positive effects on fruit and vegetable consumption and diet

16. As part of their undergraduate curriculum medical students should be given nutrition training in order to enable them to offer basic nutrition and diet advice to patients as part of disease prevention<sup>44</sup>.

**BEST PRACTICE – Aprifel Global Fruit and Veg Newsletter**

Aprifel’s [Global Fruit and Veg Newsletter](#) raises awareness of the importance of recommendations from doctors on healthy diet and nutrition for patients. The newsletter features [editions](#) on specific topics directly relevant to health professionals, which could be formally incorporated into undergraduate training.

17. Continuing Medical Education for medical professionals should offer nutrition focused training courses, in particular nutrition application and how to discuss nutrition concepts with patients<sup>45</sup>, especially nutrition in NCD prevention.
18. European nutrition guidelines should be developed for health professionals across Europe so that coherent nutrition advice and support is provided to the public and media regarding fruit and vegetable consumption.

<sup>43</sup> Hutchinson, J. et al. (2017), *Community based cooking courses have positive effects on fruit and vegetable intake and cooking confidence*, The Global Fruit & Veg Newsletter No. 23, [http://www.aprifel.com/GFVN.php?lang=en&utm\\_source=Emailing&utm\\_medium=GFVN%20February&utm\\_campaign=GFVN%20February%202016](http://www.aprifel.com/GFVN.php?lang=en&utm_source=Emailing&utm_medium=GFVN%20February&utm_campaign=GFVN%20February%202016)

<sup>44</sup> Hicks, K.K. (2017), *Training physicians to educate patients about fruit and vegetables as an element of a healthy dietary pattern*, The Global Fruit & Veg Newsletter No. 24, [http://www.aprifel.com/GFVN.php?lang=en&utm\\_source=Emailing&utm\\_medium=GFVN%20February&utm\\_campaign=GFVN%20February%202016](http://www.aprifel.com/GFVN.php?lang=en&utm_source=Emailing&utm_medium=GFVN%20February&utm_campaign=GFVN%20February%202016)

<sup>45</sup> Hicks, K.K. (2017), *Training physicians to educate patients about fruit and vegetables as an element of a healthy dietary pattern*, The Global Fruit & Veg Newsletter No. 24, [http://www.aprifel.com/GFVN.php?lang=en&utm\\_source=Emailing&utm\\_medium=GFVN%20February&utm\\_campaign=GFVN%20February%202016](http://www.aprifel.com/GFVN.php?lang=en&utm_source=Emailing&utm_medium=GFVN%20February&utm_campaign=GFVN%20February%202016)



19. Information from Complementary and Alternative Medicine practices regarding fresh fruit and vegetables should be incorporated into community and school nutrition education programmes to help motivate lifestyle change. It should also form part of the treatment for NCDs where possible in European health care practices.

## Environmental Action

Environmental action involves changes in consumers' food environment. Positive changes in consumers' immediate surroundings where they choose and/or consumer their food can nudge them towards healthier food choices, including increasing fruit and vegetable consumption.

20. EU regulation should not prohibit fresh fruit and vegetables from making claims about 'healthfulness', which can facilitate consumer understanding of their important role in the diet at points of sale. Under current legislation, this would require significant funding for scientific proof for each individual product variety.
21. European nutrient profiles should be linked to specific health benefits of fresh fruit and vegetable products to help consumers understand nutritional composition and related benefits of fresh produce.

### **BEST PRACTICES – 'Vegipedia' and 'Veggycation'**

Online vegetable indexes are available in the Netherlands and Australia, called '[Vegipedia](#)' and '[Veggycation](#)' respectively, where all different types of fresh produce is indexed with accompanying nutritional information to facilitate understanding of healthy diets. Consumers are also given, preparation and storage information as well as cooking methods and suggested recipes for each product.

22. Nutrition standards and food guidelines should be set nationally for food provided in public institutions (including public procurement), such as in meals and vending machines, to ensure proper dietary provision including fresh fruit and vegetables. This includes for example schools, universities, health care institutions, prisons and public work sites.

### **BEST PRACTICES – 'Public Procurement for Food for Health'**

In 2017 the Maltese Government in collaboration with the European Commission's Joint Research Centre published [guidelines for Member States](#) to translate their national school food standards related to health and nutrition into food procurement specifications. The guidelines provide practical technical tools for those in school food related services to ensure food provided is health-sensitive and promote healthy diets. A specific [toolkit](#) was also developed on how to promote fruit and vegetable consumption in schools.

23. National and local governments should develop urban and rural planning policies and infrastructure to increase availability of fresh fruit and vegetables in all regions. For example adequate road infrastructure for transport of fresh produce and limitations to urban sprawl on fertile land for production of fruit and vegetables.

24. Local government urban planning authorities should ensure that access to fresh fruit and vegetables are part of municipal governance to avoid fresh fruit and vegetable 'deserts'. This includes guaranteeing high accessibility to fresh produce to all populations through land use planning provisions and permits for local produce markets, supermarkets and retail outlets especially in low-socioeconomically disadvantaged areas.
25. Stakeholders in the health and agri-food industries should support and encourage actors in the fruit and vegetable supply chain to ensure that fruit and vegetables reach consumers in minimally processed forms to stimulate consumption of fresh fruit and vegetables where possible.

**BEST PRACTICES – Junk Fruit not Food**

Delhaize, a Belgian retailer, released a marketing campaign in 2018 '[Junk Fruit not Food](#)' that included a range of fruits that could be easily eaten on the go. Delhaize selected fruit for the range and prepared and packed it to be just as easily eaten as convenience 'junk food' at home and in out-of-home settings to encourage consumers to choose fruit instead of unhealthy snacks.

## Communication Action

Communication is vital to the spread of the message of the importance of fresh fruit and vegetable consumption. Communication action should not only target consumers but also decision-makers at all levels within Europe as well as stakeholders within the health and agri-food sectors.

26. At all levels of society all communication promoting the consumption of fresh fruit and vegetables should emphasise the link between fruit and vegetable consumption and health, especially fruit and vegetable consumption for NCD prevention.
27. The European Commission should continue information and promotion measures of agricultural products in the internal market. In particular, specific budget should be continued to be allocated to the fresh fruit and vegetable sector to promote its role as an important part of a healthy diet to consumers in all Member States.
28. European Commission information and promotion measures for fruit and vegetables in the internal market involving general communication on action on healthy diet and lifestyle should be 100% financed by the European Commission to take into account the difficulty of the sector in funding these measures due to high fragmentation and high diversity of products within the sector. In this respect fruit and vegetables should be considered as a public good due to their positive health impact.
29. Fresh fruit and vegetable products should be promoted nationally through national campaigns to highlight the importance of consumption. Although often consisting of promotion of local and seasonal products, health aspects should be included.

### **BEST PRACTICES – German Apple Day**

Since 2010 Germany has celebrated ‘German Apple Day’ on the 11 January. This national day, initially launched by BVEO, promotes the consumption of apples, which are the most popular fruit in Germany. In particular campaigns for the national day underline the product’s nutritional qualities and how it can be part of a healthy diet.

30. Clear guidelines for all European consumers should be developed recommending consumption of fresh fruit and vegetables at every meal. Guidelines should emphasise the importance of fresh fruit and vegetables for the prevention of NCDs as well as provide information regarding portion sizes to facilitate consumer understanding of the difference between minimum intake and daily intake recommendations.

### **BEST PRACTICES – Spanish ‘5 a day’ fruit and vegetable portion guidelines**

The Scientific Committee of the ‘5 a day’ Spanish Association to Promote Fruit and Vegetable consumption produced [criteria and parameters](#) for assessing fruit and vegetable portion sizes to be included as part of ‘5 a day’ recommendations in Spain. Each [recommended portion](#) has been assessed on legal, technological, nutritional, dietary and



31. National food pyramids should be developed for specific demographics, such as children and the elderly, which clearly illustrate specific consumption recommendations for fresh fruit and vegetables in the diet and their low environmental impact to educate and improve knowledge on healthy eating and lifestyle.

**BEST PRACTICES – Healthy Nutrition and Physical Activity for the elderly pyramid**

The Polish National Centre for Nutritional Education published a [Healthy Nutrition and Physical Activity for the elderly pyramid](#) to cater for the elderly's different health needs. Specifically tailored to the dietary and exercise needs of older people, the pyramid emphasizes the need for frequent consumption of fruit and vegetables.

32. Specific support should be granted to research institutions to better understand how to achieve higher success in promotion and marketing of fresh fruits and vegetables to consumers and where industry efforts should be focused to effectively stimulate consumption.

**BEST PRACTICE - WUR flavour-driven marketing of fruits and vegetables**

Wageningen University & Research recently studied consumer groups based on the fruit and vegetable consumption levels and health-related motive orientations facilitate more tailored interventions and campaigns to stimulate consumption<sup>46</sup>. The study revealed clusters of consumers with different fruit and vegetable product attribute importance.

33. The fruit and vegetable sector should invest in innovative communication campaigns that effectively communicate consumption messages to their target audience.

**BEST PRACTICES – Ga Voor Kleur campaign**

The [Ga Voor Kleur](#) (Choose Colour) campaign is an initiative of the Dutch National Action Plan to increase fruit and vegetable consumption. As a collaboration between the Dutch government, the Dutch fresh produce sector and other parties, the campaign involves modern and bright graphics that appeal to all age groups to stimulate and inspire consumption.

34. National governments should regulate online and offline food marketing to children to limit the exposure of children to unhealthy foods that may negatively impact their diet choice and instigate unhealthy eating habits lasting into adulthood. Prioritisation should be given to the marketing of fresh fruit and vegetables to children starting from a young age using relevant marketing tools and technology.

<sup>46</sup> Raaijmakers, I. et al. (2018), *Consumer segmentation based on health-related motive orientations and fruit and vegetable consumption*, British Food Journal.

**BEST PRACTICES – UK**

In 2017 the UK introduced [rules banning the advertising of high fat, salt or sugar food or drink products](#) in children's media in an effort to reduce children's preference for these foods. Restrictions on both broadcast and non-broadcast media are self-determined and self-regulated by the marketing industry and products are categories using nutrient

35. Fresh fruit and vegetable content in processed food should be correctly labelled on the packaging to avoid misleading advertising.

**BEST PRACTICES – 'Where is the fruit?' and 'Food Labels: Tricks of the Trade' reports**

Freshfel Europe and BEUC have both published reports on the misuse of labelling regarding fruit and vegetable content in processed foods. Both the 2017 '[Where is the Fruit?](#)' report and the 2018 '[Food Labels: Tricks of the Trade](#)' report detail current food labelling practices that give the perception to consumers that they are buying a healthier product than they are in reality, especially the use of pictures of fruit on products with no or little fruit content.

## Cooperative Action

To achieve and sustain an increased consumption of fresh fruit and vegetables in different population groups across Europe, cooperative action is essential.

36. A health-in-all policies approach should be adopted to ensure long term stimulation of fresh fruit and vegetable consumption.
37. Successful actions to stimulate fruit and vegetable consumption require partnerships. These should be fostered between, within and across different institutions, levels of government as well as sectors and industries to ensure policy coherence and maximise initiative outcomes<sup>47</sup>, especially positive health impacts.

### **BEST PRACTICE – FAO & WHO PROFAV initiative**

The [PROFAV](#) initiative, ‘Promotion of Fruit and Vegetables for Health’, aims to promote diversified and sustainable fruit and vegetable production and consumption within the ‘Kobe framework’ to prevent NCDs. The Kobe Framework is a multi-sector consultation mechanism for fruit and vegetable promotion to coordinate partnerships between agriculture, health and education ministries, the private sector and civil society. Through these partnerships programmes are built on and integrated into on-going initiatives in horticulture, nutrition and public health.

38. Member State cooperation under the lead of the European Commission is essential to achieving increased fruit and vegetable consumption across Europe in all regions. The European Commission should continue to act as a catalyst and forum for dialogue for Member State representatives to work together to stimulate consumption together.

### **BEST PRACTICE – European Commission Steering Group on NCDs**

In 2018 the European Commission established a [Steering Group on Health Promotion, Disease Prevention and Management of Non-Communicable Diseases](#) to facilitate the implementation of evidence-based best practices by Member States. The Steering Group works to put into practice the most up-to-date findings and knowledge, including evaluated best practices to drive consumption of fruit and vegetables.

39. The European Commission’s Steering Group on Health Promotion, Disease Prevention and Management of Non-Communicable Diseases, consisting of Member State representatives, should establish the promotion of fresh fruit and vegetable consumption as a continuous priority area for best practices and screening of implementable research results.

<sup>47</sup> WHO (2014), *European Food and Nutrition Action Plan 2015-2020*, Copenhagen: WHO, [http://www.euro.who.int/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0008/253727/64wd14e\\_FoodNutAP\\_140426.pdf](http://www.euro.who.int/_data/assets/pdf_file/0008/253727/64wd14e_FoodNutAP_140426.pdf)  
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40. Public-private partnerships are vital to combining specific know-how with access to resources in order to efficiently stimulate consumption of fresh fruit and vegetables and should be fostered when possible at all levels of society.

**BEST PRACTICE – ‘The Case of the Missing Fruit’**

Royal Philipps in partnership with the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam launched a ‘[Dutch Masterjuices](#)’ campaign to highlight the importance of fruit and vegetable consumption. Still life works of art appeared in the museum without the fresh produce depicted in them in order to instigate conversation amongst viewers on fruit and vegetables in diet and lifestyle.

41. Close collaboration between the fruit and vegetable and health sectors should be encouraged to understand how to stimulate fruit and vegetable consumption and how to ensure that dietary advice is consistent across both sectors at EU and national level.

**BEST PRACTICE – EGEA Conference**

The [EGEA Conference](#) is an international scientific conference taking place every 2-3 years with a specific focus on the connection between nutrition and health and fruit and vegetable consumption. The aim of the conference is to mobilize decision-makers across the EU health and fresh produce sectors to formulate a [policy strategy](#) for evidence-based policymaking for the prevention of NCDs through fresh fruit and vegetable consumption.

42. Collaboration between food industries should be encouraged so that together they may strongly advocate the message of the importance of fruit and vegetable consumption for health. Food industries have a powerful impact on consumer choice at the end of the supply chain through responsible evidence-based advertising and together they can bring about positive change in consumption habits across different populations.

**BEST PRACTICE – Peas Please**

In 2017 the Food Foundation, Nourish Scotland, Food Cardiff and WWF launched the [Peas Please](#) campaign in the UK, to which food stakeholder can pledge to take action to increase vegetable consumption. The campaign addresses low levels of marketing and advertising dedicated to vegetables. A ‘Veg Power fund’ has been created to support advertising for all vegetables, acting as an independent brand manager for all vegetables. The Veg Power fund is supported by food industry players, celebrity chefs and food personalities. Veg Power has also partnered with ITV to launch a [national campaign](#) involving £2 million advertising airtime value on ITV to promote vegetable consumption to reach over two thirds of households with children.

43. Stakeholders at all levels within the agri-food sector and within the health sector should collaborate closely and form networks for open dialogue and cooperation within each sector to work together to stimulate fruit and vegetable consumption effectively.

**BEST PRACTICE – AIAM5**

The Global Alliance for the Promotion of Fruit and Vegetable Consumption '5 a day' ([AIAM5](#)) is a Forum of International Collaboration. AIAM5 gathers national associations promoting consumption of fruit and vegetables and works as a network to promote and support efforts to increase consumption by provision of information, resources and tools to its members.

44. Food retailers play a key role in consumption habits as they have direct contact with consumers and provide a unique setting for conveying positive messages about the role of nutritious food in a healthy diet. Collaboration among food retailers should be fostered to enhance consumer understanding of dietary choices to instigate behavioural change.

**BEST PRACTICE – Euro Coop Obesity Database**

Consumer co-operatives are particularly active in the promotion of fruit and vegetable consumption due to consumer health being one of their core interests as they are run by and for their consumer members. The European Community of Consumer Co-operatives (Euro Coop) provides a platform for consumer co-operatives to share their knowledge and best practices in the promotion of fruit and vegetable consumption for NCD prevention through their [Obesity Database](#).

## Endorsing Stakeholders

### Contributing Stakeholders

The following stakeholders have contributed to the development of the Joint Statement and have endorsed the Joint Statement, whereby they advocate the general provisions of the document.



### Other Stakeholders

The following stakeholders have endorsed the Joint Statement, whereby they advocate the general provisions of the document.