



Event	Eighth Plenary Meeting of EU Platform on Diet, Physical Activity and Health
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Organised by	European Commission DG health and consumer protection

Mr. Madelin noted that the concept of partnership in the last 12 months has moved into the spotlight. The partnership concept, as modelled in the Platform's structure is to be discussed at the WHO Conference in Istanbul.

Secondly, the **Platform will focus increasingly on what should go into the Strategy on Nutrition**. This particular plenary meeting aims to focus on **monitoring and accountability** of the work of Platform members.

He suggested that the future of the Platform is not yet certain, that it may continue if it proves to deliver good work.

Lara (EPHA) raised the concern that the background documents for the plenary had not been circulated until the last minute, which puts organisations who democratically consult their membership on such documents in an awkward position to comment.

Update of Synopsis on Commitments and Monitoring Work Packages

Mr. John Bell of the Commission outlined the actions for this and future plenary sessions:

- Adopt two documents (the framework and the report) today, which were presented last time and discussed in length;
- Get members to apply the framework and give practical tips;
- Identify the nature of the framework and what it means to monitor. This includes tackling the problems that are relevant to the platform.

To achieve the final action, the Commission is to bring actors to talk to members about their experiences. These actors will include civil society and the challenges they face, as well as commercial organisations because they have different challenges.

Three meetings are planned, according to the following topics:

- Advertising and Marketing – 17 October
- Product reformulation / development – 14 November
- Physical activity – 5 December

Mr. Bell noted that the working group is actually monitoring the commitments and supporting the members of the platform to fix their commitments. He made the following suggestions -

- If the commitments are unreadable, they'll be probably unmonitorable...
- Don't reinvent the wheel, use existing data (WHO, etc) to explain your commitment
- Transparency is difficult with sensitive commercial information: however, he commends those who have opened up in the spirit of trust.

EUFIC then presented one of their commitments on monitoring, which is essentially a **communication template** for journalists. It was developed between DG Sanco and EUFIC as a "tool to help communicators communicate". A one page outline will be presented at the next plenary.

Lara (EPHA) raised the issue of independent monitoring by a third party, which reflected a concern of EPHA member and Platform member, Ms. Patti Rundall of IBFAN, who could not be present. The Commission responded the issues was embodied in the text of the document but that this would not be feasible in terms of resources for many Platform members. Hence, the term "transparency" has been introduced in the document.

BEUC requested that when the Platform examines the case studies, we also discuss the nature of the commitment and their relevance, since relevance may change with time. Mr. Madelin agreed to do this by category, rather than one-by-one.

SUMMARY:

- **Platform agrees to have a greater focus on monitoring in next few meetings and those from the Working Group on Monitoring are to present their work;**
- **Monitoring Framework is adopted;**
- **Platform members are to commence participating in monitoring activities, since now the question of "how to monitor" has been decided;**
- **The Commission is to send a page-long summary document on what is involved in monitoring.**

Membership

Three new organisations approved.

Joint Commitment on Healthy Workplaces

The paper "Joint Commitment on Healthy Workplaces" has been updated, based on the July plenary discussions.

Mr. Madelin expressed his belief in the importance of Platform members implementing Healthy Workplace measures in their own organisations since Platform members are umbrella organisations and therefore some are big employers. He mentioned that Platform members should be "ambassadors for health". He stressed that it is not "all or nothing" and consensus is not necessary – it simply requires a "critical mass" of Platform members to believe in it.

The **CIAA** stated their support for the the initiative.

Lara (EPHA) questioned how many resources of the Commission are to be committed to this issue to which Mr. Madelin acknowledged that resources may be a constraint.

WHO Ministerial Conference

There were less places for Platform members than applications so not everyone could be accommodated.

Mr. Francesco Branka of the WHO offered the following details:

- Most of the delegations will be lead by Ministers of Health and will have intersectoral members (at least one has members representing non health) in areas such as agriculture, trade economics, finance, labour, education, sport local government, etc. ;
- There will be 5-6 member delegations for member state;
- The other non-health representatives are also high level representatives;
- The WHO welcomes the Commission's efforts in organising one more satellite event focused on research projects funded by EU;
- The Platform presentation meeting is purposely scheduled on Friday 17 November when there are no any other plenary sessions so that government delegations can participate;
- There will be exhibitions, a few short seminars, and a closing ceremony;
- NGOs with official relations with the WHO are invited, as well as other NGOs;
- Regarding EPHA's request for a meeting venue for NGOs – yes, space inside the venue will be offered.

Mr. Branka encourages Platform members to bring video materials, poster etc in order to present the different commitments of the Platform.

Platform Networks

Mr. Madelin introduced the revised document on “Expanding the Networks of the EU Platform for Action on Nutrition”, which essentially proposes that the Platform establishes itself better at local, regional, and national level through building a directory of contacts, gathered by the Platform Members.

EPHA responded by briefly outlining its work in New Member States in setting up national platforms of health NGOs and by inviting the Commission to meet us to explore the practical successes and challenges that we have encountered so far. Madelin thanked EPHA for the offer.

Ms. Anne Auffret (**EurohealthNet**) also responded with a similar offer to EPHA.

Mr. Madelin emphasised noted that there seemed to be agreement to gather a 'telephone directory' of contact names. The aim is to have a version for the high level committees meeting before the WHO conference in Istanbul.

BEUC Presentation on Simplified Labelling

Barbara Gallani (BEUC) presented the aims and conclusions of a **Discussion Group on Simplified Labelling**, which came about as a result of the plethora of different consumer labelling systems on food packaging. A survey had been carried out in four different European countries on how consumers would like to see the nutrition indicators on food packaging. The study, which relied on scientific evidence, concluded that consumers are increasingly interested in the 'bigger picture' nutrition-wise; not solely concerned by calories/energy but also sugar, salts, and other nutrients. In addition, BEUC wants performance

testing, not just preference testing, of different nutritional labelling systems.

Mr. Madelin praised the work as drawing together data which other Platform members may not have at their disposal.

The **CIAA** representative questioned the “interpretative element” of the study, which Barbara explained was because not all evidence had been of equal value, due to varying degrees of rigour in compilation. The CIAA reps also noted that 'keyhole' nutrition indicators are good as an example of “positive”, rather than negative, indicators.

Mr. Madelin urged that we be “sophisticated” and not mix personal preferences into the issue – the colour red in a nutrition indicator can mean many different things to different people. He suggested that more data is needed on colour or symbol reactions.

The **UNESDA** representative noted that data is still emerging so there has not yet been time to assess it. He also noted that there is often not enough room on the package for nutrition information.

Mr. Madelin posed the question on whether it is feasible to have a “gold standard test” to tackle the phenomenon of different results that arise when different studies are carried out on simplified labelling.

EUFIC responded to declare that it has some 60 studies in this area, which share some commonalities. Regarding nutritional information, the studies generally conclude that consumers want (i) simplification of nutritional labelling, (ii) complete information and (iii) not to be coerced or misled. EUFIC recommends combining academic rigour with retailer experience and current findings to explore the best system of nutritional labelling. **A EUFIC report on this issue is to be out soon.**

Sir Alexander MaCara (CPME) spoke of the **EFSA high level strategy group on labelling**. Members are made up of senior representatives of food retailers and producers, CPME, the EFSA and others. He noted that the situation is “polarised” between the camps. EFSA is to carry out another study on the issue.

Ms. Susanne Logstrup (EHN) spoke of her organisation's study on front-of-pack (FoP) labelling, which is to be circulated to Platform members in the next few weeks.

Mr. Madelin noted that the **regulatory challenge is to push action on labelling forward and avoid freezing the process on the basis that more evidence is needed**. He believes that it is good news that FoP labelling is now accepted by the CIAA and BEUC.

Ms. Barbara Gallani (BEUC) backed Madelin's assertion, reminding stakeholders of the **necessity of decision-making on labelling, while keeping an open mind to any new evidence and science**.

Managing Sweetness Conference Update

Organisers of the Managing Sweetness conference, which took place in June 2006 presented video excerpts on it, as well as the scientific consensus **Statement on Managing Sweetness**.

A **DG Research representative** reacted, highlighting her concerns that the **ten statements of the scientific consensus represent “only a fraction of the issues” in sweetness**. For example, the statement does not mention the role of sugar in diabetes, or address the fact that the taste for excess sugar is learned as well as hereditary.

Ms. Barbara Gallani (BEUC), who spoke at the Managing Sweetness conference, raised the question of the **re-education of consumer taste**; namely, whether tackling this using artificial sugars is the best approach. She also noted that the documentation produced by the organisers contained some misquotes of her words.

All other business

Conference of Freshfel on “The role of fruit and vegetables in the fight against obesity” -

Freshfel is to organise the above conference on 17-19 April 2007 in Brussels, which hopes to attract scientists, Platform members, and Commission representatives.

German Presidency -

A representative gave an overview of the current state of play. 15 September saw the first meeting of the Presidency advisory board on health to which several Member States, plus the WHO and CPME, were invited. Next steps are to finalise the health programme and to send a questionnaire to Member States on the State of Obesity at national level, which in turn is to feed into a dossier to be presented next year.

Preparatory material for the German Presidency is to be made available on the Platform website.

Eurocommerce -

Eurocommerce is to hold a conference, details of which are to be emailed to Platform members in the form of an invitation.

WFA -

The WFA has conducted a study which monitored marketing compliance on unhealthy food. The results are to be presented at the next Platform meeting.

Close of Eighth Plenary Meeting

Reminder of main actions to be taken by Platform members:

- Comments on the Commitments documents: by the end of September
- Confirm accreditation to WHO : by 22 September.