



# Health & Consumer Voice

July 2009

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## Launch of HELP 2.0 TV campaign

To mark the World No Tobacco Day, the European Commission launched on 28 May the second phase of its "HELP - for a life without tobacco" campaign. During the month of June, three new TV spots have been shown on over 100 TV channels across Europe and will be repeated during the month of September.



Tobacco remains the largest single cause of premature death and disease in the European Union. It causes more than 650,000 premature deaths in the EU each year – about 1,800 deaths a day.

The new HELP 2.0 campaign builds on lessons learnt from the first HELP campaign (2005-2008) and features a brand new website and 3 new TV spots. The TV spots, developed with young people, use humour to deliver three serious messages: don't start smoking, how to quit smoking and dangers of second hand smoke.

Young people are not only the target but also participate in the strategy and development of the campaign. The three TV spots show an original approach to this issue; some fairly absurd and humorous tips draw the attention of the public in order to lead them to the serious message: real help and advice can be found on the HELP website. Young people are invited to contribute their own anti-smoking tips on the campaign's website and even record their own 'anti-smoking tips' at local awareness raising HELP events.

The Internet – the main communication tool of young people - is the nucleus of the HELP 2.0 campaign. All campaign actions - the TV spots, the Internet banner campaign, and the local HELP events – lead to the new [www.help-eu.com](http://www.help-eu.com) website.

The Commission supports the view that pictures speak louder than words, especially in tobacco control. As a result, in 2005, the Commission created a picture library of 42 graphic images to accompany the mandatory health warnings on tobacco packs, likely to be renewed in 2010. Health warnings on tobacco packs are an excellent tool to communicate the health risks of tobacco and "de-glamorise" its use in society, as someone who smokes one pack of cigarettes per day is confronted with these warnings over 7000 times a year. A third of EU citizens claim that the warnings are effective in informing them about the health risks of tobacco, according to the results of latest Eurobarometer on tobacco.

So far, picture warnings have been introduced in Belgium, Romania and the UK. Latvia is due to follow suit in March 2010 while France, Hungary, Ireland, Malta, Poland and Spain plan



## In brief



### Youth and health: a working seminar in Helsinki

On 11 June Commissioner Androulla Vassiliou attended the Working Seminar on the promotion of the health and wellbeing of children and young people held in Helsinki

During her speech, the Commissioner wanted to express the Commission's vision on youth and health, a vision which is about empowerment and inclusion and about building healthy societies from the bottom up.

"Young people cannot be empowered and included without enjoying good health", Commissioner said. "Youth health is important in two ways: both in terms of acute needs and in terms of the prevention of chronic disease later in life. Heart disease, cancer, mental illness and musculoskeletal disorders are very much influenced by attitudes and behaviours which are established early in young people towards eating, physical activity, sexual behaviour, alcohol, drugs and tobacco".

The Commissioner reported some data on the health of young people in the 27 EU countries, which seems to be better than ever. Since 1980 the probability of a child dying before the age of 5 years has fallen by two thirds from about 1.5% to less than 0.5%; young people are taller now than a generation ago; rates of disease and disability are generally better now than 25 years ago.

But on the other hand, there are disturbing trends rising: far too many young people adopt lifestyles and ways of living which in the long term will reduce their ability to lead healthy and productive lives, thus endangering their future.

"Inequalities in the health of young people, both between different EU regions and between social groups, are also a cause for concern", the Commissioner said. To this extent, she mentioned the most recent report of the Health and Behaviour in a School Aged Children survey, showing that children of less affluent families are consistently more likely to report fair or poor health and to have multiple health complaints.

In this respect, Ms Vassiliou declared her intention to present together with Commissioner Spidla a communication on health inequalities, which is scheduled for adoption this autumn.

to introduce pictorials in the near future. The Commission has also given the right to use EU images to several countries outside the European Union. The Commission urges all the Member States to make use of such pictorial warnings.

Over the last 20 years, the European Commission has pursued a comprehensive tobacco control policy aimed at reducing tobacco consumption. The objective is to maintain and strengthen tobacco control policy efforts through a range of mechanisms, activities and initiatives including tobacco control legislation and prevention and cessation activities.

The EU is also bringing experience and expertise to the global arena. For example, the EU Tobacco Advertising Directive, which came into effect in July 2005, banned cross-border tobacco advertising and tobacco sponsorship of events such as Formula One. After the European Union had completely banned tobacco sponsorship in Formula One, the rest of the world followed suit. Hence, in 2008 television viewers witnessed the first tobacco free Formula One season.

For further information, please view:

[http://ec.europa.eu/health/ph\\_determinants/life\\_style/Tobacco/tobacco\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/health/ph_determinants/life_style/Tobacco/tobacco_en.htm)

## EU to set new safety standards for child care products

In the General Product Safety Committee meeting held on 15 June EU Member States gave a green light to proceed with two new child safety standards – for "childproof" locking devices for windows and balcony doors and child bathing articles. The new standards will ensure that window and balcony door locking devices are fully "childproof" as well as raising overall safety standards, while for nursery bathing articles the standards will improve the stability and safety requirements and impose new clear warnings for carers.

Accidental falls from heights such as windows or balconies represent a leading cause of death or brain or skeletal damage for children below 5 years. Locking devices for windows and balcony doors are designed to reduce or prevent accidents by blocking the opening of a window or balcony door to a certain limited position and "childproofing" the lock so it cannot be opened by a child of less than 4 years old.

Between 2005 and 2007, a joint project was carried out by Austria, Denmark and Norway to evaluate the safety of locking devices for



windows and balcony doors. The results found that several models were disengaged by a child, despite the childproof claim; other models collapsed, broke or did not withstand the ageing test. All the models tested did not contain some of the required basic instructions.

The EU standard will introduce new requirements to test a product's child resistance, their structural integrity throughout the expected lifetime, their resistance to ageing and exposure to weather conditions. The standard will also require the provision of clear instructions and information to users.

There is extensive evidence worldwide of accidents and injuries in early childhood associated with nursery products. These products include bath seats for babies, bathing aids

and bath stands for young children up to 12 months. The main reason behind the accidents is a false sense of security by the adult users where they assume that these products are safety devices, and can be more likely to leave the child unattended in the bath. Because of these concerns, the Commission carried out a study (2007-2008), following consultations with Member States, which identified nursery products which pose particularly serious risks to infants and young children – and for which there are either no safety standards or the existing standard does not cover all the risks.

The Commission's study also raised concerns about stability requirements. Accidents have also occurred when a carer is present: products collapsed, detached from the sur-

face or were accidentally opened by the child.

The new standard will introduce improved stability and resistance requirements - to minimize the risk of "tipping over" if the child leans in any direction or tries to stand or push the product. It will also require clearer and more visible warnings and instructions to consumers, on the package, on the product and at the point of sale.

The Commission's proposal goes now to the European Parliament for a one month scrutiny period and then to the College of Commissioners for a formal decision. A mandate then goes to CEN (the European Standardisation Committee) to start work on new product standards.

For further information, please view:

[http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/safety/projects/ongoing-projects\\_en.htm#project\\_results](http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/safety/projects/ongoing-projects_en.htm#project_results)

## Regulation on travelling with pets

On 16 June the European Commission adopted a proposal according to which transitional animal health requirements applicable to the movement of pet animals travelling with their owners to Finland, Ireland, Malta, Sweden and the United Kingdom are to be extended until 31 December 2011. The proposal will be discussed by the European Parliament and the Council, with a view to formal adoption through the co-decision procedure.

In accordance with the current rules laid down in Regulation (EC) 998/2003 (known as the "Pet Regulation"), pet dogs, cats and ferrets travelling with their owner for non-commercial movements to another Member State must be accompanied by a passport or, when imported from a third country, by a certificate providing proof of a valid anti-rabies vaccination.

The Regulation also grants a transitional period expiring 30 June 2010



to Finland, Ireland, Malta, Sweden and the United Kingdom to make the entry of pet animals into their territory subject to compliance with certain additional requirements in relation with rabies, the tapeworm *Echinococcus multilocularis* or ticks (the "transitional regime").

The Commission considers that the conditions for moving to a fully harmonised set of rules throughout the EU that would avoid unnecessary burden for travellers are almost entirely fulfilled.

For further information, please view:

<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=MEMO/09/277&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN>

## In brief



### Swedish Minister for Health's visit to DG SANCO in Luxembourg

On 9 June 2009, taking advantage of her presence at the Health Council in Luxembourg, Minister for Elderly Care and Public Health Ms Maria Larsson, from Sweden, visited the Health Threat Unit of DG Health and Consumers (DG SANCO).

The visit was mainly dedicated to the presentation of the Health Emergency Operations Facility (HEOF) of DG SANCO, including the tools in place as well as its practical arrangements for dealing with health emergencies.

The Minister expressed her appreciation for the visit and for the work being done by the Commission and partners, and looked forward to close cooperation during the Swedish Presidency.



### EP elections: slight decline in turnout

Turnout figures for the election are set at 43.20%. This is around the same level as 2004, with only a slight decrease. In 2004 the amalgamated turnout of the 25 Member States was 44.40%.

Turnout varied per country, some having a higher turnout than in 2004 and others with a decrease. The biggest turnouts were in Luxembourg with 91%, Belgium 90.3%, (where voting is compulsory) and Malta with 78.8%.

The biggest increase in turnout occurred in some of the smaller Member States: Estonia, Latvia, and Denmark.

Some of the "old" Member States, such as UK and Italy, showed instead a decline. The biggest decreases occurred in Lithuania, Cyprus and Greece.



# Conference on the health of young people: be healthy, be yourself

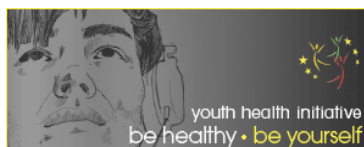
The two day conference on Youth and Health, organised by the European Commission in cooperation with WHO- Regional Office for Europe, the European Youth Forum and other youth organisations, will be opened by Commissioner for Health Androulla Vassiliou on 9 July in Brussels.

About 400 people are expected to attend the conference on the health of young people to be held on 9 and 10 July. This includes representatives from youth organisations, EU institutions, Member and non-Member States, relevant sectors (such as health, education, workplace, social affairs and civil society) and individual young people.

The conference, which is the first step of a wider Youth Health Initiative, will explore several themes including the physical activity and sexual health, risks related to alcohol, tobacco and drug consumption. Cross cutting issues will also be up for discussion, for example youth involvement, labour market, education, media and information and health impacts of the economic and financial crisis on young people.

A panel debate, taking place right before the conclusion of the conference, will involve chairs and rapporteurs from plenary and parallel sessions, with a view to discuss the feasibility of a new Youth Health Action Framework, involving young people in the decision-making process related to their health.

The conference will be aimed at generating renewed and effective action across EU policy areas and at national level to improve the health of young people; involving young people more closely in EU work on public health; supporting Member States' activities on the health of young people.



Major element of the conference is the youth camp which will take place just before the conference, starting on the afternoon on 8 June and which is facilitated by our main partner European Youth Forum. Various activities are planned for the 150 young people who will be attending the entirety of the conference. The objective is to prepare the delegates for the conference, to discuss their views and prepare their input for each theme of the conference.

The main distinguishing feature of the conference is the intense involvement of young people and their organisations, which have been more and more interested in discussing health issues and involved in the preparation of the event. This shows that young people today are willing to take up the challenge and to become active partners in actions to improve their health.

The conference is accompanied by a new website "Be healthy - be yourself", targeted towards young people aged 15-25 and available in 22 languages on the EU health portal. Lot of useful information can be found there, including the recent and future youth health activities of the Commission, the blog on the health issues of young people moderated by the European Youth Forum, contributions of the health competitions pictures, short video-clips and drawings on the six conference themes.

This event is organised in the frame of the European Commission's initiative "Be healthy, be yourself".

For further information, please view:

[http://ec.europa.eu/health-eu/youth/theme/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/health-eu/youth/theme/index_en.htm)

## In brief

### Web chat with EU Consumers Commissioner Meglena Kuneva

On 14 May EU Consumer Commissioner Meglena Kuneva hosted one of her regular webchats online. This time she discussed the consumer issues which are particularly relevant during the summer period.

Have you recently bought a timeshare and are having second thoughts?

Have you ever won a "free" holiday abroad and ended up paying for it?

How often do you visit a budget airline website and come away with only the ticket you wanted to purchase? Are you fed up with inadvertently buying extra items, like insurance, you don't need?

Are you planning a package holiday this summer?

If you answered "yes" to any of those questions, or are interested in finding out more, then take a look to the Web Chat with EU Consumer Commissioner Meglena Kuneva held on 14 May. You will learn more on what she and her team are doing for you as an EU citizen and consumer within all of these and other areas.

The purpose of the chat is to facilitate the direct communication between European Commission and the citizens. Due to the spontaneous nature of the correspondence via chat media and the lack of thorough research opportunities regarding the questions submitted during the conference, the answers given cannot be regarded as legally binding statements.

For further information, please view:

[http://ec.europa.eu/commission\\_barroso/kuneva/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/commission_barroso/kuneva/index_en.htm)



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