



Health & Consumer Voice

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Active and Healthy Ageing Innovation Partnership: adding 2 years to the average healthy lifespan in the EU by 2020

The European Commission is now seeking the views of public and private organisations, companies and individual citizens on how Europe could scale up innovation to meet the challenges of the ageing population in Europe, and in particular on a pilot European Innovation Partnership on active and healthy ageing.

The main target of the European Innovation Partnership on Active and Healthy Ageing is to add two years to the average healthy lifespan in the EU by 2020, and in achieving this, it seeks to improve older people's quality of life and to lead to more efficient care solutions.

Between 2010 and 2030, the number of Europeans aged over 65 will rise by nearly 40%, posing huge challenges but also offering great opportunities for Europe's society and economy. The European Innovation Partnership (EIP), which the Commission aims to propose, seeks to meet three goals:

- to improve the health and quality of life of older people, enabling them to live active and independent lives;
- to contribute to the sustainability and efficiency of health and social care systems;
- to foster competitiveness and business opportunities.



The consultation invites interested stakeholders at EU, national, regional or local level, to help identify current barriers to innovation and opportunities in the field of active and healthy ageing as well as the scope for action at European level.

The online consultation runs until 28 January 2011. The Commission will publish a report after the consultation together with the received contributions.

The European Commission has already had a first round of discussions with approximately 200 stakeholders including, but not limited to, high-level business and civil society representatives, health and care professionals, citizen representatives, NGOs, industry, academics, and policy-makers from Member States and regions at a conference which took place on 26 November in Brussels.

Ministers of the 27 Member States also supported the launch of this pilot project at the Competitiveness Council of 26 November 2010.

The consultation document is available at:

http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/activities/einclusion/deployment/ahaip/consultation/



In brief



Better Training for Safer Food initiative marches on

Since 2006 the EU has trained 23,000 professionals worldwide to improve food safety through its Better Training for Safer Food initiative (BTSF). Now the European Commission is seeking to further improve this initiative by launching a dialogue with all key stakeholders, including the African Union; in such a frame a two-day high-level conference was held in Brussels on 18-19 November, with around 200 delegates from the EU, the African Union (AU) and other third countries attending.

A working document recently adopted by the Commission on the BTSF programme served as a basis for discussions. The document identifies the challenges BTSF is facing and a series of possible actions to overcome them, either on medium-short term (by the end of 2013) or on long-term (after 2014). The former include actions such as:

- A study to accurately estimate the demand for BTSF training;

- A pilot project to set up an e-learning tool for basic-level training;

- Reinforcing the train-the-trainer approach in the selection process.

The long-term actions envisaged include:

- The implementation of e-learning for basic-level training;

- The introduction of basic- and advanced-level courses for all subjects;

- The establishment of a summer school to increase availability of highly-qualified tutors.

Further information is available at:

http://ec.europa.eu/food/training_strategy/index_en.htm

"Health at a Glance" report now launched

The new "Health at a Glance: Europe 2010" report was jointly launched by the European Commission and the OECD on 7 December. It provides up-to-date facts and figures giving an overall picture of health in Europe.

The report is available at:

<http://ec.europa.eu/health/reports/european>

Communication on bee health in the EU: saving the EU's bees population for the benefit of nature

In recent years, an increase in bee mortality has been reported in several countries around the world, with consequences both on honey production and on pollination of plants. Bees are important to humanity as they are indicators of a healthy and sustainable environment. They are linked to natural processes vital for the preservation of plants, fruits, flowers.

On 6 December the European Commission published a paper aimed at getting a better understanding of the reasons behind this high bee mortality and at assisting the efforts to find solutions to the problem. The communication takes up the issue of increased bee mortality and lays down actions planned by European Commission in order to save bee population today and for future generations.

Beekeeping is a widely-developed activity in the EU. There are about 700,000 beekeepers in the European Union, most of whom enjoy beekeeping as a hobby. Bees are important for pollination of plants; without them the production of many agricultural crops would be impossible. They are also essential to maintain the biodiversity in nature, as they ensure by pollinating plants the survival of many wild plants.



Last but not least, we all benefit from the production of honey, which is of high nutritional value and an important first material for many products.

The main actions outlined in the paper include: designate an EU Reference Laboratory for bee health; launch a pilot surveillance programme to estimate the extent of bee mortalities; review the EU animal health rules for bees; increase the EU contribution to the financing of the national apiculture programmes by almost 25% for the period 2011-2013. The measures could also include non-legislative initiatives to promote a higher level of awareness of bee diseases amongst beekeepers.

The Communication should serve as a basis for further discussion with the European Parliament, the Council as well as Member States' authorities and stakeholders. It should also help in identifying possible further actions needed at EU level.

Further information is available at:

http://ec.europa.eu/food/animal/liveanimals/bees/index_en.htm

Assessment of EU nutrition policy

On 8 and 9 December the European Commission's Directorate-General for Health and Consumers, several EU Member States, and the World Health Organization (WHO) Regional Office for Europe met in Brussels for a "High Level Conference on

Monitoring and Evaluation of EU and Member States' strategies on nutrition, overweight and obesity related health issues", with the task of assessing and reporting on the progress of nutrition policy.

Over half the EU adult population is now overweight according to the "Health at a Glance: Europe 2010" report published by the European Commission and the OECD on 7 December. The rate of obesity has more than doubled over the past 20 years in most EU Member States, and has now reached an average of 15% of the EU's population with considerable implications on the wellbeing of citizens and on the healthcare systems.

The Conference was a kind of "celebration" for reaching the mid-term of the EU's Nutrition Strategy: a celebration which was shared by those involved in all the achievements reached so far: the members of the Stakeholders' Platform for action, the 27 Member States' representatives of the High Level Group of experts on nutrition and physical activity as well as the European Commission, the EU's Presidency and the European Parliament that has recently demonstrated a keen interest in action on obesity-related issues. There was also particular focus on the cooperation of the European Commission with the WHO and its actions while the perspective of a third country outside EU borders was represented by a Canadian delegation, who shared experiences on nutrition and physical activity policies.

The event was an excellent opportunity for all actors involved in the implementation of the Strategy so far to meet and exchange ideas and good practices in the field and to lay the groundwork for the next three years of the Strategy.

The European Commission's Directorate-General for Health and Consumers and the WHO Regional Office for Europe reported on the progress made in relation to the EU Strategy for Europe on nutrition, overweight and obesity related health issues



Paola Testori Coggi, Director-General for Health and Consumers, with co-creator of Lazy Town, Magnus Scheving, alias "Sportacus", a children super-hero promoting healthy eating and physical activity around the world

Speakers represented all parties with a keen interest in nutrition and obesity-related issues. The Belgian Presidency embraced the work achieved so far and handed the task of moving further to the next EU Presidency. The European Commissioner for Health and Consumer Policy John Dalli shared his vision on the future of the Nutrition Strategy and the work that is expected by the Platform of Stakeholders and the High Level group. The Regional Director of WHO Europe Zsuzsanna Jakab presented the Strategy of the WHO on obesity-related issues.

The mid-term progress of the Strategy was presented by the European Commission's Director-General for Health and Consumers Paola Testori Coggi, while the Member of the European Parliament Glenis Willmott expressed full support for the approach taken in the Strategy so far. The conference was moderated by the Chair of the Platform and High Level Group, Despina Spanou, Principal Adviser at the European Commission's Directorate-General for Health and Consumers. Last but not least, Magnús Scheving, alias "Sportacus", gymnastics champion and co-creator of the TV programme LazyTown, made a presentation on his experiences in promoting healthy nutrition and physical activity to children around the world.

Further information is available at:

<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/10/1674&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=fr>

In brief



EU Health Journalism Prize 2010: the winners

On 30 November the three winners of the Second EU Health Prize for Journalists were announced in Brussels. The award-giving ceremony was held at the Berlaymont building, in the presence of John Dalli, Commissioner for Health and Consumer Policy. It gathered journalists from all 27 Member States who share the common interest of promoting health issues to raise awareness and provide objective information to citizens around the EU.

The prizes were awarded by Paola Testori Coggi, Director General for Health & Consumers and Andrzej Rys, Director for Public Health.

Gianluca Ferraris and Ilaria Molinari, two Italian journalists, won the first prize for their joint article "Stealing Hope". The winning article draws attention to "healing clinics" that offer expensive but unproven therapies to patients suffering from chronic diseases. A Czech journalist, Lucie Hášová Truhelková, author of an article on organ donation entitled "Love Dwells in the Kidney", was awarded second place. A team of Danish journalists, Kasper Krogh, Morten Crone, Line Holm Nielsen and Jesper Woldenhof, came third, for their article "The Great Failure" on patient safety.

The EU Health Prize for Journalists was established to reward high quality journalism on health issues and especially on topics related to the Europe for Patients campaign.

The articles of the finalists of the journalist prize can be found in this booklet:

http://ec.europa.eu/health-eu/journalist_prize/2010/docs/booklet.pdf



The Commissioner John Dalli, on the right, and Andrzej Jan Rys, Director for Public Health, participating in the ceremony

International Product Safety Week

The European Commission's Directorate-General for Health and Consumers has organised the Third International Product Safety Week from 1 to 3 December 2010, in Brussels, under the theme "Keeping Consumers Safe Across Borders".

As in the past years, this week comprises a series of conferences and meetings bringing together a broad range of (non-food) consumer product safety professionals from around the globe, representing regulators, businesses, consumer organisations, standard makers and test laboratories, academics, etc. The aim is to intensify co-operation in product safety on the global market, ensuring safety throughout the entire supply chain.

On 1 December a Conference on the Revision of the EU General Product Safety Directive (GPSD) took place, with the objective to share with stakeholders the results of the consultation regarding key aspects of the revision of the Directive and to provide an opportunity for stakeholders to discuss the way forward.

On the second day the European Commission and its international partners held an awareness event on child safety, focusing on a case study of cords and chains in window coverings - a critical safety hazard that has led to many child deaths globally. The aim was to provide an overview on the hazards posed by cords and chains in window coverings, to report the state of play of ongoing international cooperation to ensure the safety of such devices, as well as to give practical advice on what can be done to improve the safety of existing products at home.

On 3 December an International risk assessment seminar of EMARS II (a PROSAFE project on Enhancing Market Surveillance through Best Practice) closed the week.

Linked to these events in Brussels, ICPHSO, the International Consumer Product Health and Safety Organisation organised a Symposium on International Cooperation on Product Safety from 29 to 30 November 2010 in London.

Further information is available at:

<http://www.ipsw2010.eu>

<http://www.icphso.org>

Food Information to Consumers

The European Commission proposal for a Regulation on Food Information to Consumers was the key item on the agenda of the last Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs (EPSCO) Council held on 7 December.

The Council reached a political agreement in the first reading. The Council supports the Commission's vision to establish a labelling framework that puts consumers first, in particular with regard to establishing rules on legibility and the introduction of mandatory nutrition labelling. Some Member



States and the Commission indicated issues for re-examination in the second reading.

The file will now be pursued by the upcoming Hungarian Presidency, together with the European Parliament and the Commission.

Further information is available at:

http://ec.europa.eu/food/food/labellingnutrition/foodlabelling/proposed_legislation_en.htm

In brief



Further steps taken in the fight against tobacco

In November 2010 the fourth session of the Conference of the Parties to the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC) took place in Punta del Este, Uruguay. The FCTC represents an outstanding example, offering the opportunity to promote the EU model of tobacco control.

Adopted in 2003, the WHO FCTC is the first treaty negotiated under the auspices of the World Health Organization. It was developed in response to the global challenges linked to tobacco consumption and currently represents a milestone for the promotion of public health, providing a comprehensive regulatory framework and new legal dimensions for international health cooperation.

The long agenda of this session included different topics, including the restriction of certain tobacco ingredients and various other matters of concern to the international community.

With regard to the matter of tobacco ingredients, the European Commission's independent Scientific Committee on Emerging and Newly Identified Health Risks has recently published an Opinion on the role of tobacco additives in shaping the addictiveness and attractiveness of tobacco products.

The Committee concluded that additives and design characteristics may modify consumption patterns in a way which may impact on the uptake of tobacco, on the attractiveness of the product and on the development of dependence.

This Opinion will be taken into consideration for the revision of the Tobacco Products Directive, together with the outcome of a public consultation carried out in December 2010.

The text of the Opinion is available at:

http://ec.europa.eu/health/scientific_committees/emerging/docs/scenihr_o_031.pdf



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