



The Consumer Voice in Europe

# Nutrition and physical activity: what are the major policy issues

► *Sue Davies*

Greek Presidency Conference –  
Nutrition and Physical Activity from  
Childhood to Old Age: Challenges and  
Opportunities

Athens

25-26/02/2014

## Current situation

- Major problem of obesity and diet-related disease
- Some acknowledgement - eg. EU and WHO strategies, Vienna declaration and now the Childhood Obesity Action Plan
- Unhealthy choices are still the easier choices
- Economic crisis is focusing attention on short term, rather than longer issues
- Consumer choice is also increasingly influenced by price
- Lack of Government leadership and over-reliance on voluntary industry initiatives
- Conference is an opportunity to help to change this

## Three key areas for action

- Accessibility and availability of healthier choices
- Enabling simple and informed consumer choices
- Ensuring responsible marketing and promotions



# 1. Accessibility and availability of healthier choices

- Relative cost of healthy vs less healthy choices
- Tackling levels of fat, sugar and salt in foods (and increasing fruit and vegetable intakes):
  - Ban artificial trans fats
  - Set targets for salt, saturated fat and sugar reductions
  - Ensure responsible portion sizes



## Accessibility and availability of healthier choices

- Standards for food in public institutions, eg. schools, hospitals, nurseries, care homes, government premises etc.



## 2. Enabling simple and informed consumer choices

- Simple front of pack nutrition labelling with colour coding
- Menu labelling of calories in chain restaurants
- Health and nutrition claims consumers can trust on genuinely healthy products - nutrient profiles



# Simple front of pack nutrition labelling with colour coding



per 30g cereal:



## 3. Ensuring responsible marketing and promotions

- Need robust restrictions on marketing of foods high in fat, sugar and salt to children:
  - protect older as well as younger children
  - cover the breadth of promotions eg. packaging, sponsorship
  - establish independent criteria for foods to be included
  - be clearer about what counts as marketing to children



# Ensuring responsible marketing and promotions

- Responsible promotions in-store
  - including price promotions and product positioning
- Consistent messages that don't undermine government recommendations.



## Conclusions

- A joined up approach to policy is essential - agriculture, trade, health and environment
- Diet and health policy has to be a greater Government priority
- A more ambitious approach is essential
- Actions have to be Government led, comprehensive and across the board
- Greater recognition has to be given to the long-term costs of failing to tackle this issue.



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[www.beuc.eu](http://www.beuc.eu) – [consumers@beuc.eu](mailto:consumers@beuc.eu)

Bureau Européen des Unions de Consommateurs AISBL | Der Europäische Verbraucherverband  
Rue d'Arlon 80, B-1040 Brussels • Tel. +32 (0)2 743 15 90