



Reviews of Scientific Evidence and Policies on Nutrition and Physical Activity

Project Summary

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Reviews of Scientific Evidence and Policies on Nutrition and Physical Activity

This document provides the reader with a background to this project and a summary of its objectives. The purpose is to inform a series of scoping interviews with expert stakeholders working in the field of nutrition and physical activity.

1.1 Background to the project

In the framework of a Preparatory Action financed by the European Parliament, the European Commission, DG Health and Food Safety (DG SANTE) has contracted ICF International for the organisation of a project entitled '*Reviews of Scientific Evidence and Policies on Nutrition and Physical Activity*'.

The work will be carried out by ICF in partnership with the University of Birmingham's School of Sport, Exercise and Rehabilitation Sciences, the European Centre for Social Welfare Research and Policy, and the European Public Health Alliance (EPHA).

The main objective of the project is to produce a comprehensive review of scientific evidence and policies related to nutrition and physical activity in eight areas. This will enhance the evidence-base for effective and efficient action to tackle diet and physical activity challenges, namely those related to non-communicable diseases in Europe. A second stage will consist of expert workshops aiming at validating the reviews and discussing policy options.

The overarching goal is to contribute to the promotion of healthy diets and regular physical activity in particular, among vulnerable subpopulations and low socio-economic status groups.

The project will cover:

- **Behavioural aspects and pre-conceptions that contribute to a positive energy balance**, including associations between "tasty" and "(un)healthy", motivations when shopping for food, behavioural triggers and influencers.
- **Health intervention effectiveness and efficiency of various health intervention policies on diets and physical activity;**
- **Sources of calorie consumed** in the EU (considering additional relevant breakdowns related to differences between home and out-of-home food consumption and fresh and processed food products); and the frequency and types of **physical activity** Europeans are engaged in;
- Consumption, energy intake and impact of **fruit juices and of artificially and sugar sweetened beverages** (including sweetened alcoholic beverages) on overweight and obesity and health (including on alcohol-related harm);
- Consumption, energy intake and impact of **High Fructose syrups**, on overweight and obesity and health; the expected impact of the revised Common Agriculture Policy on sugar consumption; and the production and use by the food industry of High Fructose syrups;
- The link between **school and work performance and achievement** and overweight and obesity and/or inadequate physical activity;
- Possible **early warning indicators** for changes in population overweight and obesity (and physical activity), prevalence and trends;
- The existence, need and usefulness of **nutrition and physical activity guidelines for specific population groups** (such as children, elderly, pregnant and lactating women, hospitalised or bed-ridden patients, patients with specific diseases, citizens with certain Body-Mass Index (BMI) or physical inactivity levels, etc.) at national and European level.

1.2 Key activities

The following activities will be carried out during the course of the project:

- A comprehensive literature review of scientific evidence (published peer-reviewed literature), in the eight above-mentioned objective areas;
- A comprehensive literature review in the same eight areas, in order to identify 'grey literature' publications, produced by governments and academics;
- Interviews with expert stakeholders, for each of the eight objectives, in order to test the results of the literature reviews and to obtain preliminary ideas for related policy options;
- The production of eight case studies, one per objective area, highlighting an interesting initiative (policy approach, good practice, funded project or programme);
- The organisation of eight expert workshops, to collect feedback and insights on these thematic issues, and to discuss and validate the results of the literature reviews; and
- Development of policy options relevant to each of the areas.

The project will produce eight reports, one for each objective, encompassing the results of the scientific reviews and a set of policy options.

The project will contribute to evidence-based, targeted and outcome-oriented actions to address challenges related to unhealthy diets and physical inactivity and to the burden of chronic non-communicable diseases, ultimately in support of a healthier population.