



Ms. Anne Bucher
Director-General
DG SANTE
European Commission
Rue de la Loi 200
B – 1049 Brussels

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Brussels, 3rd April 2019

Joint letter by consumer groups and public health organisations on the need for a review of the objectives and functioning of the EU Platform on Diet, Physical Activity and Health

Dear Ms. Bucher,

We, the undersigned organisations (BEUC, EHN, EPHA, CPME, COFACE, World Obesity, ERWCPT and IBFAN), have been members of the EU Platform on Diet, Physical Activity and Health (the Platform) for more than a decade. Indeed, several of us have been members since its inception in 2005. However, we are increasingly concerned with the lack of progress achieved by the Platform and must now question the value of our continued participation within it.

We joined trusting that the Platform would provide useful opportunities for constructive dialogue with other members that would contribute to combatting overweight and obesity and related non-communicable diseases (NCDs) in Europe.

However, today **it is increasingly apparent that the Platform is not fit for purpose**. The reduction in the number of its annual Plenary meetings alone, from an initial five when the Platform was founded to just two in 2018, points to a wider realisation that the Platform cannot achieve its objectives. Moreover, we are concerned that **robust EU-level action to address overweight and obesity and NCDs seems to be diminishing** rather than intensifying and this despite the persistent high prevalence^{1,2}. This is at odds with a climate where citizens have high expectations of the EU to promote and preserve their health^{3,4} and ensure a high level of consumer protection.

¹ WHO. European health report 2018: More than numbers - evidence for all. Highlights (2018)

² COSI Preliminary Factsheet 2015-2017 data collection

³ Eurobarometer 89 (2018) Spring 2018

⁴ Eurobarometer (2017) Two years until the 2019 European elections

All in all, we are alarmed about the current situation. The Platform is regularly referred to as a key component of the EU's response to obesity and NCDs, yet the resources and attention invested in its activities do not match the challenges which it is expected to address.

Therefore, we have reached the conclusion that there is a need for an extensive **overhaul** of the Platform. We believe that the European Commission – DG SANTE – must take on the leading role to **drive forward actions required** to achieve the health objectives set out above, which are also vital to achieve economic objectives.

We very much look forward to hearing from you and propose to meet with you before the end of June 2019 to discuss our request for an overhaul. We do point out, however, that in the event that improvements to the functioning of the Platform are not forthcoming, we shall re-evaluate whether our participation in it still constitutes a worthwhile allocation of time and resources for our organisations.

Kind Regards,

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Director General
BEUC

Susanne Løgstrup
Director
European Heart Network
(EHN)

Fiona Godfrey
President
European Public Health
Alliance (EPHA)

Tim Lobstein
Director of Policy
World Obesity

Liz Gosme
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Annabel Seebohm
Secretary General
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European Region of the
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Patti Rundall
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