



BEUC The European
Consumer
Organisation

The Consumer Voice in Europe

Limitations of self-regulation: the case of the EU Pledge

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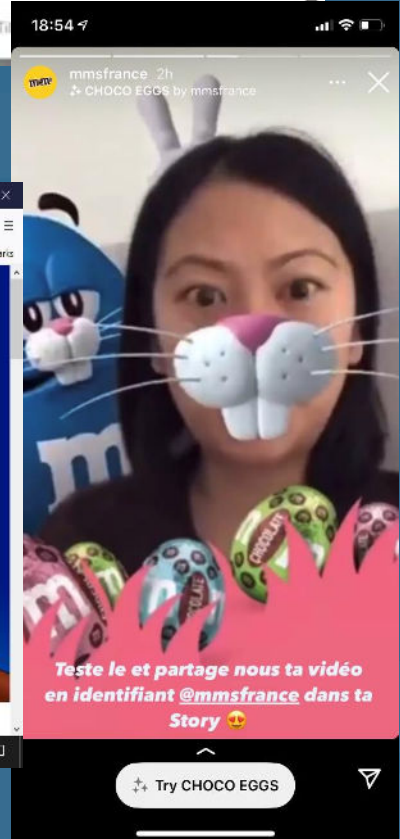
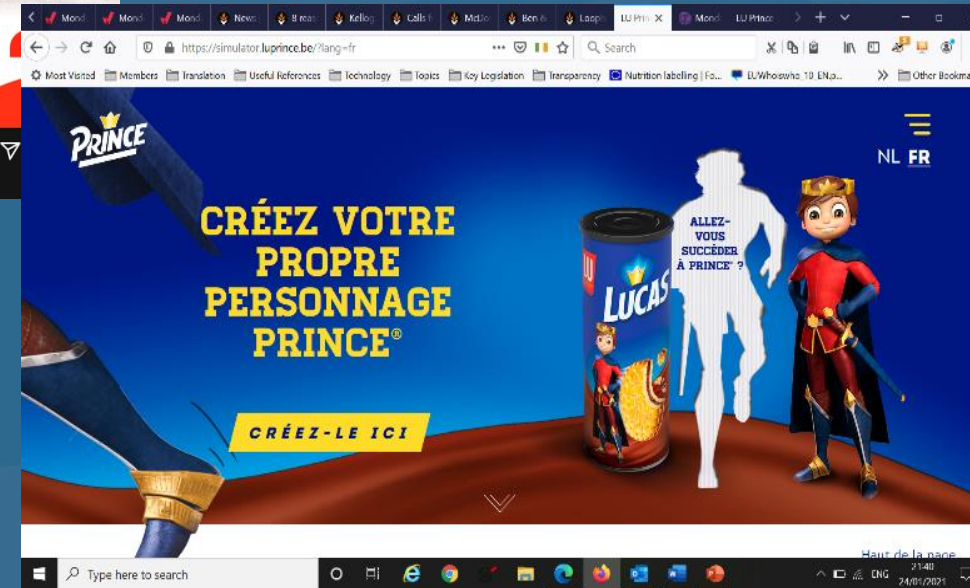
Towards a childhood free from unhealthy food marketing - exploring the next
frontier for European action



A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A KID



OUR SNAPSHOT



SELF REGULATION AT EU LEVEL

- The EU Pledge
- Since 2007
- Accountability mechanism since 2018



The EU Pledge

A voluntary initiative by **23 leading companies** to change **food advertising to kids**



Companies representing over **80%** of food ad spend in the EU

Logos of participating companies: SAN CARLO, Unilever, Z, AMICA, PEPSICO, Nestlé, Aria, Mondelez International, bel, MOM, BURGER KING, MCDONALD'S, DANONE, MARS, THE Coca-Cola COMPANY, FERRERO, LINDT & SPRÜNGLI, KIMs, Kellogg's, Intersnack, General Mills, FrieslandCampina.

OUR ACTION

81 complaints submitted to the EU Pledge
Accountability Mechanism

- **7 withdrawn** by companies
- **8 upheld** (3 only after appeal)
- **66 unaffected**

THE FLAWS OF THE EU PLEDGE

- **Nutritional criteria** are too weak
- Commitments only affect children's **TV programmes**
- Commitments too weak to address the ecosystem of **digital marketing**
- No commitments for **food packaging**
- **13-18 years old** not protected
- Loophole for '**brand marketing**'

INADEQUATE ACCOUNTABILITY MECHANISM

- Complaint process is **too slow**
- **Minimal consequences** for the infringing companies
- **Lack of transparency**
- Panel decisions favour companies on **very weak** grounds
- **Inconsistent** panel decisions

CONCLUSIONS

- **Self-regulation fails** to prevent the marketing of unhealthy foods to children
- **Binding EU rules** are necessary to adequately protect children from the exposure to nutritionally poor food marketing
- Full report accessible via <https://bit.ly/BeucFoodAds>

