



The European Heart Network's (EHN)
High-level dinner-debate
La Bibliothèque Solvay, Wednesday 27 April 2005

OBESITY: THE IMPACT OF MARKETING OF UNHEALTHY FOODS TO CHILDREN IN EUROPE

Report

Organised by Forum Europe



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SUMMARY OF THE DEBATE

If there was one message to be taken from the European Heart Network's (EHN's) debate, it was that progress in the fight against child obesity depended on collaboration between all parties. Early in the evening, the European Commission's Director General for Health & Consumer Protection **Robert Madelin** advised attendees to focus on the process of gathering the evidence of obesity, conducting a peer review of the data and identifying vulnerable consumers rather than debating what constituted "healthy and unhealthy" food¹. However, that topic did reach the table and it is one that will run and run.

Many speakers stressed the need to reach agreement on what constituted "unhealthy" food, as this would be an essential pre-requisite to the introduction of legislation. There were also demands to limit the marketing of such "unhealthy" foods, with **Mike Rayner**, Director of the British Heart Foundation Health Promotion Research Group at Oxford University, calling for the *Television without Frontiers (TWF)* directive to be amended, together with the introduction of a pan-European monitoring mechanism that ensured the availability of valid and comparable data.

Representatives of the food industry were not totally convinced by the report's conclusions, with the CIAA's **Daniela Israelachwilli** questioning the need to focus only on marketing as a cause of obesity. She wanted other factors, such as parental responsibility and the role of schools, to be given equal priority.

The WFA's **Stefan Loeke** questioned some of the figures in the executive summary, referring to different figures reported by leading market research companies. He emphasised that credible policy recommendations needed to be founded on correct data, or else run the risk of not being credible. **EHN** mentioned that figures quoted in the report were all fully referenced. Loeke offered to share data which the WFA can access. But he accepted that strengthened voluntary codes will be necessary, as advertising self-regulation standards needed to reflect changing sensitivities in the context of rising obesity rates.

The International Association of Consumer Food Organizations' **Tim Lobstein** described how the food industry was beginning to move away from television marketing campaigns towards more subtle means, with popular characters such as *Shrek* and *Spiderman* being used (on product packaging) to entice children to eat "unhealthy" food, and food-branded 'educational' books for young children. During the debate, EPHA's **Tamsin Rose** argued that by limiting the marketing of unhealthy foodstuffs to children, parents would be under less pressure to purchase such products. That led the debate on to the subject of when did children stop being so vulnerable and whether it was right to target children in the same way as other consumers?

Moderator, **Willy De Backer** of EurActiv heard the Swedish Public Health Institute's forecast that sales of some sweet and fatty foods should decrease by 50% and commented that this would not help to bring the food industry to the negotiating table. The Irish Representation to the EU's **John O'Toole** was also concerned about competition, as he saw the food industry as a key player in the EU's overall objective of meeting the Lisbon Goals.

Towards the end of the evening, the World Health Organisation's **John Martin** reminded everyone that children might start dying sooner than normally expected if the growth of obesity continued unabated. He wanted the "evidence and experience" from this and other studies to be used so that the correct decisions could be taken. It was left to the European Commission's **Mattia Pellegrini** to ask all the stakeholders to look at the big picture in a collaborative manner. He wanted the obesity "drivers" to be identified so that various policy options could be fully examined.

Summing up the debate, De Backer could see no magic bullet, while EHN Director **Susanne Logstrup** added that there was, indeed, no magic bullet and that a number of measures were needed to address all the complexities of obesity. Not acting, Logstrup pointed out, is also acting and she believed that Europe had to do everything in its power to improve a worsening situation.

¹ As the EHN report "The marketing of unhealthy food to children in Europe" had noted, there was an ongoing debate about whether food could be described as "healthy or unhealthy". Some contended that there was no such thing as healthy or unhealthy food, only healthy and unhealthy diets. The report assumed that some foods were more likely to contribute to unhealthy diets than others and for convenience described these foods as "unhealthy" throughout the report. The report added that "unhealthy" generally meant "high in fat, sugar or salt".

ROBERT MADELIN

EHN's **Susanne Logstrup** introduced the European Commission's Director General for Health & Consumer Protection **Robert Madelin**, who described the report as the first fruits of collaboration between the Commission and the European Heart Network (EHN).

Looking forward to the ongoing process, Madelin saw two parallel streams – a peer review of the evidence (starting with that evening's function) and input from the various stakeholders. He then highlighted two of the key issues that had arisen from the report:

- *How were “children” defined?* There were diverse opinions², both within the food industry and across the member states. Madelin saw this as a key question, which was affected by different cultural traditions. He suggested that the Directive on Unfair Commercial Practices (UCP) might be utilised to define a “vulnerable child consumer”.
- *How could an effective ban on food marketing be introduced?* Any ban would be hard to enforce, for example the ban in Sweden had been undermined by cross-border transmissions, and there was a need to determine exactly what the EU could and should do.

Madelin added that although the discussion came at a good time, he did not see anything to be gained from a long debate on the definitions of “healthy” and “unhealthy” food (a point raised in the report). He preferred that emphasis be placed on the more technical issues, such as possible policy options.

Dr. MIKE RAYNER

Mike Rayner stressed the immediacy of the problem as obesity was increasing across Europe. He introduced the EHN's report of phase 1 of the “*Children, obesity and associated avoidable chronic diseases*” project, partly-funded by the European Commission.

The first phase has looked at the marketing of “unhealthy³” foods to children in Europe. Rayner explained that data had been gathered in 20 participating countries⁴. He listed the conclusions in various areas:

- *Type and amount of food advertising to children:* marketing of “unhealthy foods” was a major issue in all 20 of the participating countries, as the majority of television advertising to children promoted the consumption of such products. The research also reported a perceptible shift from television to advertising within schools and over the internet, for example.
- *The regulatory process:* described as “an incoherent patchwork of legal and voluntary controls” that contributed little to the fight against obesity. This even included countries where a ban had been introduced – in Sweden and Norway – where adverts could still be picked up from neighbouring countries.
- *Attitudes towards marketing:* parents, teachers and health professionals were all concerned about the constant marketing of unhealthy foods, and governments appeared to be bemused by the situation.
- *Counterbalancing measures:* these differed, from total bans, in Sweden and Norway, to education programmes about “healthier eating”. However, Rayner described the various amounts being spent on these programmes as “minuscule” in comparison to the amounts expended on the marketing of unhealthy foods.

² From the Executive Summary: “The definition of a ‘child’ ranges from less than 12 years of age in The Netherlands, Norway and Sweden to less than 21 years of age in Estonia”.

³ The report states that “unhealthy” generally means “high in fat, sugar or salt”.

⁴ Participating countries: Austria, Belgium, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and the UK.

Given the report's findings⁵, the recommendations are:

1. *Stricter controls on food marketing to children:* the *Television without Frontiers (TWF)* directive should be amended in order to prohibit advertising of unhealthy food to children; additional measures are needed against advertising within schools and on the Web etc.
2. *A common definition of "unhealthy" foods across the EU:* as restrictions are not possible without such a definition being agreed.
3. *A pan-European monitoring system:* to be based on comparable information across all member states, as it had been difficult to collect data on the type and amount of food advertising.

Rayner concluded that the marketing of "unhealthy" foods to children was a scandal throughout Europe and that actions had to be taken. If not, obesity in childhood would continue to be a problem.

Dr. TIM LOBSTEIN

Giving consideration to the report's results, Tim Lobstein argued that consumer groups were offering "free consultancy" to the food industry, providing industry with an opportunity to adjust its actions in line with the way that consumers were thinking and the public health problems being faced. Lobstein also saw new marketing opportunities for the food industry, as it had to work with a public that was already "sensitive about obesity and heart disease issues."

Lobstein made two points to stimulate the debate:

1. *The future of the food industry:* he asked the audience where the food industry might be in 10 years time. Referring to the Swedish proposals for an action plan against obesity⁶, Lobstein said its recommendations went further than usual as it called for decreased consumption of foods, especially ice-creams, sweets, soft drinks, crisps, cakes and cookies, with a target to halve the consumption of these items. It was therefore time for the food industry to "get thinking".
2. *Changes in marketing to children:* he also warned that television advertising was not the only way that companies were reaching children. Moving on to other techniques, Lobstein showed examples of:
 - o *Character endorsement:* with *Shrek* and *Spiderman*, for example, on soft drink containers described as "a subtle association" as children not only wanted the drink itself but also thought about the drink when they saw the films *Shrek* or *Spiderman*.
 - o *Cross-branding:* for example, *Tony the Tiger*, on kitchen paper towels, so that children were constantly reminded of *Tony* (who is usually associated with Kellogg's' high-sugar content breakfast cereal)
 - o *M&M's Counting Books and other examples:* parents could order a book (produced by Nestlé) with their children's name featuring as the main character, i.e. a "personalised story book"; it was also possible to order books that could be used to hold brand-name chocolate and cereal pieces as learning and counting aids.

Lobstein described these as various "marketing tricks" that were designed to replace television-advertising campaigns in the event that they were prohibited. He saw marketing aids as a whole range of techniques, ranging from the use of flavours and colouring (to attract children) through the type of tricks listed above.

⁵ From the Executive Summary: "Increasing obesity, especially in children, is being noted with mounting concern throughout Europe. The International Obesity Task Force estimates that approximately 20% of school-age children in Europe are carrying excess body fat, with an increased risk of developing chronic disease. Of these overweight children, a quarter are obese, with a significant likelihood that some will have multiple risk factors for cardiovascular diseases, type 2 diabetes and other co-morbidities before or during early adulthood."

⁶ Which listed 79 action points for preventing obesity in Sweden

THE DEBATE

OBESITY AND THE DRIVING FACTORS

As the evening's moderator, EurActiv's **Willy De Backer** introduced the debate with the first intervention coming from the CIAA's **Daniela Israelachwilli**. She disagreed with the EHN's decision to focus on one possible factor – the marketing of food – in the increase of diet-related diseases in children, as that in itself would not end obesity. Israelachwilli wanted other factors, such as parental responsibility and the role of schools, to be given equal priority.

The EHN's **Susanne Logstrup** replied that the report on the marketing of unhealthy food was only the first phase of a full programme that would include examining parental responsibility but also other factors – such as the need for physical activity, the problem of the reduction in the number of children biking or walking to school, and the content of school meals (nutritional standards). Marketing of food to children had been given priority, she added, as it was a huge problem that had to be tackled and could be addressed immediately.

On the issue of parental choice, European Public Health Alliance's **Tamsin Rose** argued that while marketing campaigns were aimed at children, it was the parents' decision as to whether or not a particular product was purchased. Noting that this placed parents under great pressure, Rose said that a ban on advertising would help parents and give them more space in which to make their purchasing decisions.

THE HEALTHY-UNHEALTHY FOOD DEBATE

Despite Madelin's comments, Israelachwilli wanted the “healthy and unhealthy” food argument to be debated. It should be done “scientifically”, together with more discussion on possible regulatory frameworks (i.e. “what might work”). Her overall conclusion was that a ban on the marketing of food to children should not be considered at this point, as there was insufficient evidence to justify such a decision.

Rose also emphasised the need to debate the “healthy versus unhealthy” food issue. She noted that the food industry was regularly stressing “quality” food, which was not well defined either. Rose could not see any difference between the “quality / poor quality” and “healthy / unhealthy” debates, as consumer groups might well disagree with industry's claims about what defined a “quality” food.

The International Obesity Task Force's **Neville Rigby** argued that the food industry was already differentiating between “unhealthy” and “healthy” foods as displayed in his local supermarket (Sainsbury's in Westminster), aisles with “healthy choices” and others with “kid's options”. He concluded that the food industry was already marketing “healthy” foods, and that they had therefore decided on which food was unhealthy.

Eurocommerce's **Xavier Durieu** disagreed. He said there were no “bad foods” as it depended on both the quantity of a particular foodstuff that was digested and on the physical condition of the person in question. Durieu wanted more emphasis to be placed on physical exercise and on overall dietary intakes.

In response, Rayner said that if dietary guidelines were followed and regular exercise taken, then on a probabilistic basis, bread was more likely to be part of a healthy diet than, for example, a *Mars Bar* or a can of *Coke*. Durieu was not convinced, as he could not see the moderate consumption of anything (salt, sugar, etc.) being bad! He wanted a positive approach rather than an attempt to ban certain products.

THE NEED FOR GREATER COLLABORATION

The World Federation of Advertisers' **Stefan Loerke** had checked some of the figures of the Executive Summary (he quoted data on TV and Internet advertising for food & beverage in the UK, TV advertising for food & beverage in Germany, food advertising in Greece) and argued that they were incorrect. He therefore, called for increased collaboration between the food industry and consumer and health groups, so that the correct data could be used as the basis for decisions. Mike Rayner explained that the national coordinators had encountered difficulties in finding the relevant information as it was not easily and readily available but that the figures quoted in the report were obtained from published sources and that they were all fully referenced in the report⁷.

⁷ The full report contains extensive references to all figures quoted

He said he would welcome co-operation with the advertising industry so that more comparable data could be produced. Loerke added that ways existed to receive information from such companies as Gallop and Nielsen Media Research acknowledging that information from these sources was only available at a price.

Lisette Tiddens-Engwirda, of the Standing Committee of European Doctors, wanted to make the discussion more positive. She suggested that the focus be placed on “healthy lifestyles” – instead of blaming and shaming individual groups – so that affirmative actions could be identified.

WAS FOOD NOT SO HEALTHY AS IT WAS 50 YEARS AGO?

As moderator, **De Backer** intervened to ask if food had changed in the past 50 years. Could that be having an impact? Rigby stated that he believed there had been fundamental changes in the food chain in the past decades. For example, he pointed out that the amounts of *Omega3* fatty acids in many products had been reduced in order to improve the shelf life of products, and cattle had a lower level of polyunsaturated fats in their meat as they were no longer grass fed.

A CALL FOR THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION TO ACT

The Irish Representation to the EU's **John O'Toole** had good words for the US Department of Health endeavours to combat the obesity epidemic, particularly their TV advertising campaign which US Secretary Tommy Thompson, shared with the EU Health Ministers at their Cork meeting in 2004. He felt that the Commission should consider a similar approach in Europe, using television in a proactive and positive manner. Rigby did not agree as he felt the campaign had been inappropriate (a series of prosthetic body pieces left behind in public places) and was not sure if it had been widely used. His conclusion was that advertising campaigns of this nature were expensive and unlikely to be effective.

The Commission's **Matti Rajala** confirmed that discussions were ongoing with the US authorities on a package of measures. He added that counter-balancing advertising campaigns had worked in the tobacco industry. However Rajala compared the US situation in the tobacco industry (\$ 600 million available for campaigns, one main language) with Europe (€15 million, a wider area and many languages). Loerke commented that there was no magic bullet and that it was too early to say which approach might work. He wanted all the relevant players to pool their resources in order to determine the most effective methods. Rigby said that scientific evidence existed that showed advertising aimed at children (to suggest they lead a healthier lifestyle) did not work. As for tobacco, its successful counter-advertising campaigns had always been backed by regulation.

The Commission's **Mattia Pellegrini** stepped back from the detailed discussion about “unhealthy” foods and stressed the need to look at the various policy options. Given that there was a definite need to reduce obesity, Pellegrini argued that it was important to identify possible factors (drivers) behind its growth. He listed: targeted marketing campaigns, a lack of sufficient exercise, poor parental choices and a lack of nutritional education within schools. He wanted the whole picture to be assessed so the various policy options could be compared before any ban on advertising was considered. As to which options best met the requirements, his options were self-regulation (with appropriate deadlines in case of insufficient compliance), campaigns and co-regulation (both Commission-led and self-regulatory actions). Overall, Pellegrini wanted the factors behind obesity to be identified so that the various policy options could be examined.

The Permanent Representation of Sweden to the EU's **Anna-Eva Ampélas** agreed to a large extent with Pellegrini's summing-up and underlined that different policy options should be examined. She thought that a dialogue with the industry would be useful but stated that stricter restrictions on advertising must be considered if voluntary agreements are not effective. Commenting on the Swedish ban on food marketing aimed at children, she said that it had not been controversial and had generally been well accepted. In response to a question from De Backer, Lobstein said that the Swedish ban had helped to slow the increase of obesity in that country. Loerke later commented that there was no scientific evidence as to the impact of the Swedish experiment and added that only the Netherlands had a significantly lower rate of obesity within Europe.

MEP **Irena Belohorská** stated that it is not important whether the figure at present is 12% or 14%. What is more important is the long-term prognosis. The best example we can see is in the United States. We have to realise that if we include habits of the American Lifestyle into our own (e.g. McDonald's, Burger King...) we will have the same problems. Dr. Belohorská suggested that the media, schools, parents and NGOs should promote the healthy way of life. It is important not to only “link” obesity with unhealthy food but with unhealthy lifestyle in general.

THE NEED FOR INDUSTRY TO BE COMPETITIVE AND CHILDREN AS CONSUMERS

De Backer then introduced the element of competition, as he reasoned that the Commission would have a problem if industry became less competitive (in view of the Lisbon Agenda). Rose thought the answer was clear: the food industry should reduce the consumption of (high-sugar) soft drinks and replace them by healthier products (low-sugar or fruit-based) and create a new market (for healthy products).

Israelachwilli was insistent that regulation itself could not change markets. She said that consumers drove them and that the industry had a history of producing the products that consumers needed e.g. "Lite brands" etc. Logstrup argued that taste could be changed and gave the example of the Jamie Oliver TV series "*Jamie's School Dinners*"⁸, where the children had initially disliked "healthy" food, but had then grown to appreciate the different (healthier) options.

Answering Israelachwilli, Rayner said it was wrong to treat children as consumers, as they were a "special case" as all parents recognised. He argued that children should not be given the same choices as adults.

O'Toole warned against possible over-regulation, especially in regard to the Lisbon Agenda. He wanted to ensure that the food industry was able to conduct business effectively in a global marketplace.

THE NEXT STEPS

The World Health Organisation's **John Martin** reminded everyone that children might start dying sooner than normally expected if the current problem of obesity continued unabated. He did acknowledge, however, that some members of the food industry had changed the ways in which they marketed (and provided) food, as they had appreciated that genuine public health concerns did exist.

Martin added that the debate in Europe was being watched with interest, as it was one that involved all of the stakeholders and did not depend on regulation only. Looking forward to the forthcoming WHO conference on Obesity in 2006, he hoped there would be a definition of the actions to be taken across the Platform⁹. Martin wanted the experience of this and other studies to be used ("recorded and measured accurately") so that the correct decisions could be taken. As a final comment, he wanted to know what the advertising industry planned to do next in this area.

Loerke took up the challenge. He said advertisers were working on voluntary commitments and that the food industry in general had been active in recent months. He acknowledged that public health concerns would change the look of the market in the future, as it had to follow consumers' new desires and expectations.

IN CONCLUSION

Logstrup summed up on behalf of the EHN, saying that everyone had agreed that there was a growing problem of obesity. Logstrup agreed that all policy options had to be examined, but felt that immediate action was called for to stop and reverse the increase in obesity and related diseases.

Summing up the debate, De Backer could see no magic bullet. EHN's **Susanne Logstrup** added that there was, indeed, no magic bullet and that a number of measures were needed to address all the complexities of obesity. Not acting, Logstrup pointed out, is also acting and she believed that Europe had to do everything in its power to improve a worsening situation.

⁸ "*Jamie's School Dinners*" showed the chef's battle to persuade canteens to switch from processed meat products, chips and other fast foods to proper meals prepared from fresh ingredients. It also portrayed the difficulties involved in tempting children used to high-fat, high-salt processed products to forgo these in favour of fruit and vegetables. Following a newspaper outcry about the programme, the government announced it would increase spending on school meals. (Yahoo! News).

⁹ Under the leadership of the Commission, the *Platform* brings together industry associations, consumer groups, health NGOs and political leaders to take voluntary action to halt and hopefully reverse the rise in obesity, particularly among children. Obesity is on the rise across the whole of Europe, and the increase is particularly severe among children and adolescents. (see http://europa.eu.int/comm/health/ph_determinants/life_style/nutrition/platform/platform_en.htm)



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AGENDA

- 19.00Hrs Welcome of participants & Cocktail
- Welcome remarks by:
Robert Madelin
Director General
Directorate General for Health & Consumer Protection
European Commission
- 19.30Hrs Dinner & debate starts
- Introductory remarks:
Dr. Mike Rayner,
British Heart Foundation's Health Promotion Research Group,
Oxford University
- Dr. Tim Lobstein**
International Association of Consumer Food Organisations
- 21.30 Hrs End of Debate

List of Guests

Anna-Eva Ampélas	Counsellor Pharmaceuticals/Medical Devices, Public Health, Permanent Representation of Sweden to the EU
Irena Belohorská	MEP, Committee on Environment, Public Health and Food Safety, European Parliament
Geert Cami	Managing Director, Forum Europe
Paloma Castro	Board Member, European Modern Restaurants Association (EMRA)
John Chapman	Rapporteur
Willy De Backer	Evening Moderator, Editor-in-chief of Euractiv.com
Léopold de Callatay	Treasurer, European Parents Association (EPA)
Xavier Durieu	Secretary General, Eurocommerce
Christian Hawkins	Conference Manager, Forum Europe
Lex Herrebrugh	Regional Manager, International Diabetes Federation, European Region
Roland Higgins	Chairman, European Modern Restaurants Association (EMRA)
Daniela Israelachwili	Director General, Confederation of Food and Drink Industries in the EU (CIAA)
Emmanuel Joly	Administrateur, Audiovisual Policy, DG for Education and Culture, EU
Marleen Kestens	European Coordinator, European Heart Network (EHN)
Tim Lobstein	International Association of Consumer Food Organisations
Stephan Loerke	Chief Executive, World Federation of Advertisers (WFA)
Susanne Logstrup	Director, European Heart Network (EHN)
Robert Madelin	Director General, DG for Health & Consumer Protection, EU
John Martin	Director, United Nations World Health Organisation
Francesco Montanari	Food Policy Officer, European Community of Consumer Cooperatives (Eurocoop)
John O'Toole	Counsellor Health and Children, Permanent Representation of Ireland to the EU
Mattia Pellegrini	Policy and Strategy, DG for Health & Consumer Protection, EU
Catherine Piana	Director General, European Vending Association (EVA)
Matti Rajala	Head of Unit, Health determinants, DG for Health & Consumer Protection, EU
Mike Rayner	British Heart Foundation Health Promotion Research Group, Oxford University
Neville Rigby	Director of Policy & Public Affairs, International Association for the study of Obesity (IASO), International Obesity Task Force
Tamsin Rose	Secretary General, European Public Health Alliance (EPHA)
Lisette Tiddens-Engwirda	Secretary General, Standing Committee of European Doctors
Donal Walshe	Secretary General, European Community of Consumer Cooperatives (Eurocoop)



Mission statement EHN

The European Heart Network plays a leading role in the prevention and reduction of cardiovascular disease through advocacy, networking and education, so that it is no longer a major cause of premature death and disability throughout Europe.

Children and Obesity and Associated Avoidable Chronic Diseases

Data from several studies suggest that childhood obesity has increased steadily in Europe over the past two to three decades. In Europe, almost 20% of children are overweight or obese. The highest prevalence levels are observed in southern European countries with up to 36% of 9-year-olds in Italy being overweight or obese.

Some of these obese children already have multiple risk factors for type-2 diabetes, heart disease and a variety of other co-morbidities.

Many interacting factors cause obesity and add to the complexity of tackling it. However, the rapid changes in the numbers of obese children within a relatively stable population indicate that genetic factors are not the primary reason for change, rather obesity-promoting environmental factors are the main culprit. An emphasis on the environmental causes of child obesity leads to certain conclusions:

- treatment for obesity is unlikely to succeed if we deal only with the child and not with the child's prevailing environment;
- Prevention of obesity will require a broad-based public health approach.

The aim of this project is to tackle the obesity epidemic among children and young people. The project has a specific focus on one of the environmental factors, namely marketing to children of foods that are high in fat, sugar and salt, as a short term action. A comprehensive research review carried out by the Food Standard Agency in the UK concludes that food promotion affects the preferences of children (type and brand of food they like to eat) and what they buy or pester parents to buy.

In its first phase, the project will measure the extent and nature of the food marketing to children. It will collect available information on food industry practices in 20 countries with regard to food marketing to children. Information will also be collected on existing measures (legislation, voluntary agreements, codes, etc) at national level with regard to food marketing to children.

Subsequent phases of the project (which runs over 32 months) will build on the outcome of the data collection and analysis done in the first phase. This will lead to guidelines based on consensus at European and national level, setting out actions to be taken in the longer term. The guidelines will look at a wider range of factors, including physical activity.

EHN members

- Austrian Heart Foundation
- Belgian Heart League
- Bosnia and Herzegovina Foundation of Health and Heart
- British Heart Foundation
- Czech Heart Foundation
- Cyprus Heart Foundation
- Danish Heart Foundation
- Estonian Heart Association
- Finnish Heart Association
- French Federation of Cardiology
- Georgian Heart Foundation
- German Heart Foundation
- Hellenic Heart Foundation
- Hungarian Heart Foundation
- Icelandic Association of Heart Patients
- Icelandic Heart Association
- Irish Heart Foundation
- Italian Association Against Thrombosis (ALT)
- Italian Heart Foundation
- National Heart Forum
- Netherlands Heart Foundation
- Northern Ireland Chest, Heart and Stroke Association (NICHSA)
- Norwegian National Health Association
- Portuguese Heart Foundation
- Heart to Heart League
- Slovenian Heart Foundation
- Spanish Heart Foundation
- Swedish Heart Lung Foundation
- Swiss Heart Foundation
- Turkish Heart Foundation