

Health

NUTRITION STRATEGY

Commission White Paper of 30 May 2007 for a Strategy for Europe on Nutrition, Overweight and Obesity related health issues ([COM \(2007\) 279 final](#))

Objective

To establish a comprehensive EU strategy on nutrition to fight against overweight and obesity.

Relevance for the hospitality industry

The White Paper is of interest for the sector because it proposes actions in different policy areas at various level (European, national, local) in relation to nutrition. Some of the actions proposed can impact hospitality enterprises serving food. For example, the text suggests strengthening nutrition labelling legislation to help consumers to make better informed and healthier choices. The White Paper also insists on the importance of a “public-private partnership approach” at European and national level, explaining that the private sector (food producers, retailers, etc.) has a major role to play in developing healthy options for consumers and “empowering them to make healthy lifestyle decisions”.

The text confirms the key role of the EU Platform for Action on Diet and calls on Member States to set up similar *fora* at national level involving industry stakeholders (manufacturers, retailers, catering), consumers, etc.

State of progress

Adopted in May 2007.

In 2010, the Commission will evaluate the results of its strategy and “to which extent actors across the EU are contributing to the achievement of the objectives”. In particular, the 2010 review will assess the effect of the self-regulatory measures taken by industry stakeholders and determine whether it is necessary to adopt different strategies.

Content

The White Paper (a non-legislative document proposing various actions) establishes an EU strategy on nutrition, calling for measures in different policy areas (internal market, common agricultural policy, transportation, urban planning, research, etc.) at various levels (national, regional and European). Some of the actions envisaged at European level aim at:

- Better informing consumers (e.g. Commission proposal of January 2008 for a regulation on food information to consumers)
- Making healthy options available (e.g. “EU School Fruit scheme” to improve the availability and affordability of fruit and vegetable)

The White Paper confirms the centrality of the EU Diet Platform in the Commission policy on nutrition. Member States are encouraged to set up similar *fora*, using the EU Platform as a model. With a view to improving the liaison with national governments and exchanging best practices at EU level, the White Paper foresees also the setting up by the Commission of a “High Level Group”, bringing together national experts to focus on nutrition and related issues (e.g. salt reduction campaigns, etc.).

For a detailed summary of the White Paper (and related texts) you can visit the [SCADPlus](#) website (European Commission).

HOTREC position

HOTREC, which shares the concerns of public authorities in relation to the rising levels of obesity, in particular among children, welcomes the White Paper as it acknowledges that *“the individual is ultimately responsible for his lifestyle and that of his children”*. Furthermore, the White Paper confirms HOTREC views that diets and eating habits vary greatly across Member States and it is therefore essential that actions are taken *“at regional and local levels as these are closer to EU citizens”*.

However, HOTREC has reservations with regard to the strengthening of the monitoring process in relation to the EU Platform for Action on Diet, and more generally, in relation to other initiatives called for by the White Paper. HOTREC considers that whether or not people eat healthy food or practice sports is a matter of personal choice. This choice cannot be regulated at any level. Public authorities can only raise awareness and facilitate the dissemination of good practices. Because eating habits and lifestyles vary to a large extent with geography and cultures, solutions can only be suggested at national level.

For the position of HOTREC on nutrition labelling refer to the separate sheet on food labelling.

See also:

HOTREC [reply](#) to the Commission Green Paper on Nutrition (January 2006).

Official references

White Paper on a Strategy for Europe on Nutrition, Overweight and Obesity related health issues, 30 May 2007 ([COM\(2007\) 279 final](#))

See also:

European Parliament resolution of 25 September 2008 on the White Paper on nutrition, overweight and obesity related health issues ([P6_TA\(2008\)0461](#))

Green Paper - "Promoting healthy diets and physical activity: a European dimension for the prevention of overweight, obesity and chronic diseases", 8 December 2005 ([COM\(2005\) 637 final](#))

EU Platform for Action on Diet, Nutrition, Physical Activity and Health [website](#)

DG SANCO [website](#) on nutrition policy