

Ms Anne Bucher  
Director General  
DG Health and Food Safety (SANTE)  
European Commission  
Rue Breydel 4  
Brussels

Brussels, 16 April 2019

**Subject: EU Platform for Action on Diet, Physical Activity and Health**

Dear Ms Bucher,

With reference to the [open letter](#) recently sent to you by 8 consumer groups and public health organisations (NGOs)<sup>1</sup>, FoodDrinkEurope would like to concur with these groups on the need for a (further) review of the objectives and functioning of the EU Platform on Diet, Physical Activity and Health.

First and foremost, we agree with the group of NGOs that an EU-led approach to tackling obesity and non-communicable diseases (NCDs) is needed. Indeed, as part of our [Priorities for the EU Institutions 2019-2024](#), **FoodDrinkEurope calls for a comprehensive, coordinated and inclusive EU nutrition and health policy** (for example, through renewal of the EU Strategy on Overweight, Obesity and other Health related issues), which is i) based on solid science and evidence, ii) which respects individual foods and ingredients, and iii) which avoids fragmentation of the EU Single Market to the greatest extent possible.

Within this context, as one of the founding members of the EU Platform, FoodDrinkEurope recognises that, over the past decade and a half, **the Platform has demonstrated added value as one of the tools to improve public health through the delivery of concrete actions**. It has facilitated discussion among different stakeholders – each with its own views and roles – and spurred stakeholders to engage in projects with partners with whom they might not have engaged otherwise, including community-based programmes that have been successful in reducing childhood obesity at local levels.

We remain convinced that a multi-stakeholder approach is the strongest, most viable and efficient way to achieve progress in this area. This is why FoodDrinkEurope and its members have actively led concrete [commitments and initiatives](#) of scale and scope – often together with partners across sectors – since the foundation of the Platform, the spirit of which is one of collaboration. **Our willingness to actively contribute and collaborate remains firm, but it is also dependent on meaningful contributions by other actors and the political priority that is given to the platform.**

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<sup>1</sup> BEUC, EHN, EPHA, CPME, COFACE, World Obesity, ER-WCPT and IBFAN (letter dated 3 April 2019)

With regard to the latter, **we echo the concerns of the NGOs that the political priority given to the work of the Platform is diminishing**, and fully agree that the current resources and attention invested in its activities do not match the challenges which it is expected to address. We concur that the European Commission must take a leading role here.

Whilst welcoming the Commission's attempt to enhance the functioning of the Platform by introducing operational changes in 2017/2018, **we are concerned with the current state of the Platform, some 15 years after its establishment, and reiterate the need for a broader reflection with all relevant stakeholders – most notably the Commission and EU Platform members themselves – on the way forward.**

We believe that such a joint reflection could usefully include:

- Agreeing on the need for a strong, coherent EU approach to nutrition and health that incentivizes stakeholders to work together towards common public health goals;
- Reaffirming the long-, medium-, and short-term objectives, principles and expectations of the Platform, which should be ambitious but also realistic and reasonable (taking a holistic approach to nutrition, diets and health as well as balanced and active lifestyles, facilitating collaboration across sectors);
- Finding ways to facilitate better dialogue and collaboration between the EU Platform and the EU Member States, and (more) involvement/support of the European Parliament;
- Agreeing on clear governance rules, investing in better evaluation of the Platform's output, and reducing administrative bureaucracy as much as possible.

We remain at the disposal of your services and interested Platform members to further discuss any of the above in more detail in a bilateral and/or group setting.

Yours sincerely,

Mella Frewen