

Brussels, 15 January, 2010 – egta, the association of television and radio sales houses, presents its Interpretative Guidelines on the ICC Framework for Responsible Food and Beverage Marketing Communication at a dedicated workshop on food advertising and complies with its commitment with the EU Nutrition Platform

During the last few years, the debate on the rising level of obesity across Europe has provoked calls for restrictions on the advertising of food high in fat, salt and sugar that are particularly directed at minors. In view of the significant impact that such restrictions would have on the media industry, and in the context of the reiterated acknowledgment by European Institutions of the role played by self-regulatory mechanisms in this field, egta has engaged in numerous initiatives aimed at strengthening food advertising self-regulation and, in turn, demonstrate the effectiveness of the industry's initiatives in responding to the obesity challenge.

In order to assess the developments that have been achieved prior to the Commission's assessment of its current nutrition strategy, **on 15 January, egta held a dedicated workshop on the topic of Food advertising & the obesity debate.** The egta workshop was aimed at offering egta member sales houses a forum to discuss, together with the other parts of the advertising industry, the effectiveness of initiatives undertaken by broadcaster sales houses to date in response to European decision-makers' calls to address the content of food advertising to children via self-regulation and to discuss what more can be done by the advertising industry collectively. With the support of advertising self-regulation practitioners and through the analysis of concrete examples of television advertising for food products, the workshop offered participants the opportunity to trial their skills. Successful experiences from national markets were also presented as a way to leverage best practice in advertising self-regulation.

On the occasion of the workshop, egta presented its **Interpretative Guidelines on the ICC Framework for Responsible Food and Beverage Marketing Communication.** This publication addresses egta member professionals in charge of screening advertisements with the aim of helping them to better understand the most commonly used self-regulatory codes on food advertising and to equip them with concrete suggestions on how to call more frequently on the support of national self-regulatory organisations. Part of an overall initiative to raise awareness among sales houses on the need to increase their watchfulness regarding advertising for food high in fat, sugar and salt directed to children, egta's guidelines have the ultimate goal of ensuring that all broadcast advertising complies with the most commonly used self-regulatory code.

An interesting debate was held among attendees, including a representative from the European Commission, on the interpretation that should be given to the EU invitation to media service providers to self-regulate the content of food advertising to children and on whether the current initiatives are effective in responding to this call. Issues related to freedom of expression and the responsibility of media in the implementation of self-regulatory mechanisms (sales houses have a small influence on the content of the advertisement and cannot discriminate against products and advertisers) were also discussed among all self-regulatory partners, i.e. media, advertisers, agencies and self-regulatory organisations. In addition, the impact of potential binding restrictions on broadcasters' revenue streams, as well as the commercial and social value of healthy lifestyle programming and media literacy initiatives was debated by attendees. As a result of the debate, attendees agreed that significant improvements have taken place in different countries and that the initiatives undertaken by the broadcasting industry to properly respond to the EU legislators' call to strengthen self-regulation of food advertising are going in the right direction. However, it highlighted how strong cultural differences among different countries across the EU make a common evaluation almost impossible.

Please note that in carrying out the above-mentioned initiatives **egta has complied with the commitment undertaken on behalf of its members with the EU Platform for action on diet, physical activity and health.**

About egta

egta is the trade association of television and radio advertising sales that commercialise the advertising space of both private and public TV/radio channels all over Europe.

- *77 TV members*
- *35 Radio members*

egta provides a network for its members based on **relationships with more than 1000 high-level advertising executives**. egta fulfils different functions for its members in fields of activities as diversified as regulatory issues, audience measurement, sales methods, interactivity, cross-media, etc.

Over its 33 years of existence, egta has become **the reference centre** for television & radio advertising in Europe.

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For further information please visit egta website at www.egta.com