

egta wants food advertising to be placed in the right context within the obesity debate

Brussels, 13 March 2006 – Egta welcomes the Commission’s green paper *Promoting healthy diets and physical activity: a European dimension for the prevention of overweight, obesity and chronic diseases* where it emphasises the need to further promote healthy diets and physical activity to prevent obesity. Television and radio sales houses are pleased to play their part by taking concrete actions to promote healthy lifestyles and will keep working in this direction within the framework of “nutrition, physical activity and health” platform.

In the area of advertising however, egta feels the need to stress that the food and beverage industry remains by far the first investor in television advertising in most EU countries, representing on average 15% of investments. It is clear that any restriction to the advertising of certain food products would have tremendous impact in both economic and social terms which have not been assessed.

Egta wishes to highlight that the effectiveness of quantitative restrictions to the advertising of certain food products on television has never been demonstrated. *“In addition, one must keep in mind that television advertising is by far the most regulated and controlled marketing tool in an environment increasingly characterised by the complexity and variety of marketing practices. It should thus be treated proportionally”* said Michel Grégoire, Secretary General of egta.

Egta believes that much work is instead needed on constantly improved qualitative standards for advertising. Self-regulation provides an efficient tool to make sure that advertising is legal, decent, honest, and truthful and egta invites the European Commission to pursue the Advertising Roundtable process, which is very helpful in the development of effective self-regulation as a means of delivering high levels of consumer protection.

Egta comments to the Commission’s green paper *Promoting healthy diets and physical activity: a European dimension for the prevention of overweight, obesity and chronic diseases* is available on egta’s website: <http://www.egta.com/pages/egta%20comments%20on%20GP%20Nutrition%20&%20PhysActivity.pdf>