

# Tackling Childhood Obesity in Europe: Promoting Healthy and Active Lifestyles



**Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> May 2016**

Thon Hotel Brussels City Centre,  
Brussels



# Tackling Childhood Obesity in Europe: Promoting Healthy and Active Lifestyles

## Overview

Childhood obesity continues to be a key challenge for most countries in the European Union. According to the World Health Organisation's Childhood Obesity Surveillance Initiative (COSI), around 1 in every 3 children aged 6-9 years old is overweight or obese, while each year around 7% of national health budgets across the EU are spent on diseases linked to obesity.

Despite policy action promoted at EU level to tackle the growing trends in overweight and obesity, both elements remain prevalent among children and adolescents in European countries. With children being increasingly exposed to an environment which encourages weight gain and obesity due to factors such as the accessibility of healthy and varied diets, a steady decline in physical activity as well as a strong vulnerability to food marketing messages, the risk of witnessing a growing obesity epidemic in the years to come is realistic.

Addressing childhood obesity therefore requires developing a comprehensive approach that encompasses responsible governmental and stakeholder action directed towards obesity prevention and treatment. This approach should embody measures such as the availability and affordability of healthy diets and the promotion of policies aiming at increasing levels of physical activity, which takes into consideration the child's life-course and its own environment.

In this context, EU policymakers have taken steps to develop a set of innovative policies and tools to tackle childhood obesity. As part of its strategy on nutrition and physical activity, the European Commission launched the **EU Action Plan on Childhood Obesity in 2014**. During the same year, the World Health Organisation adopted the **new European Food and Nutrition Action Plan 2015-2020**, signaling a renewed effort to promote good nutrition among infants and children. However, too much focus has been granted to policies aiming to raise awareness amongst consumers with less action being taken in other key areas such as the children's environmental context and its behavioural responses.

This international symposium will discuss the latest strategies, policy actions as well as institutional developments aimed at combating childhood obesity in Europe. The event will analyse the role of adopting a comprehensive approach in the early years as a means to prevent and tackle childhood obesity. It will explore the importance of coordinated approaches involving governmental sectors, communities, marketing/mass media and the private sector to ensure the accessibility of healthy diets and the promotion of everyday levels of physical activity. The conference will support the exchange of ideas and encourage delegates to engage in thought-provoking topical debate.

**“Increased political commitment is needed to tackle the global challenge of childhood overweight and obesity. WHO needs to work with governments to implement a wide range of measures that address the environmental causes of obesity and overweight, and help give children the healthy start to life they deserve.”**

-Sir Peter Gluckman, Commission co-chair, World Health Organisation

## Venue and Accommodation

Thon Hotel Brussels City Centre  
Avenue du Boulevard 17  
1210 Brussels  
Belgium



## Why Attend?

- ✓ Analyse current policy strategies and other initiatives to tackle childhood obesity across Europe
- ✓ Examine the pivotal role of pre-conceptual years for effective obesity prevention and intervention at an early stage of life
- ✓ Discuss the significance of physical activity as a healthy lifestyle
- ✓ Evaluate the accessibility of healthy diets and protect children from unhealthy food advertising

## Who Should Attend?

- General Practitioners
- Local Authority Officers and Councillors
- Central Government Departments and Agencies
- Heads of Children's Services and Teams
- Pre-School, Infant School, Primary and Secondary School Head Teachers and Staff
- School Nurses
- Health Service Professionals
- Youth Services
- Leisure Services
- Food and Drinks Industry Professionals
- Midwives
- Maternity Care and Midwifery Organisations
- Maternity Support Workers
- NHS Training Departments
- Parent Participation Teams
- Parental Engagement Teams
- Paediatricians
- Teenage Pregnancy Coordinators and Advisors
- Local Pregnancy Advisory Services
- Heads of Early Years
- Play Groups
- Social Workers and Social Services Officers
- Family Planning Clinics
- Integrated Disabled Services
- Local Education Authorities
- Safeguarding Children Teams and Local Safeguarding Boards
- Voluntary and Community Organisations
- Third Sector Practitioners and Organisations
- Trade Unions
- Equality, Diversity and Human Rights

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## Programme

- 09:15** Registration and Morning Refreshments
- 10:00** Chair's Welcome and Opening Remarks
- 10:10** **Addressing Childhood Obesity in the EU: Developing a Multilevel Approach.**
- Assessing the Latest Policy Developments at EU level - Main Challenges and Ways Forward
  - Insights from WHO European Food and Nutrition Action Plan 2015-2020
  - Discussing The Report of the Commission on Ending Childhood Obesity
  - Future Policy Recommendations
- 10:40** **First Round of Discussions**
- 11:10** Morning Coffee Break
- 11:30** **Promoting Antenatal Care and Prevention in the Early Years.**
- Supporting Preconception and Pregnancy Care Initiatives
  - Promoting Healthier Environments in Family and School Settings
  - Understanding the Link between Obesity and Psychological Health
- 12:00** **Second Round of Discussions**
- 12:30** Networking Lunch
- 13:30** **Combating Obesity through Physical Activity and Weight Management Services.**
- Promoting Physical Activity and Reducing Sedentary Behaviours
  - Assessing Weight Management Initiatives for Children and Adolescents
  - Sharing Knowledge and Best Practices
- 14:00** **Third Round of Discussions**
- 14:30** Afternoon Coffee Break
- 14:50** **Implementing Health and Nutrition Literacy, Promoting Responsible Food Marketing.**
- Guaranteeing Accessibility to Healthy Diets and Diminishing the Intake of Unhealthy Foods
  - Providing Better Information on Food Products through Responsible Marketing and Advertising
  - Conclusions and Recommendations
- 15:20** **Fourth Round of Discussions**
- 15:50** Chair's Summary and Closing Comments
- 16:00** Networking Reception
- 16:30** Close

*\* Please note that the programme is subject to change without notice*

## Marketing and Exhibition Opportunities

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## Event Details

- Date:** Wednesday 18th May 2016  
**Time:** 10:00am – 4:30pm  
**Venue:** Thon Hotel Brussels City Centre, Brussels



## Speakers Include:

- ✓ **Dr Roberto Bertollini**, Chief Scientist and WHO Representative to the EU, World Health Organization
- ✓ **Prof. dr. Kristine De Martelaer**, Head of the Research Team Movement and Sports Training, Faculty of Physical Education and Physiotherapy, Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB)

## Forthcoming Events

- ✓ Supporting Tourism in Europe: Working Towards Sustainability, Competitiveness and Growth  
15th March 2016
- ✓ Cross Border Healthcare in Europe: Improving Transparency and Patient Mobility  
23rd March 2016
- ✓ Unlocking the Potential of e-Skills in Europe: Accelerating Europe's Competitiveness and Inclusive Growth  
19th April 2016
- ✓ Young People's Mental Health in Europe: Promoting Prevention and Early Intervention Through Multi-Sector Cooperation  
26th April 2016
- ✓ Building Resilience to Climate Change Challenges: Promoting Solutions Towards Sustainability and Growth  
28th April 2016