



Consortium for the prevention of
obesity through effective nutrition
and physical activity actions

Newsletter



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European Commission
Coordination Action

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From the Scientific Coordinator

Welcome to this second issue of the EURO-PREVOB *Newsletter*!

In order to keep you more closely informed of the project progress, we have decided to publish the newsletter every three months rather than bi-annually. We hope that you all agree with this change.

The current issue of newsletter will update you on the progress since September 2007, including outputs of the 1st Advisory Board meeting and 2nd Scientific Committee meeting in October 2007, and progress achieved since then.

We are now gearing up towards the 3rd Scientific meeting and 1st Plenary Meeting of the project to be held in April 2008. This will be a major step in the project's life as it will coincide with the end of the first year and first phase of activities. It will be an excellent opportunity to discuss the project outputs with external experts and stakeholders, with the added benefit of meeting in the beautiful city of Riga. Further details of the plenary meeting will be provided to you in the March issue of the Newsletter.

In the meantime, the management team at LSHTM wish you restful holidays and all the best for 2008!

Joceline Pomerleau



**14 partners from
11 countries**

Project coordination: London
School of Hygiene & Tropical
Medicine

Project partners: Bosnia and
Herzegovina, Czech Republic,
Denmark, France, Italy, Latvia,
Russian Federation, Slovenia,
Switzerland, Turkey, United
Kingdom

Duration: 04/2007–03/2010

EURO-PREVOB MEETINGS

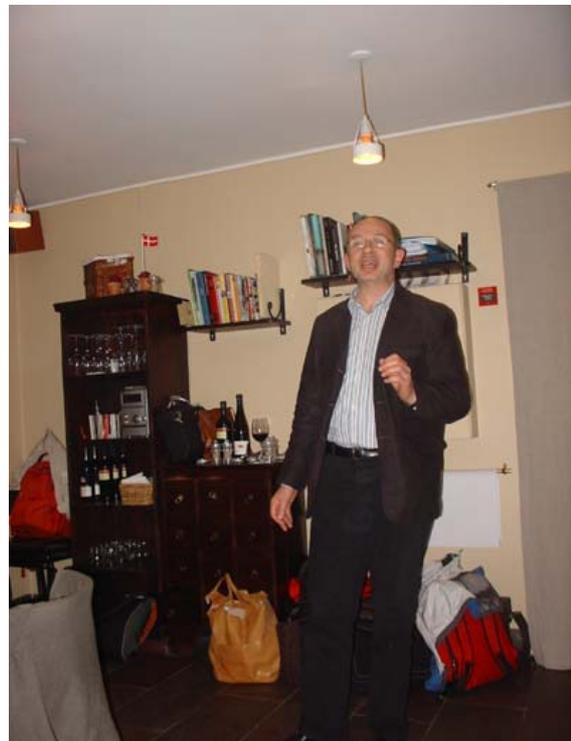
1ST ADVISORY BOARD MEETING OF THE EURO-PREVOB PROJECT: The EURO-PREVOB partners had the great pleasure of meeting the EURO-PREVOB Advisory Board for a first meeting on the afternoon of 15 October in Copenhagen. The Advisory Board is composed of (*from left to right in the photo*): **Dr Brian Martin**, Chairman of the Steering Committee of the European Network for the Promotion of Health-Enhancing Physical Activity; **Dr Tim Lobstein**, Director of the Childhood Obesity programme at the International Obesity TaskForce, London; **Susanne Løgstrup**, Director of the European Heart Network in Brussels; **Dr Liselotte Schæfer-Elinder**, a director at the Stockholm Centre for Public Health. **Dr Francesca Racioppi**, Director of the WHO programme Transport and Health in Rome, is also one of the members but was unfortunately unable to attend the meeting.



The EURO-PREVOB partners had the opportunity to present the progress of the work so far, as well as the dissemination and monitoring strategies. Very constructive feedback was received from the Advisory Board, and this will inform the next stages of the project. The next official Advisory Board meeting will take place in Sarajevo, in October 2008.



The Advisory Board meeting concluded with an exceptional meal at Traktørstedet Restaurant, at a stone's throw from Rosenberg Castle in the heart of Copenhagen.



Eric Brunner valiantly representing England in song!

2ND SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE MEETING: On 16 October the EURO-PREVOB partners met for the 2nd Scientific Committee meeting. Workpackage leaders for WP2, 3 and 4 led the discussion on key points raised in preparation for the meeting, and as a follow-up to the previous day's discussion with the Advisory Board. Key building blocks of the project were discussed and decided upon, and tasks allocated to partners involved in the current workpackages (details are described below under *Update on Progress*).

The minutes of the Advisory Board and Scientific Committee meetings are available on the intranet.



*1st Advisory Board meeting and 2nd Scientific Committee meeting,
SUHR's University College, Copenhagen*

Top row, from left: I. Pudule (PHA), N. Darmon (INSERM), U. Truebswasser (WHO), L. Lhotska (IBFAN), B. Martin (HEPA), L. Schäfer-Elinder (Stockholm Centre for Public Health), M. Suhrcke (WHO), L. Mistura (INRAN), E. Brunner (UCL); 2nd row: G. Maiani (INRAN), K. Vrtikapa (WHO), Z. Brazdova (MU), Janneke Hartvig Jørgensen (SUHR's), J. Pomerleau (LSHTM); 3rd row: Pernille Malberg Dyg (SUHR's), G. Pekcan (HUBDB), H. Rutter (SEPHO), S. Løgstrup (EHN), A. Filipovic Hadziomeragic (IPH-FBIH), T. Lobstein (IOTF); Last row: F. Branca (WHO), N. Scagnetti (IVZ RS), G. Ceroni (LSHTM), M. McKee (LSHTM), C. Knai (LSHTM), M. Cholewa-Madsen (Rector of SUHR's), A. Robertson (SUHR's). Absent: T. Kamardina (NCPM), M. Gabrijelcic (IVZ-RS), F. Racioppi (WHO).

LAUNCH OF THE EURO-PREVOB WEBSITE

The 15-16 October meeting in Copenhagen offered also the opportunity to officially launch the project's website (www.euoprevob.eu), the partners' intranet and a dedicated email address (euoprevob@lshtm.ac.uk).

Giovanna Ceroni in large part designed and saw through to completion the website and gave project partners a workshop on the intranet in the evening of the 15th.

WORKPACKAGES

As noted above, the meeting in Copenhagen was key in order to get feedback on the workpackages in Phase 1.

WP2: Set-up of a database of European experts and stakeholders analysis, led by Dr Francesco Branca, WHO-EURO

Cécile reviewed progress to date on WP2. She presented the two concept papers developed, 1) the Concept Paper on Expert Database on behalf of Vicky Kolovou-Delonas and 2) the Concept paper on Stakeholder Mapping. Seven policy areas for analysis were presented and it was generally agreed that these points were a reasonable starting point for further work.

WP3: Review of the literature, led by Dr Eric Brunner, University College London

Eric reviewed progress to date on WP3. It was agreed that there was a need for a conceptual framework underpinning the EURO-PREVOB project and that the review of the literature on policy analysis could be complemented by a "policy on the street" assessment. The following was agreed: 1) Eric will draft a paper on the theoretical model underpinning our work by mid-November 2007. This paper will propose a conceptual framework for EURO-PREVOB. 2) Cécile and Joceline will take the lead on the review of epidemiological evidence. 3) Aileen will take the lead on the policy analysis review. 4) WP3 will go ahead with the development of a score-card for the "policy on the street" analysis.

WP4: Development of policy analysis tools, led by Dr Francesco Branca.

Francesco reviewed progress to date on WP4. The present policy analysis aims to understand the processes through which these policy areas are developed and implemented, the aims and motives behind the policies, and the potential for improvement in terms of policy development and implementation processes. Work is organized around the preparation of a concept paper reviewing the existence and effectiveness of policy analysis tools in the health field, ways of analyzing the results and priority setting. The methodological conclusions of the concept paper will feed into the policy analysis tool development which will in turn be subjected to external evaluation by experts before being piloted in countries. The policy analysis tool is currently being developed.

Plans for Disseminating Knowledge & Monitoring Quality

Joceline presented the Plans. She invited Advisory Board members to help ensure EURO-PREVOB gets wide coverage and dissemination. It was agreed that links to EURO-PREVOB would be added to the HOPE project website and to the European Heart Network site. The HEPA Europe Newsletter will also feature a news item on EURO-PREVOB. Partners from countries whose main audience is non-English-speaking raised the point of translating some of the project's main dissemination vehicles (e.g. the Fact Sheet) into vernacular languages. Once translation costs are identified by individual partners, some of the dissemination budget can be used for this activity.

PREPARATION OF THE 3RD SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE MEETING IN RIGA, 17-18 APRIL 2008

MEETING PREPARATIONS: We are in the process of identifying experts to invite to the plenary meeting on 17-18 April. More information will be provided in the next Newsletter in March 2008.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS: Participants will receive the background documents for the 3rd Scientific Committee meeting approximately 2 weeks prior to the meeting.

INFORMATION ABOUT RIGA: Those able to stay the weekend to enjoy the city of Riga or its surroundings can find a few information and ideas of what to do and see on the following websites:

- www.latviatourism.lv/info.php or <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Latvia> (for information about Latvia)
- www.rigatourism.lv/EN/Channels/Tip/default.htm or www.timeout.com/travel/riga/ (for information about Riga).
- www.opera.lv/opera.php?lang=2 (Riga has one of the most beautiful opera houses in Europe dating back to 1863. It hosts the Latvian National Opera which offers a broad repertoire of opera and ballet. An experience not to miss!)

NEWS FROM PARTNERS

NEWS FROM SEPHO

SEPHO has held meetings with UCL partner Eric Brunner and is in the preliminary stages of work to develop models of obesity causation focusing on physical activity and the built environment.

NEWS FROM GIFA: GENEVA CANTONAL HEALTH PROMOTION AND PREVENTION PLAN FOR THE YEARS 2007 – 2010

On 23rd November 2007, GIFA participated at the launch of the Geneva cantonal Health Promotion and Prevention Plan for the years 2007 – 2010 ("*Plan cantonal genevois de promotion de la santé et de prévention 2007 – 2010*"), attended by a group of some 190 delegates representing both the Swiss Federal State, the most representative layers of the local government and key stakeholders. A flyer informing the audience about the EURO-PREVOB project (Fact-Sheet) was made available to the audience.

Eating habits and physical activity are placed at the centre of the strategy to fight and prevent overweight and obesity. The promotion of breastfeeding is one of the 11 public health policies recommended to tackle the problem. The situation in Switzerland is summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Prevalence of excess body weight in Switzerland, population over 15 years of age.

Indicator	Population	Prevalence
Obesity	500.000	7.7%
Overweight	1.700.000	29.4%
Excess weight	2.200.000	37.1%

Source: *Observatoire suisse de la Santé – OBSAN, 2002*

The number of people with overweight increases by 50 000 persons per year. The National health office estimates the cost of chronic illnesses linked to overweight and obesity at Swiss Francs 2.7 billion per year. In 2004, Zimmermann et al* found that nearly 20% of children between 6 – 12 years of age were overweight or obese.

The increase in the rate of obesity is identified as being the product of a lifestyle that comes together with modern, affluent societies. However, a clear social gradient in the prevalence of obesity shows that the less privileged are more affected by this condition. If lifestyles are the primary cause of obesity, inducing changes to those lifestyles seems the right answer to address the problem. In this respect, the Cantonal plan asserts that it is possible to bring about healthy behaviour by using education and information as tools. However, the Plan makes no mention of consumer protection measures that will limit the marketing of unhealthy products and

protect the more vulnerable citizens – children – from being targeted as a potentially lucrative market segment by publicity for these products.

Nine recommendations were formulated in the Plan:

1. 30 minutes physical activity per day for adults and 60 minutes for children
2. Promote cycling and walking as means of transportation
3. All citizens to actively plan and engage in sport activities in their leisure time
4. Reduce time in front of the screen and other sedentary forms of behaviour
5. Replace “miracle diets” by a healthy life-style
6. Eat in a balanced way
7. Eat five fruits and vegetables per day
8. Eat maximum one greasy / sweet product per day
9. Respect the feelings of hunger and satisfaction.

The Geneva Infant Feeding Association (GIFA) will follow up the implementation of the State of Geneva’s Health Prevention Plan and engage in specific activities in accord with its competences. For more information about the Plan implementation please refer to:

www.geneve.ch/plancantonal

Other useful addresses:

Office fédéral de la santé publique - Santé en Suisse:

www.bag.admin.ch/index.html?lang=fr

Promotion Santé Suisse

www.promotionsante.ch/f

* Zimmermann et al: *Obésité en Suisse: percentiles d'indice de masse corporelle (IMC) d'une population d'enfants et d'adolescents nés en 1980 à Lausanne et écart avec les normes suisses (1955) Sozial- und Präventivmedizin/Social and Preventive Medicine; Birkhäuser Basel; 0303-8408 (Print) 1420-911X (Online); Volume 48, Number 2 / Apr 2003; 121-132; 19 Feb 2004*

NEWS FROM IPH-FBIH: 4th Meeting of the Country Project Managers of the South-Eastern Europe (SEE) Food Safety and Nutrition Project.

The SEE Food Safety and Nutrition Project: Strengthening Food Safety and Nutrition Services in South-Eastern Europe is initiated and supported under the framework of the Stability Pact Initiative for Social Cohesion. Its aim is the strengthening of SEE states’ public health approach to food safety and nutrition and increasing effectiveness of activities directed to promote health and reduce the burden of food- and nutrition-related diseases. At regional level the project is coordinated by Serbia and other partners include Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Republic of Moldova, Romania, Serbia and Montenegro and The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

To date, the first component of the project - formulation and adjustment of *Food Policy, Strategy and Legislation in SEE* in line with international and EU standards has been implemented. Recently, the project has been supported for implementation of its second component. Focus of the second component is the establishment of harmonised and integrated models for food safety and nutrition systems that are tailored to the countries’ politico-legislative and socio-economic contexts. Accordingly, support and technical inputs to countries in the region to develop and implement 2nd National Food and Nutrition Action Plans will be provided. The project will also focus on the establishment of a more concrete regional collaboration and human resources development. Partnerships with other countries who have implemented Food and Nutritional System reforms will be forged and expanded.

The Fourth Workshop of the Country Project Managers of the SEE Food Safety and Nutrition Project to discuss implementation of project component 2 is planned to be held in Skopje on 17-18 December 2007 and will be hosted by the Ministry of Health of The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

3rd Meeting of the UNU/SCN Network for Capacity Development in Nutrition in Central and Eastern Europe (NCDNCEE)

Regional networks to foster capacity development have been initiated by the United Nations University - Food & Nutrition Program, and the UN Standing Committee on Nutrition (SCN), in Africa, Asia, Latin America, the Middle East and Central and Eastern Europe.

The general objective for the UNU/SCN Network is to initiate and support the establishment of networks for capacity development in various part of the World, for the purpose of improving knowledge and skills in areas such as food, nutrition and health policy development, nutrition research and higher training, nutrition academic accreditation, nutrition advocacy, nutritional norms and recommendations (such as recommended intakes, dietary guidelines, food composition databases). The regional networks will themselves decide on capacity development objectives, their focused activities, all based on the needs in the countries in the region. The general objective for the CEE Network is the same as the general objective for the UNU/SCN Network. Specifically to the region, the objectives will be linked to the specific topics of interest for the Network at any time. This is to be open for new challenges following changes in the various countries over time.

The regional initiative in Eastern and Central Europe (CEE) started in 2005. Members of the Network are: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, the Check Republic, Croatia, Holland, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Romania, Hungary, Norway, Serbia and Slovakia. To date, network members have met three times and the 3rd Meeting of the UNU/SCN Network for Capacity Development in Nutrition in Central and Eastern Europe was held on 1-2 November 2007 in Belgrade, Serbia.

The objectives of the 3rd meeting were: the analysis of national activities related to World Food Day Celebration; the analysis of national activities related to the implementation of new WHO Growth Standards and Food and Nutrition Action Plan for 2007-2012. New European projects related to nutrition such as EURRECA, EuroFIR and Sorates were discussed as well.

<http://agrowebcee.net/subnetwork/ncdn/>

NEWS FROM SUHR'S: "Obesity and socio-economic group in Europe: State of the art review and implications for action"

On 26-27 November 2007, Aileen Robertson attended an EU Commission Meeting (DG Commission for Health and Consumer Protection), "The Expert group on Social Determinants and Health Inequalities", where all EU Member States were represented. The final draft of the report: "Obesity and socio-economic group in Europe: State of the art review and implications for action" was presented. The overall aim of this report is to prepare a review on obesity and socio-economic groups in Europe and present the implications for action at national and EU level. The main objectives are: to bring together and analyse information on the relationship between obesity and trends in obesity in relation to socio-economic groups in the European population; to document and evaluate policy measures and interventions to tackle obesity which take into account variations in prevalence by socio-economic group; and to make recommendations relevant to policies at European and national level. Colour-printed EURO-PREVOB fact sheets were circulated and EURO-PREVOB was highlighted at the end of the presentation to all Member States.

OTHER EVENTS AND PUBLICATIONS OF NOTE

Foresight report. The findings of the *Tackling Obesities: Future Choices* project were launched on 17 October 2007, the details of which can be read on the project's website www.foresight.gov.uk/Obesity/Obesity.html.

The Foresight project aims to "produce a long-term vision of how we can deliver a sustainable response to obesity in the UK over the next 40 years", by using the scientific evidence base from across a wide range of

disciplines to identify the broad range of factors that influence obesity, looking beyond the obvious; creating a shared understanding of the relationships between key factors influencing levels of obesity and their relative importance; building on this evidence to identify effective interventions; and analysing how future levels of obesity might change and the most effective future responses.

Some of the key conclusions of the report include:

1. The obesity epidemic cannot be prevented by individual action alone and demands a societal approach;
2. Tackling obesity requires far greater change than anything tried so far, and at multiple levels: personal, family, community and national; and
3. Preventing obesity is a societal challenge, similar to climate change. It requires partnership between government, science, business and civil society.

The full report can be downloaded from www.foresight.gov.uk/Obesity/obesity_final/17.pdf.

The World Cancer Research Fund (WCRF)

www.dietandcancerreport.org/

Food, Nutrition, Physical Activity and the Prevention of Cancer: a Global Perspective.

The World Cancer Research Fund (WCRF) has published the most comprehensive report ever on the link between cancer and diet, physical activity and weight. One of only ten recommendations* is that women should aim to breastfeed their baby exclusively for six months, and then continue with complementary breastfeeding after that. The authors state that "there is convincing

evidence that breastfeeding protects against pre-menopausal and post-menopausal breast cancer. There is also limited evidence that it protects against cancer of the ovary. There is also evidence that being breastfed probably protects babies from becoming overweight or obese in later life." It includes 10 recommendations from a panel of 21 world-renowned scientists that represent the most definitive and authoritative advice that has ever been available on how the general public can prevent cancer. UNICEF and the World Health Organization were among the official observers of the report's process.

*The 10 recommendations can be found at: www.dietandcancerreport.org/downloads/chapters/chapter_12.pdf

Other publications of note

Friel S, Chopra M, Satcher D. Unequal weight: equity oriented policy responses to the global obesity epidemic. *BMJ* 2007; 335:1241-1243.

Baker JL, Olsen LW, Sørensen TIA. Childhood body-mass Index and the risk of coronary heart disease in adulthood. *NEJM* 2007; 357:2329-2337.

EU-FUNDED PROGRAMMES RELEVANT TO THE WORK OF EURO-PREVOB

DYNAMO-HIA: Dynamic Modelling for Health Impact Assessment.

http://ec.europa.eu/phea/documents/2006_Health_Information.pdf.

EHN-CHOB: European Heart Network – Policy Options to prevent Child Obesity.

www.ehnheart.org/content/goto.asp?docid=6392

EUROTHINE: Tackling Health Inequalities in Europe.

<http://mgzlx4.erasmusmc.nl/eurothine/>

HELENA: Healthy Lifestyle in Europe by Nutrition in Adolescence: This project includes

cross-sectional, crossover and pilot community intervention multi-centre studies.

www.helenastudy.com/

HOPE: Health Promotion through Obesity Prevention in Europe.

www.hopeproject.eu/

IDEFICS: Identification and prevention of Dietary- and lifestyle-induced health **E**ffects **I**n Children and infant**S**. www.ideficsstudy.eu/

PORGROW: Policy Options for Responding to the Growing Challenge of Obesity.

www.sussex.ac.uk/spru/porgrow

PERSONNEL ANNOUNCEMENTS

NEW EURO-PREVOB STAFF AT SUHR'S: Welcome to Elaine Duncan Jessen-Klixbüll, who will work with Aileen Robertson (6 hours per week).



EURO-PREVOB CONTACTS

For additional information please visit the EURO-PREVOB website at www.europrevob.eu or email your questions, comments or suggestions directly to us (europrevob@lshtm.ac.uk).

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Name: Istituto Nazionale di Ricerca per gli Alimenti e la Nutrizione (INRAN)

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Website: www.inran.it

Name: Public Health Agency (PHA)

Country: Latvia

Website: www.sva.lv

Name: Masaryk University (MU)

Country: Czech Republic

Website: www.muni.cz

Name: Institute of Public Health of Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (IPH-FBiH)

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Website: www.zzjzfbih.ba

Name: National Centre for Preventive Medicine (NCPM)

Country: Russian Federation

Website: www.gnicpm.ru

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Website: www.ivz.si

Name: Geneva Infant Feeding Association (GIFA)

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Website: www.gifa.org

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