



# **Nutrition Communication in Europe**

Joint meeting of the European Public  
Health Nutrition Alliance (EPHNA) and  
World Health Organization  
(WHO Regional Office for Europe)

MEETING REPORT

**7–8 September 2017**  
**Copenhagen, Denmark**

## ABSTRACT

*The ambition of the European Public Health Nutrition Alliance (EPHNA) is to become the leading partnership on nutrition communication between European countries. Established in 2014, EPHNA is a joint force of centres that are responsible for nutrition and health communication at country level. Its primary focus is public health nutrition. While its early efforts were directed mainly at expanding its network, since 2016 EPHNA has focused on professionalizing its operation. By creating a vision, mission and focus for its work and extending its public profile by launching a website ([www.ephna.eu](http://www.ephna.eu)), EPHNA has taken the first steps towards establishing itself as a professional alliance. Its initiatives are supported by the World Health Organization Regional Office for Europe (WHO/Europe).*

*On 7–8 September 2017, 11 organizations from 10 European countries, together with representatives from WHO/Europe, came together at UN City in Copenhagen, Denmark. During this two-day meeting, introductory presentations were given by all the organizations present. Progress made by the first two EPHNA working groups (“Increasing vegetable intake” and “Healthy schools and school meals”) was reported to the meeting, and two new working groups (on food guidelines and the creation of apps) were established.*

*The next annual meeting will take place in the summer of 2018; exact dates and location to be confirmed.*

### Keywords

NUTRITION COMMUNICATION  
NUTRITION INTERVENTIONS  
NUTRITION CAMPAIGNS  
BEST PRACTICE  
PUBLIC HEALTH  
NUTRITION GUIDELINES  
CHILDHOOD OBESITY  
OBESITY  
HEALTH  
SUSTAINABILITY  
MARKETING TO CHILDREN  
SCHOOL MEALS  
SOCIAL MEDIA  
SALT REDUCTION  
BREASTFEEDING  
VEGETABLE INTAKE

© World Health Organization 2018

All rights reserved. This information material is intended for a limited audience only. It may not be reviewed, abstracted, quoted, reproduced, transmitted, distributed, translated or adapted, in part or in whole, in any form or by any means.

# CONTENTS

	<i>Page</i>
BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION .....	1
Introduction to EPHNA .....	1
Introduction to WHO/Europe .....	3
INTRODUCTORY SESSION .....	4
Introductions by all the organizations present .....	4
SHARE-AND-LEARN SESSIONS .....	9
Share-and-learn session 1: Apps .....	10
Share-and-learn session 2: How to handle social media.....	11
Share-and-learn session 3: Reaching specific target groups .....	11
PRESENTATION: WORKING GROUP 1 – HEALTHY SCHOOLS AND SCHOOL MEALS .....	12
PRESENTATION: WORKING GROUP 2 – HOW TO INCREASE INTAKE OF VEGETABLES.....	13
ACTION POINTS, NEXT STEPS, NEXT HOST COUNTRY .....	14
Action points .....	14
Next steps.....	15
Next host country .....	15
Annex: LIST OF PARTICIPANTS.....	16



## **BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION**

Gerda Feunekes (EPHNA) and Jo Jewell (WHO/Europe) welcomed all participants (see Annex) to the first joint meeting.

### **Introduction to EPHNA**

Gerda Feunekes gave an introductory presentation on EPHNA. EPHNA is a joint force of centres that are responsible for nutrition and health communication at country level. Its starting point is public health nutrition.

EPHNA's mission is to:

- provide leadership on nutrition communication in Europe by combining the strength of national partners;
- support WHO/Europe in its nutrition communication work;
- shape the political agenda, by drawing attention to nutrition-related issues.

All the organizations present at the meeting are active in the field of nutrition communication; all are independent centres that are funded by government and aim to translate scientific knowledge into concrete practice in the public arena, especially with respect to consumers.

The public is very much interested in health and, increasingly, in sustainability. Compared to other sciences, nutrition science is relatively young, so the available body of evidence is growing, and sometimes changing. However – despite the dynamic state of the science – the basic facts about what constitutes a healthy diet are fairly clear. Europe is facing a number of challenges:

- Nutrition-related diseases are still on the rise. The risk of poor health outcomes is known to increase in individuals and populations with unhealthy diets, overweight/obesity, and/or diabetes. This risk is greatest among people with a low socioeconomic status.
- Changing people's health behaviour is complex: they need to be motivated and supported if they are to improve their diet. Nutrition knowledge is often limited and subconscious drivers play a significant part.
- Everyone has an opinion about nutrition: consumers are easily confused by the many voices – including those of advertisers and self-proclaimed food gurus – that address them from all sides.

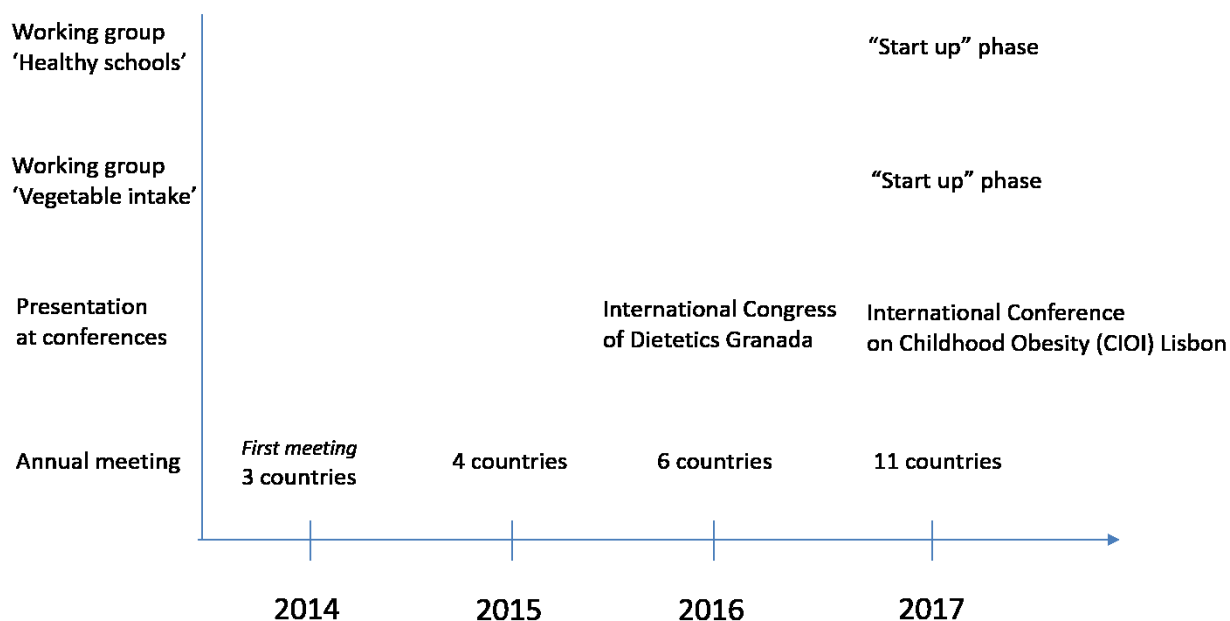
EPHNA feels that all consumers throughout Europe should have access to objective information and effective tools that help them make healthy food choices. That information and those tools are still absent in many countries.

What has EPHNA achieved so far? It has:

- created a trans-European community dedicated to nutrition communication, uniting countries from the north, west, south and east of Europe;
- created a website;
- started to find synergies in healthy food guidelines; and
- initiated working groups focusing on challenging food-related topics.

Eleven organizations from 10 countries were present at the meeting (see Annex). Three EPHNA members – Switzerland, Austria and Spain – were not able to send delegates in 2017.

Gerda Feunekes presented a timeline to show how EPHNA has evolved since its foundation in 2014.



EPHNA's early efforts were directed mainly at expanding its network. Since 2016 it has focused on professionalizing its organization by defining a vision and a mission. Also in 2016, EPHNA's [website](#) went online. Such were the first steps towards a professional alliance.

Feedback from the group:

- Anna Fijałkowska (Poland) congratulated EPHNA for starting up the alliance. She said she was happy to be present and confident that this partnership of countries would contribute to achieving changes in the area of nutrition, public health and communication.
- Ana Rito (Portugal) hoped that EPHNA could be a body that would gather information and then share best practices; these could then be implemented by Member States to help consumers in their respective countries.
- Charmaine Gauci (Malta) was glad to hear about EPHNA's work; she said she would like to talk about areas where European Union (EU) regulations could create barriers to

nutrition communication (for example, the WHO breastfeeding code cannot be fully implemented with respect to labelling of baby foods, which state that they can be started at four months).

- Maria Hassapidou (Greece) raised the issue of how EPHNA relates to existing bodies, such as the European Federation of the Associations of Dietitians (EFAD); it is important to make connections and avoid overlap.

## **Introduction to WHO/Europe**

Jo Jewell gave a short presentation on WHO's work, emphasizing the importance of networks like EPHNA. His presentation outlined some of the key priorities for the WHO European Region, including (among others): childhood obesity; salt reduction; breastfeeding and appropriate complementary feeding; low fruit and vegetable intake; adult obesity; and physical inactivity.

Jo detailed the progress of the WHO's European Food and Nutrition Action Plan 2015–2020. The WHO's goals have not yet been achieved and further action is needed in some policy areas, including marketing of foods to children; salt, sugar and fat reduction; and improved front-of-pack nutrition labelling. Nevertheless, good progress has been observed in Europe in the area of taxation of sugary drinks, and more countries are considering similar measures.

Besides the above-mentioned areas, school food policies are very important and have already been put in place by 39 countries. Increasingly, schools acknowledge that providing healthy products in schools and minimizing consumption of unhealthy products are important steps to improve student health.

Finally, an important focus of WHO's work is on early-life nutrition and, in particular, on promotion and protection of exclusive breastfeeding and adherence to the International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes. WHO is also increasingly looking at the composition and marketing of commercial complementary foods. WHO needs innovative ideas on how to increase breastfeeding and to support mothers in doing so; it is also looking to collaborate with countries on the topic of complementary feeding.

WHO sees the following areas as particularly relevant in terms of collaboration with EPHNA:

- communicating with groups that are difficult to reach: low socioeconomic groups, people with limited (less advanced) education, and males generally;
- developing tools, such as front-of-pack labelling schemes and "healthy swap" apps, to enable the general public to select healthier food;
- promoting and protecting breastfeeding and providing guidance on complementary feeding;
- improving nutritional habits through primary care channels.

## INTRODUCTORY SESSION

### Introductions by all the organizations present

#### ***Flemish Institute for Healthy Living (Belgium)*** Loes Neven

Formerly known as the Flemish Institute for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention (VIGeZ), the Flemish Institute for Healthy Living used to focus on communicating public health evidence and guidance to health professionals, but now also engages in direct communication with the general public. Its efforts are focused on the Flemish part of Belgium; it is funded by the Government of Flanders, Department of Public Health.

The Institute's main communication model has long been the "Active Food Guide Pyramid", which gives a graphic visualization of healthy food and healthy activity. However, the model has become rather outdated and has undergone a facelift (see box below). EPHNA members were treated to a preview of the new food triangle.

One key focus of the Institute is to engage, through active interventions, with schools and schoolchildren. Other focus areas are the workplace and the local community; its work within the community is facilitated by close collaboration with municipalities.

The Institute recently renewed its health targets for 2025; the result was greater emphasis on communication with the general public, with a special focus on vulnerable groups. The Institute organizes an annual symposium; the theme of the symposium in October 2017 was healthy food and activity.

Loes Neven suggested that the EU Platform for Action on Diet, Physical Activity and Health (EUFIC) might be of interest to EPHNA.

#### ***THE NEW FLEMISH FOOD TRIANGLE***

The old Flemish "Active Food Guide Pyramid" had not been updated since 1997, so it was pretty out of date, in both content and appearance. The guidelines it gave on the right amounts to eat were not fully motivating Flemish consumers. So the old communication model has been updated and the new version is due to be launched by the Flemish Institute for Healthy Living on 19 September 2017.

The new model has been developed by a multidisciplinary team on the basis of the latest science, but at the same time the Institute wanted to create something that the general public would find easy to understand. The emphasis is now more holistic, focusing on foods rather than nutrients. Also new is that the model now separates the messages on nutrition and exercise – each has its own triangle – and it now includes sustainability. Last but not least, the pyramid has been turned



upside down and colour-coded, to make it clearer which products should be consumed more and which products should be consumed less.

The new food triangle is pictured [here](#); more information on it (in English) is available [here](#) and [here](#).

### ***Nutrition Information Center (NICE) (Belgium) Hilde de Geeter***

In addition to the Flemish Institute for Healthy Living, a second organization in Belgium responsible for nutrition communication is the Nutrition Information Center (NICE); it is funded by the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries. The activities of both organizations are aligned.

NICE's website – its main communication tool with its various target groups – is due to get a new look and structure in 2018. NICE also publishes a quarterly magazine for health professionals. Given a style makeover in 2016 to make it more readable, the magazine offers tools (such as infographics) to facilitate conversation between professional and patient. NICE uses (among other things) a question-and-answer format to structure its information; it also publishes recipes online to help consumers turn theory into practice. All its leaflets are based on the Flemish Institute for Healthy Living's Active Pyramid and will be updated according to the new model. For nearly 20 years NICE has made a board game available to primary school teachers, giving them a fun way of teaching children the basics of healthy eating. An [updated version of the board game](#) is due to be launched in September 2017.

### ***Federal Centre for Nutrition (Germany) Margareta Büning-Fesel***

Since February 2017, the new Federal Centre for Nutrition (Bundeszentrum für Ernährung, BZfE) has aimed to become a driving force and central player in the field of nutrition in Germany. The BZfE is a separate department of the Federal Office for Agriculture and Food (BLE) in Bonn ([www.ble.de](http://www.ble.de)).

The BZfE provides practical information and guidance for a healthy, sustainable and enjoyable diet and lifestyle, in ways that remain close to the everyday life of the target group(s). It provides easy-to-understand, food-based nutrition recommendations and guidance to encourage and facilitate healthy food selection.

The BZfE's nutritional and lifestyle support covers the entire life span, from the beginning (the first 1000 days) to old age. Recently, the Centre launched a campaign to make Germany more breastfeeding-friendly.

Today, a healthy lifestyle is not possible without a diet and food selection that are both healthy and sustainable. Among the BZfE's central activities is reduction of nutrition-related diseases, by providing information, education and materials to support advice and therapy.

The BZfE addresses certain aspects of behavioural prevention and plays a part in supporting the process of structural/environmental prevention in the food environment (e.g. community catering) and the food supply (labelling, reformulation, food code, etc.).

The BZfE uses an easy-to-understand food guide pyramid, which shows appropriate portions for the various food groups. At the end of August 2017, the German Nutrition Society (DGE) published new rules for healthy nutrition, which will affect the current recommendations in the food guide pyramid. The focus has moved slightly from bread and cereals to fruit and vegetables, and from low-fat products to ordinary products with healthier fats.

### ***Netherlands Nutrition Centre (the Netherlands) Gerda Feunekes***

The Netherlands Nutrition Centre (NNC) is an independent foundation funded by the Dutch Ministry of Economic Affairs and the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport. Its core business is to provide information on healthier and more sustainable food choices and to encourage consumers to make such choices.

The NNC's work is divided into three programmes: "Healthy and conscious eating habits", "Healthy throughout all phases of life" and "Sustainable food habits". The basis of its work is scientific information, obtained mainly from the Dutch Health Council. The NNC collaborates closely with scientific networks on food safety, health and sustainability. In 2016 the Wheel of Five model, which is based on dietary guidelines issued by the Health Council in 2015, was relaunched.

The NNC communicates both directly with consumers and through health professionals. Its website ([www.voedingscentrum.nl](http://www.voedingscentrum.nl)) is its main communication channel, but apps and social media are becoming an increasingly important means of sharing information and tools.

The principal challenges set for 2018 are the elderly and people of lower socioeconomic status.

### ***CEIDSS (Portugal) Ana Rito***

CEIDSS (Centro de estudos e Investigação em Dinâmicas Sociais e Saúde) was founded in 2008 as a non-profit research organization, with a main focus on prevention of childhood obesity. It has 20 nutritionists operating all over Portugal, who work within communities to communicate directly with families, children and consumers. CEIDSS collaborates with several organizations internationally.

In Portugal CEIDSS works with both national and local government, collaborating closely with the Ministries of Education and of Health. One of CEIDSS's missions is to put all research and scientific information in the field into practice on the ground. The organization mainly focuses on families, working directly with and within families; its information about families is provided by the municipalities.

CEIDSS is running several programmes. MUN-SI is a municipality-based programme that focuses on childhood malnutrition (both obesity and underweight) and on primary

schoolchildren. The AMEA teens programme focuses on adolescents (12+ years) in low-income families, while AMEA kids focuses on reducing childhood obesity. Eat Mediterranean addresses social inequalities and promotes a Mediterranean diet among children and adolescents. CEIDSS is the technical and data management centre for COSI (Childhood Obesity Surveillance Initiative) Portugal.

Portugal has a new Mediterranean dietary wheel which communicates and promotes a healthy (Mediterranean-style) diet.

CEIDSS's priorities are: to establish new partnerships; to share ideas and experiences with other European and international organizations; and to work with EPHNA to produce nutrition and food communication and guidance material for the general public. In addition, the organization aims to improve its funding mechanisms.

### ***National Center of Public Health and Analyses (Bulgaria) Vesselka Duleva***

The National Center of Public Health and Analyses (NCPHA) is part of the Bulgarian national healthcare system. The main function of the NCPHA's Food and Nutrition Department is implementation of the national nutrition policy and public health protection. It disseminates national recommendations and communication materials such as recipe books; conducts scientific research and expert consultation; and produces and updates recommended dietary values for energy and nutritional intake for all population groups in Bulgaria. The organization also maintains a food composition database and software programme for assessment of dietary intake.

The NCPHA collaborates with the Ministry of Health and other ministries, regional health inspectorates, and international bodies such as WHO and the EU.

Nutrition is an up-and-coming field in Bulgaria. In 2018 the first MSc and PhD degrees in nutrition are due to be awarded. The NCPHA also trains medical doctors and regional health professionals in nutrition.

Specialists from the NCPHA have participated in working groups for the European Commission and in several international projects. Bulgaria holds the EU presidency from January 2018 and a major conference entitled "Healthy Nutrition for Children" is due to take place in Sofia.

### ***Alexander Technological Educational Institute of Thessaloniki (ATEITH)/ Ministry of Health (Greece) Maria Hassapidou***

Greece does not have a national institute on nutrition communication; instead, the Ministry of Health is responsible for everything to do with nutrition and nutrition communication. There is only one nutritionist working within the Ministry. There is a society of nutritionists and dietitians in Greece, and the Ministry of Education does some work on the subject of nutrition communication. In addition, the Department of Nutrition and Dietetics at the Alexander Technological Educational Institute of Thessaloniki (ATEITH) is collaborating with the Ministry of Health, working together in a number of national and European projects, such as COSI and

JANPA (Joint Action on Nutrition and Physical Activity), and producing educational material on nutrition.

The key committee in the Ministry of Health is the National Committee on Nutrition Policy. Maria Hassapidou from ATEITH is a member of this committee, which now has two ad hoc subcommittees on childhood nutrition and food reformulation.

Greece has recently developed new national dietary guidelines for different age groups. The website [www.diatrofikoiodigoi.gr](http://www.diatrofikoiodigoi.gr) provides information for both health professionals and the general public. Much nutrition-related research is being conducted in Greece, mainly in the universities. The recently completed NUTRIHEAL project is a nutrition intervention programme with a focus on the municipalities; a large amount of material on nutrition communication has been produced through this programme.

### ***Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (Latvia) Iveta Pudule***

The Centre for Disease Prevention and Control is under the direct control of the Latvian Ministry of Health. Budgets were severely cut in 2012.

The Centre is involved in several research projects, including a survey of health behaviour in schoolchildren, a similar survey of the adult population, and various initiatives on childhood obesity surveillance. It is also engaged in research on subjects such as salt intake and vitamin D consumption.

In Latvia, taxes are used as a tool to stimulate healthier behaviour; for instance, there is higher tax on sugary drinks and lower tax on fruit, and these taxes are effective. It is illegal to sell energy drinks to minors.

Latvia has established a national network of healthy municipalities, in which almost all (112) municipalities now participate. They receive EU funding for health promotion programmes. In support of these programmes, there are various websites directed at the public, for example on pregnancy and physical activity.

### ***Ministry of Health (Malta) Charmaine Gauci***

The vision of the Maltese Ministry of Health is to actively promote a society that fosters an environment in which people are able to attain their maximum potential in both health and well-being.

Between January and June 2017 Malta held the EU presidency. One of the key thematic areas of the presidency was childhood obesity, and one of its achievements was evaluation of the EU action plan to tackle the issue; this work fed into the development of the [European Council's conclusions](#) on halting the rise in childhood overweight and obesity. In addition, guidelines on food procurement for schools were developed in collaboration with the European Commission's Joint Research Centre (JRC).

***Institute of Mother and Child (Poland) Anna Fijałkowska***

There are three institutes in Poland responsible for public health and nutrition: the Institute of Public Health, the Institute for Food and Nutrition, and the Institute of Mother and Child. The last of these covers nutrition communication targeted at children, adolescents and pregnant women. As a consequence, nutrition communication in Poland is somewhat fragmented.

The Institute of Mother and Child was founded 65 years ago and is essentially a research institute. It monitors preventive health care and – with respect to public health – cooperates with international organizations and is part of the COSI and HBSC (Health Behaviour in School-aged Children) networks.

The Institute maintains close connections with the Ministries of Health and of Sports. It is responsible for developing guidelines on nutrition and physical activity for different age groups, as well as guidelines on breastfeeding. The Institute has worked as a partner in several national programmes, such as “Eat healthy, grow healthy”, and developed leaflets for the “Fighting obesity day”. Each year the Institute organizes a scientific conference on obesity prevention for doctors, dietitians and teachers, as well as several events for children, families and pregnant women, with the aim of promoting a healthy lifestyle among these groups.

***Danish Veterinary and Food Administration (Denmark) Trine Enevold Grølund and Maja Overgaard Lund***

The Danish Veterinary and Food Administration (DVFA) is part of the Ministry of Environment and Food. The Danish often work together in collaboration with other Nordic countries.

While Denmark does not have a particular communication model, it does have 10 official dietary guidelines on food. The DVFA’s aim is not to make all Danes familiar with all 10 guidelines; rather, it works through them, step by step, by adopting a range of different approaches – providing information (including via websites), structural initiatives such as the keyhole logo on food, and partnerships with (e.g.) school canteens. The keyhole logo, originally created by putting a plate (circle) and pyramid together, is known and trusted by 94% of the population.

Currently, the DVFA is focusing on people who are least exposed to/least compliant with its dietary recommendations. It has launched campaigns for specific target groups, such as males with lower education. Interestingly, the campaign to raise awareness of the keyhole logo among lower-educated men, which featured four men who had participated in a TV show on weight loss (called *The Biggest Loser*), was also very successful in reaching people outside the target audience. Alongside this work, the DVFA has also developed a label to identify healthy school and work canteens.

## **SHARE-AND-LEARN SESSIONS**

All participants were asked to write down subjects they would like to share with the group and subjects about which they would like to learn more from other countries present. Three specific

subjects were then discussed within smaller groups, and the conclusions shared with the full meeting.

## **Share-and-learn session 1: Apps**

Several countries have developed apps and are currently in a learning phase.

The first conclusion of the group was that a multidisciplinary team is vital when building an app. Scientific information and knowledge are important, but communication professionals are just as valuable when creating a successful app. It is also crucial to evaluate feedback from users – to discover the triggers that make users come back to an app.

Anna Fijałkowska (Poland) is currently developing an app, with 15-year-old girls, that allows nutritional intake and physical activity to be tracked by means of an activity bracelet. The results of the development will be shared with EPHNA.

Maria Hassapidou (Greece) suggested that – rather than creating new apps – existing ones that are successful should be considered. This would limit costs considerably.

Jovanka Vis (Netherlands) shared information on a successful app that allows consumers to track their daily food/nutritional intake. This app could be used as a template for other countries. The Netherlands is currently creating an app which allows consumers to compare the nutritional composition of products in (e.g) supermarkets by scanning barcodes.

Portugal has an app that helps people to identify the least expensive products.

The group thought it would be valuable to set up an EPHNA working group on apps. The aim would be to organize a webinar so that members could learn from each other. In time, creating apps that could be used by all countries would be a possibility. Jolien Plaete (Belgium) offered to lead the group.

EPHNA members expressed great interest in a webinar on apps, which would allow countries to share their experiences. The group has identified external experts on apps who could contribute.

The feedback to the working group was that they should focus particularly on how to stimulate repeat use and how to reach people of lower socioeconomic status and those currently most in need of nutritional advice.

### *Actions point*

- EPHNA to start a working group on apps; the working group will consist of Jolien Plaete (Belgium), Jovanka Vis (Netherlands) and Maria Hassapidou (Greece). Goal: sharing information and devising best practice for development, implementation and evaluation of apps. The working group will share their insights with other members by means of a webinar.

## **Share-and-learn session 2: How to handle social media**

The group discussed different types of social media (Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, etc.) where several of EPHNA's member organizations are already very active. Specifically, there was debate about how to handle nutrition-related discussions on social media.

The group agreed to share material that one organization posts that may be interesting to other countries. For this purpose, it was suggested that our focal points for these topics within EPHNA should regularly link up.

The group would like to have a forum where they can discuss online experiences in greater detail: how they go about it, what experiences they have, what could be done differently.

### *Action points*

- Set up a working group on social media: Loes Neven (Belgium), Jovanka Vis (Netherlands) and Trine Enevold Grølund (Denmark) would like to pick this up.
- Our focal points to link up: put names and contact details on the EPHNA website (action: secretariat).
- Check if it is possible to create a discussion forum on the EPHNA website for the group to communicate (action: secretariat).

## **Share-and-learn session 3: Reaching specific target groups**

This discussion focused mainly on which groups should be targeted. It was agreed that groups of lower socioeconomic status deserve most attention. Working with local government or schools is relevant here. Also, the group was supportive of the idea of developing a general campaign on a specific subject, to be conducted at a European level. For people of lower socioeconomic status, strong and simple visual messages are recommended, e.g. in TV advertisements and billboards. The group saw benefits in drawing inspiration from different countries for this purpose. On the basis of successful campaigns in Portugal, it was suggested that breastfeeding could be promoted through a short movie featuring celebrities and public figures who breastfeed. Such an initiative would need funding and proper monitoring.

This led to a discussion about the need for a common base on which to build common communication activities. We should not create dietary guidelines together, but we need some practical "guiding principles" that could be rolled out across all the countries. These principles should be one step down from the WHO recommendations and expressed in simple language that is understood by all, including groups of lower socioeconomic status and migrants.

The group agreed to start by analysing the WHO guidelines and mapping them against the guidelines from different countries (and for different target groups), in order to find where the similarities and differences lie. After agreement with WHO on the guiding principles and when funding has been secured, materials can be developed. Maria Hassapidou (Greece) pointed out that EFAD and JANPA had done work in this area and that this could be used as a basis. WHO

has data on most food-based dietary guidelines from EU Member States and will share these with EPHNA. The focus should be on food-based dietary guidelines (including nutrients) for the general public, divided by target group where appropriate.

*Action point*

- Ana Rito (Portugal) and Maria Hassapidou (Greece) would like to pick up the lead here and take the first steps in making an inventory of national guidelines and logging differences and similarities between countries. Jo Jewell would like to be involved in this exercise on behalf of WHO.

## **PRESENTATION: WORKING GROUP 1 – HEALTHY SCHOOLS AND SCHOOL MEALS**

The working group consists of A. Santaliestra (Spain), J. Plaete (Belgium), A. Oepping (Germany), H. de Geeter (Belgium) and M.Ploum (Netherlands). The goal was to list existing good practices in Europe with respect to strategies to motivate and empower children to make healthy choices in school canteens and to enhance acceptance of healthier options.

Jolien Plaete described the steps that had been taken so far. It was discovered that many guidelines are available and some good practices are to be found. However, more examples of good practice from member countries are necessary to develop a proper best practice. Jolien has given everybody a questionnaire to fill in and to share their good/best practices with the group so that the working group can move forward.

Lessons shared by other countries that should be incorporated in the next phase:

- offering a healthy meal in schools is not sufficient – children need to be motivated to eat what they are offered;
- a whole-school approach is important – parents and school staff need to be involved, as well as children.

*Action point*

- The group will continue to develop best practice on healthy schools and school meals. All EPHNA members are asked to send in their information to Jolien by the end of November (she will send a reminder by email).



## **PRESENTATION: WORKING GROUP 2 – HOW TO INCREASE INTAKE OF VEGETABLES**

The working group (Germany leading, with Netherlands and Belgium) started off with the question how to increase intake of fruit and vegetables, but narrowed it down to vegetables only, as this is the bigger challenge and collection of best practices is thereby simplified.

First of all, the group tried to get an idea of what kind of interventions and data were already available. They did not want to focus solely on schools and kindergartens, as the other working group was already looking at healthy schools. So they decided to concentrate on young families with preschool children.

The group looked at programmes within the EU that focus on increasing intake of vegetables, but they did not find any programmes that focus on young families or on the intake of vegetables only.

Feedback to the working group:

- include broader programmes that are not limited to vegetables, but focus on what can be learned about vegetables;
- focus on young adults and young families (18–35 years);
- focus on communication programmes;
- start with existing work (e.g. from JANPA, which also has a communication strand) – important lessons may be learned from failed programmes as well as from existing good practices;
- include a question on taxes in the questionnaire.

Belgium explained that they are planning a programme to promote eating fruit and vegetables in schools. Bulgaria is involved in an EU project focusing on fruit and vegetables in schools.

### *Actions points*

- The working group should continue its work, taking the feedback of other members on board.
- Maria Flothkötter (Germany) will investigate the possibility of hiring a master's student to carry out research on existing programmes to find examples of best practice for the working group.
- The working group would like to add an additional country; volunteers can contact Maria Flothkötter.

## **ACTION POINTS, NEXT STEPS, NEXT HOST COUNTRY**

### **Action points**

#### *Align and share materials*

- All countries can share materials and presentations on [SharePoint](#).
- All members have their own public pages on the [EPHNA website](#); materials can be posted here (English materials, public files) through the secretariat (Milena Buurman).

*Note: check that you have copyright of any materials posted.*

#### *Align with EU and other groups (Gerda Feunekes – Netherlands; Vesselka Duleva – Bulgaria; Jo Jewell – WHO)*

- To avoid duplication, align with other relevant groups; WHO advises that the group should keep a strong focus on its USP – communication.
- The aim of the ongoing connection between EPHNA and WHO/Europe is to move the agenda forward together.
- EPHNA to get involved in the EU Platform for Action on Diet, Physical Activity and Health

#### *Working groups – way forward*

- Working group on vegetables: Maria Flothkötter (Germany) will investigate the possibility of hiring a master's student to carry out research on existing programmes to find examples of best practice for the working group. The working group would like to add an additional country; volunteers can contact Maria Flothkötter.
- Working group on healthy schools and school meals: the group will continue to develop best practice on healthy schools and school meals; all EPHNA members are asked to send in their information to Jolien Plaete (Belgium) by the end of November 2017 (she will send a reminder by email).
- New working group on healthy guidelines: Ana Rito (Portugal) and Maria Hassapidou (Greece) will make an inventory of national guidelines and log differences and similarities between countries. Jo Jewell will be involved in this exercise on behalf of WHO.
- New start-up webinars, the first one on apps: Margareta Büning-Fesel (Germany) will check technology options. The group also consists of Jolien Plaete (Belgium), Jovanka Vis (Netherlands) and Maria Hassapidou (Greece); they will share insights with the group during the webinar.
- New working group on communication: Jovanka Vis (Netherlands) and Anna Fijałkowska (Poland) will take the general guiding principles forward towards a communication idea. They will collect best practices on easy communication (visuals,

lower socioeconomic status) and probably a common approach – rolling out best example or developing a new one.

- Working group on social media: Loes Neven (Belgium), Jovanka Vis (Netherlands) and Trine Enevold Grølund (Denmark) will pick this up.
- Secure new funding: Gerda Feunekes (Netherlands), Margareta Büning-Fesel (Germany) and João Breda (WHO/Europe).

### **Next steps**

All the participants were very positive about the meeting and the outcome of it. WHO will continue to give its support to EPHNA, as they feel that this kind of organization is very much needed in Europe: EHPNA is unique in its approach and expertise, and it should keep its focus fully on nutrition communication.

To keep members up to date and connected, a teleconference meeting will be set up every two months.

The group agreed that the best time for the next face-to-face meeting would be spring or summer 2018.

For the next meeting EPHNA will contact new potential members, to expand its network still further.

### **Next host country**

Maria Hassapidou will find out if the 2018 meeting could be held on Crete. If this is not an option, Loes Neven and Hilde de Geeter are very happy to host the next meeting in Brussels.

## **Annex: LIST OF PARTICIPANTS**

### **BELGIUM**

Loes Neven  
Flemish Institute for Healthy Living

Jolien Plaete  
Flemish Institute for Healthy Living

Hilde de Geeter  
Nutrition Information Center

### **BULGARIA**

Vesselka Duleva  
National Center of Public Health and Analyses

### **DENMARK**

Trine Enevold Grølund  
Danish Veterinary and Food Administration

Maja Overgaard Lund  
Danish Veterinary and Food Administration

### **GERMANY**

Margareta Büning-Fesel  
Federal Centre for Nutrition

Maria Flothkötter  
Federal Centre for Nutrition

### **GREECE**

Maria Hassapidou  
ATEITH/Ministry of Health

### **LATVIA**

Iveta Pudule  
Centre for Disease Prevention and Control

### **MALTA**

Charmaine Gauci  
Ministry of Health

**NETHERLANDS**

Gerda Feunekes  
Netherlands Nutrition Centre

Jovanka Vis  
Netherlands Nutrition Centre

Milena Buurman  
Netherlands Nutrition Centre

**POLAND**

Anna Fijałkowska  
Institute of Mother and Child

**PORTUGAL**

Ana Rito  
CEIDSS

**WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION**

**WHO Regional Office for Europe**

João Breda  
Head, WHO European Office for Prevention and Control of Noncommunicable Diseases and a.i.  
Programme Manager, Nutrition, Physical Activity and Obesity

Jo Jewell  
Technical officer, Nutrition, Physical Activity and Obesity

Inês Morais  
Consultant, Nutrition, Physical Activity and Obesity

Liza Jane Villas  
Nutrition, Physical Activity and Obesity