

Press release - June 2022

Future directions for nutrition and physical activity policies to prevent non-communicable diseases across Europe

Policy symposium on non-communicable disease prevention

Brussels 14th-16th of June 2022

Obesity is a chronic, relapsing, multifactorial disease, and the main risk factor for several other non-communicable diseases (NCDs). Obesity alone is reducing life expectancy by up to 4 years, removing up to 4,5pp of GDP growth in the EU, and consuming up to 7% of health budgets. The growing burden of NCDs is the leading cause of global mortality killing 41 million people each year. Successful policy actions to address physical inactivity, unhealthy diets and sedentary behaviours, key risk factors for NCDs can improve the health and wellbeing of populations and reduce premature mortality. Four large European projects: the Joint Action (JA) Best-ReMaP, the H2020 projects CO-CREATE and STOP and the JPI-HDHL project PEN aim to contribute to understanding how to achieve successful policy implementation at different cultural, demographic, or socioeconomic levels.

With the objective to discuss the latest research, trends and actions needed to strengthen EU health policy and to share and discuss lessons learned from the four large European Union funded projects, a **policy symposium on NCD prevention will take place from 14th to 16th of June 2022 in Brussels** (location: Thon Hotel Brussels City Centre) with the participation of leading policy and academic experts on nutrition, physical activity and childhood obesity. Recommendations for optimal policy implementation to promote healthy diets, physical activity and reduce sedentary behaviour across Europe will be presented and discussed in the plenary, complemented by sessions where project partners, stakeholders and invited experts will have discussions on youth involvement in policymaking, the systems approach, fiscal policies, public procurement, marketing and more.

The main plenary session titled “Nutrition and physical activity policies - Benchmarking, best practice and potential“ on Wed. 15th June from 1:30 to 5:00 pm CEST will be streamed live at <https://vimeo.com/event/2186075> . The content of this session can be found at the dedicated page at <https://www.jpi-pen.eu/policy-symposium.html> .

The four European initiatives joining forces to address the childhood obesity epidemic are focusing on the following:

JA [Best-ReMaP](#) - Joint Action on Reformulation, Marketing and Public Procurements - brings together food authorities and other relevant stakeholders of the Member States to work with good practices in the areas of food reformulation, reducing food marketing to children and public procurement of healthy food in public settings. By adapting, replicating and implementing effective health interventions they would like to contribute to an increased offer of healthier food options available to children in EU markets.

H2020 project [CO-CREATE](#) - Confronting Obesity: Co-creating policy with youth - aims to investigate how policy changes can support healthy eating and a physically active lifestyle to halt the rise of adolescent obesity. By focusing on upstream factors and context change instead of on individual behaviour change, CO-CREATE hopes to generate sustainable impacts that contribute to narrowing inequalities. The project also provides a model for better involvement of young people and a range of relevant stakeholders.

JPI HDHL project [PEN](#) - Policy Evaluation Network's vision is to provide Europe with tools to identify, evaluate and benchmark policies designed to address physical inactivity, unhealthy diets, and sedentary behaviour while accounting directly or indirectly for existing health inequalities. Throughout the project, PEN will aim to deliver an overview of the 'best' public policies most likely to sustainably support more favourable health behaviours.

H2020 project [STOP](#) - Science and Technology in childhood Obesity Policy - is aiming to generate scientifically sound and policy-relevant evidence on the factors, that have contributed to the spread of childhood obesity. They also examine the effects of alternative policy options available to address the problem, such as food reformulation and limiting food marketing. A range of key actors in the health and food sector in the EU is contributing to this work.

The symposium program and speakers' profiles are available at:

<https://www.jpi-pen.eu/policy-symposium.html>