

Platform on Diet, Physical Activity and Health

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Lost in Translation

- Improvements are occurring on both sides of the Atlantic on:
 - Food composition
 - Advertising and marketing
 - Labeling

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But . . .

changes are not occurring consistently on both sides of the Atlantic

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This is problematic because:

- Both the US and the EU are suffering from an epidemic of obesity and diet related disease
- The same companies are doing business in the US and the EU

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As a general matter:

- Improvements by a multi-national food company in food composition, labeling and marketing practices should be adopted on a Transatlantic basis

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Examples:

- UK salt reduction – Nestlé's Nesquik chocolate drink contains 96 mg of sodium per 240 ml in the UK, while the same size drink in the US contains 150 mg of sodium

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Examples:

- Masterfoods (Mars Candy) provides full nutrition labeling in the US but claims in the EU that there is not enough space on the label for more than a few nutrients

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Examples:

- PepsiCo, Coca-Cola, and Cadbury have agreed to stop selling soft drinks in vending machines in all US schools
- No similar agreement in the EU

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- McDonalds has stopped, or reduced the use of oils high in trans fats to fry its French fries in some EU members states but has not done so in the US

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Consistent Transatlantic policies are possible:

- Kraft has a (global) policy not to advertise in TV, radio, or print media to children under six
- Coca-Cola has pledged (globally) not to directly promote its brands to elementary school children

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- US and EU have pledged regulatory cooperation
- As part of this program, best practices (not just "good" practices) should be identified and companies should be asked to implement them on a transatlantic basis

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Reasons for inconsistent actions:

- Corporate organization and decentralization?
- Actions taken only where governments pressure companies?
- Let's explore further . . .

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- Differences in public health priorities and cultural norms can be taken into account as appropriate
- But as a general matter, improvements in composition, marketing and advertising should be made consistently

Thank You

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