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Dear Ms Medico, Dear Giulia

Thank you for inviting the European Federation of the Associations of Dietitians (EFAD) to the recent meeting on Health Dimension of the EU School Scheme. It was a pleasure to participate in this meeting and to share with you some of the views of EFAD European Specialist Dietetic Network for Public Health Dietitians

I am writing today to confirm the points I raised during the meeting and to share some additional points that I did not feel appropriate to share during the meeting, due to time constraints:

- The fact that over 30% of schoolchildren are slightly underweight in Austria needs to be considered in order to assess the possible causes, looking into the family and school food environment. The incidence of underweight is unlikely to be associated with fruit, vegetable and non-sweetened milk consumption, thus this situation should not interfere with the implementation of the school schemes.
- Given that there are some children who may be lactose intolerant it is important that lactose free alternatives are available in these cases. Competent health authorities must endorse the list of appropriate lactose free products that can be used as alternatives to milk which should have acceptable levels of added sugars, fat and salt. Whilst yoghurt and cheese have lower lactose contents and may thus be more acceptable, but individual guidance from a health care professional is recommended, since the tolerance varies greatly from one person to another.
- National health authorities should be involved in the process of listing the products judged suitable for delivery, taking into account their nutritional value, food based dietary guideline and their impact on the environment.
- National authorities should provide guidance on portion sizes for the different age groups and allowing for different cultural habits. We would recommend that a minimum portion of 80g of fruit or vegetables is implemented. The portion should be no more than 25-30g where dried fruit is supplied. We recommend not to deliver any

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- fruit juices (natural or 100% no added sugars) but where fruit juice is delivered, portions must not exceed 125ml and should not be offered more than once a week.
- It is essential that complementary measures (nutrition education) are also implemented and that these are as closely tied to the supply of products as possible. The contents should be developed carefully and by competent professionals. We recommend that public health dietitians should be involved. It is recommended that National Health Authorities develop not only a guide to the development of these materials, but also that a complete tool kit should be available at national level. However, regions of a given country can develop their own materials following national recommendations or adapt the national proposal to regional particularities (food production, healthy habits, gastronomy, etc.)
- Complementary measures should be implemented taking into account the educational programme of the schools. The more integrated the nutrition education programme with the educational strategy of the school, the more impact it will have. Measures must consider the nutritional value of the products in the framework of the national food based dietary guidelines. Recommendations on how to reduce food waste and the impact of eating pattern on the environment, must be included in the complementary measures.
- Any nutritional or health information to be delivered by the operator in charge of the product delivery must be revealed in advance in order to avoid mixed messages or messages not in keeping with the complementary measures.
- National Health Authorities should give recommendations to encourage centres to create a healthy eating environment that not only delivers fruit, vegetables and milk but also takes measures to ensure healthy choices in canteens, vending machines, scholar food programmes, etc., as well as providing free fresh water.
- Assessment of the intervention impact should be undertaken by the operator in charge of the Scheme. Guidance and validated questionnaires should be provided by the National Authorities involved in the Scheme. We recommend that National Authorities collect annually regional results and data to assess them and share national data with DG AGRI in order to facilitate the impact assessment at European level. A control group must also be followed and assessed.
- Efforts need to be made to increase families' involvement in the scheme. Recommendations need to be made by national educational authorities providing good practices and resources.
- Financial support should continue to be provided to subsidise complementary measures and consideration should be given to funding the impact assessment strategies.

I trust you will find these comments helpful when taking the School Fruit, Vegetable and Milk scheme forward.

Kindest regards

Judith Liddell

Executive Director

The European Federation of the Associations of Dietitians (EFAD)