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UNESDA statement on food and drink taxes

Taxing food and drink is regressive and places stress on the less well-off members of society who spend a greater percentage of their income on the weekly shop.

Information and education, not tax, is the way to teach people how to eat balanced diets and lead healthy lifestyles. If governments seriously want to address the health of populations they need to adopt a coordinated approach working with industry, educational institutions, the healthcare community and civil society to teach people how to eat better, take more exercise and lead a healthy, balanced lifestyle.

Experts from the World Health Organisation to the European Commission acknowledge that rising obesity rates are due to a range of factors: we take the car or the bus rather than walking, we have sedentary jobs rather than physical jobs and we are less active in our spare time. And yes, some people eat too many energy dense foods in relation to their physical activity levels.

The European soft drinks industry already contributes €22.3 billion each year in taxes both directly and indirectly. It supports over one million jobs in Europe and delivers €55.4 billion annually in value-added impact. Taxing food and drink will have a negative impact on competitiveness and threaten jobs and growth.

For further information visit www.fooddrinktax.eu