

European Soft Drinks Industry to Stop Sales of Sugary Drinks in Secondary Schools across the European Union

Voluntary move expands existing 10+ year policy of no soft drinks in primary schools impacting 50,000 secondary schools and more than 40 million young people in 28 countries

Brussels, 6 September 2017; The European soft drinks industry^[i], represented by UNESDA, today announced that it will voluntarily cease sales of drinks containing added sugars^[ii] to secondary schools^[iii] across the European Union^[iv]. This pledge maintains the industry's long-standing commitment to responsible marketing to children and adolescents, and expands its existing policy - first introduced in 2006 - not to sell any beverages in primary schools nor advertise any beverages to children under 12.

The commitment will now begin to be introduced across the 28 European Union member countries with complete implementation by the end of 2018. From then, UNESDA member companies will provide only no- and low-calorie soft drinks to secondary schools. We recognize that water must remain the foremost drink available for schoolchildren. UNESDA estimates that this voluntary effort will reach more than 50,000 secondary schools and over 40 million young people across the EU.

The expanded school policy is the latest milestone in the European soft drinks industry's efforts to contribute to prevent obesity. It supports UNESDA's pledge made earlier this year to reduce added sugars in beverages by 10% by 2020, further building on the 12% reduction delivered from 2000 to 2015. UNESDA – whose members produce brands including Coca-Cola, Fanta, Lipton, Oasis, Orangina, Pepsi, Schweppes and Sprite - is the only EU sector to have committed to such a sugar reduction and the move was widely welcomed by stakeholders.

“As an industry we are firmly committed to responsibly serving consumers of all ages across Europe, and are pleased to announce we will be voluntarily removing sales of drinks containing added sugars from all schools across the European Union,” explained UNESDA president, Stanislas de Gramont, CEO of Suntory Beverage & Food Europe. “This new initiative further strengthens a successful existing policy which has been comprehensively implemented throughout primary schools over the last decade and will ensure our industry is not providing drinks containing added sugars to young people during the school day.”

^[i] UNESDA – Soft Drinks Europe is the Brussels based trade association established in 1958 and representing non-alcoholic beverages such as carbonates, fruit based drinks and dilutables. Other categories such as bottled water, juices, milk-based or hot beverages are represented at EU level by other organizations. UNESDA represents 80% of European soft drinks by value

^[ii] Only no/low calorie versions as defined in the EU Claims Regulation will be available in future as appropriate

^[iii] Depending on countries, schools typically attended by pupils from 11-12 to 17-18 years old

^[iv] This is an EU and sector wide commitment adopted by UNESDA. In some markets, the sale of foods and beverages in schools is already regulated by national authorities. France, Romania and the UK for example, do not permit the sale of soft drinks in schools; other countries do not permit vending machines in schools. In some markets, there is no regulation but vending simply does not occur in schools

^[v] WHO Europe report, 'Adolescent obesity and related behaviours: trends and inequalities in the WHO European Region, 2002-2014', May 2017, <http://www.euro.who.int/en/health-topics/Life-stages/child-and-adolescent-health/publications/2017/adolescent-obesity-and-related-behaviours-trends-and-inequalities-in-the-who->

The initiative responds to the changing food environment and acknowledges that special care is required in schools. The soft drinks sector has taken a lead in responsible policies in schools and towards children: for over a decade UNESDA members have not advertised any of their products to children under 12 and soft drinks have been completely taken out of primary schools. In secondary schools the industry ensures that whenever soft drinks are provided directly they are made available in agreement with school authorities and parents. WHO Europe's report Adolescent obesity and related behaviours, trends and inequalities 2002-2014 confirms the recent notable decreases in reported consumption of sugared soft drinks^[v].

“Removing sales of added-sugar soft drinks from secondary schools across Europe is the latest significant step that our industry is taking to help people of all ages make informed and responsible beverage choices while creating healthy food environments for children and adolescents,” said Dan Sayre and Nikos Koumettis on behalf of The Coca-Cola Company in Europe. “Coca-Cola is pleased to have been actively supporting this journey over the last decade by first removing all beverages from primary schools and today further extending that commitment, and is proud to be part of our industry’s wider effort to reduce added sugars by 10% across our portfolio by 2020.”

“Children and adolescents are a special audience that needs particular attention and we are fully aware of our industry’s role in enabling young consumers to make healthy choices. We very much applaud that the commitment that our company made several years ago is today being embraced by the whole sector. As such, it will have a lasting positive effect on a great many people’s diets”, Cesar Melo, Senior Vice President Categories and Franchises Europe Sub-Saharan Africa & President Sub-Saharan Africa, said on behalf of PepsiCo. “It also perfectly fits in our Performance with Purpose vision, whereby we aim to deliver strong financial performance sustainably over time in a way that is responsive to the needs of society”.

Independent, third party auditors, such as PricewaterhouseCoopers, will monitor compliance and the results will be shared with EU authorities and food industry peers.

Ends

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^[v] Eurostat http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Education_and_training_in_the_EU_-_facts_and_figures

Notes to editors

The 2006 UNESDA Commitments made to the EU Platform for Action on Diet, Physical Activity and Health created strict policies for marketing to children under 12 and providing beverages in schools. They have been regularly audited by external consultants including PricewaterhouseCoopers and compliance rates are as follows:

- No sales of any soft drinks in primary schools. A leadership position and still the only sector to do this. - 95% compliance, covering some 28 million pupils.^[vi]
- No advertising of any products irrespective of their sugar content on TV, in print, online and on social media: A leadership position and still the only sector to do this.
 - Print, online and social media - 100% compliance;
 - TV 99% compliance.
 - This contributed to 88% less exposure to advertising in 2014 compared with 2005

