

## Europe's soft drinks industry announces new commitment to reduce average added sugars in its beverages by another 10% across Europe

- Overall reduction in average added sugars in soft drinks across Europe to reach 33% since 2000 – making the healthy choice the easy choice
- Advertisement and marketing age limit raised to 13 from 12 years of age

**Brussels, 29 June 2021:** On the occasion of its 63<sup>rd</sup> anniversary, UNESDA, representing Europe's soft drinks industry, has announced **new and enhanced health and nutrition commitments to continue to help Europeans manage their intake of added sugars from soft drinks**. At a time of evolving consumer preferences and increasing public health expectations, these commitments are the industry's contribution to making the healthier choice become the easy choice under the umbrella of the EU Farm to Fork Strategy and its code of conduct for responsible business and marketing practices. UNESDA continues to respond to consumer needs and wishes to play its part in achieving the EU's goal of accelerating the transition to sustainable food systems. They also respond to the need to ensure healthier lives and promoting wellbeing for all, as set out by the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 3.4.

Amongst these commitments is the **pledge to reduce average added sugars in soft drinks<sup>1</sup> by another 10%<sup>2</sup> from 2019-2025<sup>3</sup> across the EU-27 and the UK**. This will represent a 33% overall reduction in average added sugars over the last two decades, building on past sugar reduction milestones that the industry achieved from 2015 to 2019 (14.6% reduction on average) and from 2000 to 2015 (13.3% reduction on average).

Ian Ellington, UNESDA President and Senior Vice President and Chief Category Officer at PepsiCo Europe, commented: *"This additional 10% reduction in added sugars underlines our sector's collective proactivity and determination to contribute to healthier and balanced diets in Europe. We will continue to bring innovation and choice to consumers as we implement this pledge."*

Nikos Koumettis, President, Europe at The Coca-Cola Company, stated: *"We are a consumer-centric business and have always grown by staying close to the needs and wants of our consumers, stakeholders and society at large. We agree that too much sugar isn't good for anyone and want to enable our consumers to better control their intake of added sugar from our beverages. Alongside our leading partners in Europe, Coca-Cola Europacific Partners and*

---

<sup>1</sup> Includes all soft drinks categories: still drinks, fruit drinks, carbonates, energy drinks, sports drinks, dilutables, iced teas and coffees, flavored waters

<sup>2</sup> Metric is average calories per 100 ml.

<sup>3</sup> 2019 is taken as the baseline due to the fact that 2020 industry data is not yet available and also due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on consumption and purchasing behaviour.

*Coca-Cola HBC, we continue to work with industry peers to drive meaningful voluntary initiatives at scale and make the healthier choice the easy choice.”*

Peter Harding, CEO Suntory Beverage and Food Europe, added: *“Once again the actions of UNESDA and its members have demonstrated that our industry is committed to take positive actions that will drive the right behaviours and affect societal change. Our combined efforts on reducing sugar, increasing the availability of healthier drinks and encouraging responsible consumption demonstrate our commitment to action.”*

The soft drinks industry will deliver on this new commitment through a wide range of accelerated actions, including changing recipes to reduce sugars in its drinks whilst maintaining great taste. In addition, it will continue to innovate to develop new no- or low- calorie products with different sweetness levels and it will increase the availability and range of small packs to support portion control and enable moderate consumption. The industry will also continue promoting no- and low-sugar/calorie beverages to actively encourage consumer choice towards these products.

The other **new commitment announced by Europe’s soft drinks industry is related to its marketing and advertising to children**. Currently, no soft drinks are advertised anywhere in Europe to children younger than 12 years old, where audience consists of more than 35% of this age group. The industry will raise the minimum age limit to 13 years old and lower the audience threshold to 30% so that in practice fewer young children will be directly exposed to advertising for any of its soft drinks.

Europe’s soft drinks industry also **remains committed to intensifying its efforts in the coming years to ensure that its school commitments continue to be implemented across Europe**. This include NO sales and advertising of any soft drinks in EU primary schools; and offering ONLY no- and low-calorie soft drinks for sale in EU secondary schools and only in non-branded vending machines.

**To drive healthier drink environments for Europe’s citizens and to deliver on the new and enhanced health and nutrition commitments, Europe’s soft drinks industry also depends on policy cohesion and an enabling policy framework at EU and member state level**. This means promoting a multi-faceted and multi-stakeholder approach to address obesity and overweight that calls for collective action from all actors of the food chain. In addition, policymakers should consider meaningful voluntary approaches to sugar reduction as efficient alternatives to regulation. Finally, regular and reliable pan-European monitoring of food and drink consumption intakes and patterns are desperately needed to be able to design interventions targeting population groups at risk.

Ian Ellington, UNESDA President and Senior Vice President and Chief Category Officer at PepsiCo Europe, concluded: *“For 20 years, we have been pioneers in reducing average added sugars in our drinks, implementing effective school policies and responsible marketing practices. We are committed to playing our part. It is now time to achieve critical mass across the entire food and drink chain to deliver positive health outcomes more broadly. We intend to*

*submit these new and enhanced commitments under the EU code of conduct for responsible business and marketing practices.”*

### **Note to Editors**

For further information, please contact:

Inês Rebelo

Communications Manager, UNESDA

M: +32 477 860 901

[irebelo@unesda.eu](mailto:irebelo@unesda.eu)

### **About UNESDA**

UNESDA Soft Drinks Europe is the Brussels-based trade association representing the non-alcoholic beverages sector. The membership of UNESDA comprises 23 national associations across Europe, as well as 9 corporate members.

UNESDA members are involved in the production and/or distribution of a wide variety of non-alcoholic beverages including still drinks, carbonates, fruit drinks, energy drinks, iced teas and sport drinks.

Europe's soft drinks sector is rooted in the European economy and society, employing 1.7 million people throughout its €185 billion value chain, with 424 soft drinks production and bottling plants across the EU and contributing over €22 billion in taxes every year.

[www.unesda.eu](http://www.unesda.eu)

# MAKING THE HEALTHIER CHOICE, THE EASY CHOICE



## HEALTH & NUTRITION COMMITMENTS

We are committed to helping consumers manage their intake of added sugars from soft drinks . Creating a healthier and more sustainable food system in Europe requires urgent action by all sectors of society, and the soft drinks industry is doing its part to create a healthier food environment so that the healthier choice becomes the easy choice for consumers.



## SUGAR REDUCTION

- Reduce the average added sugars in our soft drinks by another 10% from 2019-2025 across the EU
- This will represent a 33% overall reduction in average added sugars over the last two decades



## RESPONSIBLE MARKETING & ADVERTISING

- Raise the minimum age limit for marketing and advertising to 13 years old
- Lower the audience threshold from 35% to 30% so that fewer young children will be directly exposed to advertising for any of our soft drinks
- Expand the scope of channels where we will not market or advertise



## SCHOOLS POLICIES

Intensify our efforts to ensure that our commitments are fully implemented across the EU.

- NO sales and advertising of any soft drinks in EU primary schools;
- Offering ONLY no- and low-calorie soft drinks for sale in EU secondary schools and only in non-branded vending machines.



## NUTRITIONAL LABELLING

- Contribute to the establishment of an evidence-based, EU -wide, harmonised and interpretative front -of-pack nutrition system that is meaningful for consumers, encourages food producers to reformulate and is developed under an EU governance model.