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We only need to look at the figures and the expanding waist lines of Europe to see that obesity is increasing. Childhood obesity is a particularly worrying trend, which in turn can lead to a life time of health problems such as diabetes, heart disease and other major chronic diseases.

On average across European Union Member States, 17% of the adult population is obese. Fifty two per cent of the European adult population is considered overweight or obese. This means that one in two adults and nearly one in every three children are overweight or obese.

The European Union is actively engaged in the fight against obesity. One of the key ways the European Commission delivers on this is through the Strategy for Europe on Nutrition, Overweight and Obesity-related Health issues
and the implementing instruments High Level Group on Nutrition and Physical Activity and the EU Platform for Action on Diet, Physical Activity and Health.

The Strategy recently underwent an independent external evaluation to determine its effectiveness and to what extent it has achieved its aims to promote healthier lifestyles.

The evaluation report supported continuation of the Strategy and the implementation of its instruments. Findings also stressed that continued coordination at EU-level by the Commission is necessary to increase policy developments and actions. It was also found that DG SANCO has successfully integrated Nutrition and Physical Activity concerns into other EU policies.

At the Joint High Level Group and Platform meeting in June 2013, Commissioner Borg confirmed continuation of the Strategy, and going forward, the Commission has identified lower socio-economic groups and children as target groups for action, as well as a greater focus on the promotion of physical activity.

Members of the High Level Group have also committed to increasing their efforts to stop the worrying obesity trends through an Action Plan on childhood obesity, which they will discuss in November 2013.

Read the full focus of this edition