

Draft

EVA Comments on the Draft report of the WHO/FAO Expert Consultation on Diet, Nutrition and the Prevention of Chronic Diseases.

TABLE OF CONTENTS / BOOKMARKS

Executive Summary	p.1
Background	p.2
About Vending	p.2
About eating habits	p.2
Banning vending machines does not make sense	p.3
What the EVA will do	p.3
More information	p.3

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The EVA bases its view on six key principles:

- > Vending machines can offer a wide range of food and drink, including low-fat, sugar-free, decaffeinated options
- > Vending supplements catering rather than replaces a healthy meal if one is available
- > Eating habits are learned in the very early years of infancy. Reversing obesity rates requires a programme that involves better nutrition education, more physical exercise and appropriate parenting.
- > Prohibiting vending machines or classic food and drink sold in them won't stimulate better eating habits
- > Children who want those foods can get them elsewhere, thereby disrupting school activities, or worse get in danger by quickly leaving the school to purchase them.
- > Vending machine sales help fund extra-curricular activities, including sports

The European Vending Association supports a pragmatic approach to healthy eating and drinking in schools and public facilities and suggests that schools, in co-operation with vending machine operators, should agree that the range of food and drink to be sold in vending machines should include diet soft drinks, bottled water, juice drinks, sports drinks, decaffeinated drinks, alongside regular soft drinks. Similarly, snack food should include low fat options.

Suggesting that vending machines should be eliminated from those places is counter productive, discriminatory for a particular distribution channel, and even dangerous for children who will leave schools during breaks to get the products in kiosks or shops off the school's premises, where they are readily available.

BACKGROUND

The European Vending Association represents the manufacturers, ingredient suppliers and operators of the 4.5 million vending machines selling food, drink and refreshment throughout Europe.

The EVA was made aware of the draft report on diet, nutrition and the prevention of chronic diseases. The EVA wishes to comment on Section 5 – Recommended Action, more specifically the recommendations to civil society, one of them (5th indent) explicitly suggesting to “**pressure schools and other public facilities not to have vending machines, or to at least have healthy choices in them as well and to monitor the validity and bias of competitions, teaching aids and advertising.**” Whilst the EVA entirely supports a widening of the offer in machines, it strongly opposes banning vending machines. The detailed reasons are explained below.

ABOUT VENDING

Vending is an alternative distribution channel to classic retail. It has the major advantage of being available 7 days a week, 24 hours a day, wherever a vending machine may be of use to consumers. A great number of vending machines can therefore be found in schools, university campuses, sports and leisure clubs, and on many public sector premises.

An additional advantage of vending is that the vending machine sales provide schools with needed funding for cultural programmes, equipment such as computers, as well as sports and extra-curricular programmes.

A vending machine can sell almost any product, the range on offer being agreed by the school authorities and the operator who provides those products.

Vending generally supplements, rather than replaces, the children/students refreshment service. They don't prevent students eating a proper lunch if one is available.

ABOUT EATING HABITS

Eating habits are learned in the home in the very early years of infancy. Pupils and students who desire candy snacks or soft drinks will obtain them in a wide range of places: at home, in shops near the home or the school.

Obesity is a complex problem, the sources of which are multiple. Reversing obesity rates in children and adults requires a comprehensive and sustained programme that involves better nutrition education, more physical exercise and appropriate parenting.

Nutrition scientists have stated that there is no such thing as a “non-nutritious” food. All foods contain nutrients. There also is a wide disagreement on what a proper diet should be for each individual.

BANNING VENDING MACHINES DOES NOT MAKE SENSE

Vending is a distribution channel that has the great advantage of offering products where they are needed. Offering a range of products that include low-fat, sugar-free alternatives is a decision that depends upon the school.

Also, a number of EVA members are taking actions to promote better eating habits in co-operation with schools, local authorities, or government agencies. We believe that this will be much more efficient than banning machines.

WHAT THE EVA WILL DO

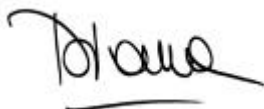
The European Vending Association groups the national associations of vending, as well as companies with a leading role in the industry. The EVA will work on a Code of Practice for vending in school, whereby members can agree to commit themselves to work with schools to identify particular needs and to help ensure that a balanced and wide variety of food and beverages are available within the school environment.

MORE INFORMATION

The EVA's website contains a list of members, outlines the aims and objectives of the association, as well as presents the activities of the association. Please visit www.eva.be

More information can also be obtained with the EVA Secretariat in Brussels.

Yours sincerely,



Catherine Piana
Director-General

Document history

Draft 16 May –for adoption by Hygiene Committee, national associations, Executive Committee
Final Document 3 June