



## Calling for Action from Europe's Leaders to promote the benefits of breakfast on the Occasion of World Diabetes Day

On the occasion of World Diabetes Day, the Breakfast is Best coalition – representatives of Europe's teachers, doctors, dietitians, paediatric dietitians and the European breakfast cereal industry – is relaunching its 'Call to Action' and urging Europe's decision-makers to take the necessary steps to promote breakfast as part of a healthy lifestyle.

With over 53 million people suffering from diabetes in Europe alone<sup>1</sup> – a number which is set to rise to 66.5 million by 2030 and account for 8.1% of the adult population<sup>2</sup> – there is an urgent need for European policymakers to encourage healthy eating across all countries. One of the ways to prevent this growing epidemic is through adopting a healthier lifestyle; key to this is a balanced and healthy diet, including regular breakfast consumption.

Breakfast consumption can not only help manage and reduce the risk of diabetes, but can also play a fundamental role in lowering the chances of other non-communicable diseases such as obesity, blood pressure and low nutritional intake. A growing body of scientific research shows that breakfast-skipping is linked to sedentary lifestyles, a slower metabolism and poor dietary choices.<sup>3</sup> It is therefore essential that policymakers ensure that a positive attitude towards the significance of breakfast is developed throughout Europe.

National governments, along with the European Union, need to make a detailed review of their nutrition guidance to their citizens, supported by the science behind them, and work towards more effective, evidence-based policymaking across Europe. As Dr. Vincenzo Costigliola, President of the European Medical Association, states "The benefits of breakfast are clear and scientifically proven, and it is essential that decision-makers wake-up to the importance of breakfast and play a full part in encouraging Europeans to eat breakfast more regularly."

This European Call for Action encourages national health authorities and policymakers from across Europe to adopt the following approach to promote the health benefits of breakfast on a local, national and European level:

1. The long term goal of ensuring that, by 2020, all EU countries include the importance of eating breakfast in their nutrition policies, and monitor breakfast consumption as a key health indicator;
2. Have 'Eat breakfast everyday' added to standard nutrition advice, and include the importance of breakfast in school curricula and employee health initiatives;
3. Ensure that the World Health Organisation Europe "Health 2020 strategy" and European Union actions on health inequalities reflect the importance of eating breakfast to long-term health outcomes.

Together, members of Breakfast is Best Campaign and a wide range of supporters are calling on Europe's leaders to put breakfast at the heart of public health promotion campaigns and encourage Europeans to 'Make Time for Breakfast', as a significant but achievable step towards achieving healthier lifestyles.

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<sup>1</sup> IDF Diabetes Atlas, 6<sup>th</sup> edition, 2014

<sup>2</sup> WHO, Diabetes Factsheet, <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/en>

<sup>3</sup> Some examples include: Adolphus K., Lawton C. and Dye L., The effects of breakfast on behavior and academic performance in children and adolescents, Human Appetite Research Unit, Institute of Psychological Sciences, University of Leeds; Williams PG., The Benefits of Breakfast Cereal Consumption: A Systematic Review of the Evidence Base. ADV NUTR 2014:4:5:636S-673S; WHO Europe, Health behaviour in school-aged children international report from the 2009/2010 survey, Social determinants of health and well-being among young people, 2009/2010