

WRITTEN QUESTION P-5780/06  
by Bernadette Bourzai (PSE)  
to the Commission

Subject: Press conference by Mr Kyprianou on 9 November 2006

I have already had occasion to express my disapproval of the words spoken by the European Commissioner with responsibility for health and consumer protection, Mr Kyprianou, at a press conference held on 9 November this year. The Commissioner warmly congratulated four food industry multinationals, which I will not name, for their contributions to the fight against obesity; he also allowed these companies to advertise themselves with stands at the entrance to the room where the press conference was held.

We must bear in mind that one child in five in Europe is obese and that this number is growing every year because of the bad nutritional habits fed by the fast foods, fizzy drinks and chocolate bars manufactured primarily by these four multinationals. There are other ways of combating obesity, such as eating more fruit and vegetables and practising sports, which deserve greater promotion.

In addition, as the International Press Association has confirmed, using a European Commission press conference to promote private companies raises questions about the Commission's communication policy. The way of selecting businesses to 'name and praise' should be based on more visible criteria.

Can the Commission explain the criteria chosen by Mr Kyprianou to justify showcasing these multinationals for their fight against obesity and giving them the opportunity to advertise their products? Is collaboration envisaged with the Agriculture Commissioner with a view to drawing up a new Common Organisation of the Market in fruit and vegetables more likely to provide a healthy, diversified diet?

I very much hope for an ambitious reorientation of Community initiatives in the near future with the aim of pursuing the fight against obesity.