

PRESS RELEASE

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Obesity needs to be fought by other means

On behalf of the Manufacturing and other Industries and Importers, Distributors and Retailers Economic Groups, the Malta Chamber of Commerce, Enterprise and Industry, is concerned with the announcement of the UK government to impose a discriminatory special tax on sugar-sweetened soft drinks in 2018. Indeed, there is no evidence to suggest a tax on sugar-sweetened soft drinks would successfully reduce obesity rates. It has been demonstrated time and again that such initiatives are merely a financial burden for consumers- in particular the low income ones-without either improving public health or reducing obesity rates.

The examples of Denmark and Mexico are telling. In both countries discriminatory taxes on food and drink were introduced, with the former abolishing them within a year due to adverse consequences to the national economy: inflation, cross-border trade, and risk to jobs.

As for Mexico, the soft drinks tax has reduced daily average calorie intake by just 6-10 calories (or 0.5% of overall calorie intake) – a result significantly lower than what was intended, especially if compared to the efforts undertaken by the sector itself in the country.

Anton Borg, President, of the Malta Chamber of Commerce stated: "As the institution representing major food and beverage industries in Malta, we support policies aimed at improving the health and lifestyle of the Maltese and more specifically, we are committed to working with all relevant institutions to find a solution for the serious and complex global health problem of obesity. If the aim is to reduce obesity, this tax goes against evidence from around the world which shows taxes do very little, if anything, to reduce sugar and calorie intake or obesity levels but do add to people's cost of living. It is misleading to suggest that an additional tax would in any way address the growing and complex problem of obesity. Real results will only come from measures that have been shown to work, like reformulation, innovation, consumer education and the promotion of physical activity."

For more information, please visit:

<http://www.fooddrinktax.eu/food-drink-taxes-dont-work/>

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