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Dear ,

Thank you for your letter to Vice-President Schinas, to Commissioner Gentiloni, to Commissioner Wojciechowski, and myself and for your observations in relation to Europe's Beating Cancer Plan, which we presented on 3 February.

We are fully aware of the complexity of dietary choices that every consumer must make and that individual needs may vary, for instance caloric needs differ depending on different physical activity levels. There is no one size fits all approach and national governments provide dietary advice to their citizens, for instance via dietary guidance.

The Cancer Plan and its actions on nutrition - as an important aspect of prevention - is closely linked to other Commission priorities. The role of nutrition in the sustainability of our food systems has been recognised within the framework of the Commission's Green Deal, notably through the Farm to Fork Strategy.

When it comes to alcohol, the European Union has the highest level of alcohol consumption and alcohol-related harm in the world. There is a strong scientific consensus that alcohol consumption can cause several types of cancer. The more alcohol a person drinks, in particular regularly over time, the higher is his or her risk of developing an alcohol-associated cancer. Restricting alcoholic beverage availability and marketing are among the best possible options to cost-effectively reduce harmful alcohol use, deaths and disabilities in the population with a particular impact on young people. Having said this, it should be noted that the primary responsibility for such restrictive measures is with the Member States. The role of the Commission is to support them in their harm reduction policies.

It is clear that no single measure will be effective if taken in isolation. A comprehensive approach to reducing alcohol-related harm involves a combination of policies that address inequities and social determinants. Therefore, the measures we are proposing in Europe's Beating Cancer Plan on alcohol and more generally on healthy lifestyles cover a wide range of actions, such as reaching a 10 % reduction in the harmful use of alcohol as agreed by Member States as part of the Sustainable Development Goals.

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Both actions in the Farm to Fork Strategy and those in Europe's Beating Cancer Plan are ambitious in view of the magnitude of the problems to be tackled. Actions are or will be open for stakeholder comments during the decision-making process.

The Farm to Fork Strategy indicated that the EU promotion policy would be reviewed. The initiative to review the policy was announced by the Commission on its 'Have your say' portal and will be carried out with a view to enhancing the promotion policy's contribution to sustainable production and consumption, and in line with the shift to a more plant-based diet, with less red and processed meat and more fruit and vegetables.

This policy review will take place in 2021 following the better regulation guidelines, including a comprehensive impact assessment of policy options and an open public consultation, both of which will be published this spring on the above-mentioned portal. I would encourage all stakeholders and interested parties to provide their feedback and participate in the open public consultation.

An external evaluation support study on the implementation of the EU promotion policy since 2016 and the results of an open public consultation carried out between May and September 2020 have been published.

The debate during the decision-making process will be based on evidence-based arguments and we will ensure that contributions like yours will be duly taken into account. I am looking forward to working constructively with you in the context of the implementation of the Cancer Plan.

Yours sincerely,

