



**Press release**  
**Oana Antonescu MEP co-signs letter of support**  
**with the European Public Health Alliance**  
**The tax on junk-food- a European model**

18 February 2010, Romanian MEP Oana Antonescu, a member of the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety Committee of the European Parliament, accepted to co-sign the letter of support addressed by the European Public Health Alliance (EPHA) to the Romanian Government. The letter follows an announcement by the Romanian Government outlining a proposal to introduce a tax of junk food. The tax will be supported by the launch of an education and information campaign on healthy eating.

EPHA addressed an open letter to the Romanian Prime Minister Emil Boc and the Health Minister Czeke Attila, in which it expressed its support for the Romanian Government's initiative, which aims to discourage the consumption of unhealthy products. EPHA mentioned that Romania is not alone in the fight against obesity and other diet-related diseases. The association added that a tax on junk food products is welcome and can represent a model for other Member States of the European Union in the years to come.

In parallel to the taxation of unhealthy food, EPHA recommended that the Romanian Government consider fiscal mechanisms and subsidies to increase the attractiveness and affordability of healthy food for consumers. Moreover, EPHA made references to successfully-implemented mechanisms for the identification of products high in sugar, salt and fats, introduced in countries such as the UK.

Oana Antonescu allied herself to this move from the European public health community following her declaration in the European Parliament's plenary in support of the Romanian initiative. Ms. Antonescu expressed her commitment to bringing the debate on this topic to the European level. The Romanian MEP indicated that the tax needs to be thought of as a form of education and the funds generated via such taxes have to be exclusively earmarked for health promotion programmes among the population focussing on those ingredients that contribute to an unhealthy diet.