

Brussels, 25 Feb 2009

EHFA Brings Top EU Officials To The Table

Senior health and fitness industry professionals from across Europe came together for the 2nd EHFA EU Policy Forum, which took place in Brussels 11th February 2009.

The informal event, organized by the European Health and Fitness Association (EHFA), and attended by 25 participants, aimed at promoting constructive dialogue between fitness industry professionals and high-ranking EU officials in order to clarify the practical application and impact of the EU policies in two major fields: the Taxation on Fitness, and the EU Health Policy.

Mr Marcus Sauer of Deloitte presented on the tax treatment and VAT on Fitness across the EU. Thanks to his input, key elements to be addressed by the EU have been clearly targeted, namely a clarification and simplification of the EU VAT rules, as well as a better recognition of the fitness industry as a benefit to public health, so as to be able to be included more easily in health-related rules of VAT exemption/reduction.

Mr Rolf Diemer, Head of Unit of the DG Taxation and Customs Union informed the meeting that the Commission was preparing a review of the VAT rules in the two years to come that would be preceded by a Consultation Process. This process will be of primary importance, as the fitness industry as a whole will have a powerful and official channel to voice its concern and influence the perception of the fitness sector. Rolf Diemer strongly emphasised that *"the more contributions we get, the more powerful your claim will be"*.

Another high-ranking EU speaker, **Mr Robert Madelin, Director General Health and Consumers**, presented the EU Health Policies impacting health and fitness, and challenged our sector: *"there are different vehicles where we can go beyond the current paths of partnership, and where we (the European Commission) are very interested to hear from you (the EHFA and its members) how you can be a partner to policy shaping"*. His listing of future possible collaborations and sources of funding will be used by the EHFA as a springboard to better promote its objective to get 'more people, more active, more often'.

Harm Tegelaars, President of EHFA warmly welcomed such a productive discussion with top-EU officials. He said that *"the EHFA EU Policy Forum has been once again successful in its mission to build a bridge between fitness industry professionals and EU officials. These Forums are meant to be a place of interaction, dialogue and debate to foster a mutual understanding of each other's activities that will result in deeper, more interconnected and more effective partnerships"*.

About EHFA:

The European Health and Fitness Association is a not-for-profit organization representing the interests of the sector at EU level. With its objective to get 'more people, more active, more often', EHFA is a standards setting body of the health and fitness industry in Europe and promotes and implements best practice in instruction and training through its European Register of Exercise Professionals (EREPS).

EHFA represents approx 6 000 health clubs and leisure centres and 15 national associations spread across 22 countries. The European health and fitness industry generates revenue of more than 20 billion Euros annually, provides employment to 370,000 people and has more than 40 million affiliates across Europe in members in public and private health & fitness clubs. For more information about EHFA please go to www.ehfa.eu

Encl: photo



EHFA 2nd EU Policy Forum, Brussels, 11 Feb 2009 with the EU Commission guest speakers:
Mr Robert Madelin and Ms Ase Fulke – DG Sanco, and Mr Rolf Diemer – DG TAXUD