

HEALTH MAINTENANCE THROUGH MOVEMENT, A STRINGENT NECESSITY FOR THE FUTURE OF THE ROMANIAN POPULATION

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Abstract

Some of the numerous programmes of the European Union concerning the health of the population and methods for improving it are considered, as well as the national situation in respect to these programmes.

Key words: health, EU Programme, physical activity

Considering the importance of the issue from the point of view of the European Union, one of the main concerns of Member States is to monitor the level of health of the population, detect the noxious factors, eliminate them and establish the most efficient measures to improve the level of health.

The health of its citizens, the supreme capital of any state, is constantly besieged and burdened by a huge number of factors. Unfortunately, in the battle with these factors of aggression and subversion of health, both individuals and health institutions dispose of too few resources which comply with the following three conditions: to be accessible, to be truly effective and to not generate adverse effects.

More and more numerous and undeniable scientific evidence pleads for the long known truth that physical activity, movement, represents a promoting and recovery factor for health, which truly complies with the three above mentioned conditions. And this truth, concerning the sanogenetic effects of movement, raised the prompt awareness of the decision-makers of developed countries. Who, to their credit, were not confined to just stating it, but moved on to action, making the physical effort to „work” effectively for the health of their citizens, that is to give physical activity the place and role to which it is entitled, in the health policies of the countries they government¹.

¹ G., Dumitru, *România se conectează lent la demersurile europene a sănătății prin*

In this problem, of considering physical activity as a factor of primary importance in promoting health and improving quality of life, the trend for systematic concerns and significant fundings was set by specialists, respectively U.S. governmentors, until the end of the twentieth century european countries – except northern ones, and to some extent England- which embraced the idea with little conviction and consistency. After the year 2000 – mainly due to the identification of obesity as „public enemy number one”, in the health plan of nowadays, and especially future generations- the institutions of the European Union (EU), especially the European Commission, started to pay increasing attention to the life-style of Member States’ citizens and the place physical activity takes in their daily and/or weekly schedule.

Starting especially with the Programme of Community Action in the Field of Public Health for the period 2003-2008, EU – in fact the European Commission – initiated and developed a series of programs, meetings, documents and actions aimed at countering the epidemic of obesity and promoting physical activity². Among these, the most recent and worth mentioning are: WHO European Ministerial Conference on Counteracting Obesity, Nutrition and Physical Activity for Health (November 2006), the European Charter on Counteracting Obesity, the EU Platform on Diet, Physical Activity and Health and the Green Paper – Promoting healthy diets and physical activities, a European dimension on preventing overweight, obesity and chronic diseases. The purpose of this material is to make Romania an involved party in these efforts, concluding that, generally speaking, our country is either absent or inadequately presented and represented.

Reffering to our country, we can state that although officially we became members only after January 1 2007, we should have – because we were given that right – to benefit of everything that the EU was undertaking in this field at least starting with 2003, as a result of our status of associated country. Unfortunately, maybe even more than in other fields, due to the ignorance and carelessness, *Romania was almost unaware of the*

mişcare, in „Palestrica Mileniului III – Civilizație și Sport”, nr. 4 (30) / 2007, pp.213-227.

² www.finanțare.ro, last consulted 30. 02. 2008.

*communitary vision and action concerning the „democratisation of sport” and the access of every citizen to the benefits of physical activity*³.

The fact that the situation, unfortunately, continues to stay the same even now, after almost a year after accession, a fact that can be seen by any man of good faith, moreover, a detailed and pertinent analysis on the status of „physical activity for the promotion of health” and on the support and impact it truly has on our society would represent a real emergency. This is because only such an analysis could create the premises of a radical turning-point, which, from this point of view, would enrol us on the orbit of evolution towards a true european country of the twenty-first century.

For several reasons, however, the present material can not propose such an analysis. As a result, including these considerations within the limited printing space, in the following we will refer only to some of the negative, even frustrating findings, which were strikingly imposed upon us during the documentation for the above mentioned articles and the present material.

The failure of our country to connect itself to the European and global trends and efforts dedicated to the rapid growth in the number and percentage of the people who regularly practice physical activity becomes obvious and more and more impossible to accept, whether we look at the situation in relation with the exterior (referring to the presence of our country in different organisms or various meetings, or the performance of those sent there to represent us), or we refer to the everyday reality from between our borders. But since each of the two perspectives requires – and indeed, even deserves – a little more laborious approach, and an editorial should not exceed its scope, in the following we will refer only to the way our country is connected to the vision and action of EU and WHO in the the promotion and stimulation of PAFH (physical activity for health).

Consequently, because it is not only characteristic but also downright outrageous, we shall begin by presenting evidence that – although chronically faced with a „hunger” of money – just as in other fields, our country does not know how to spend the funds for the projects promoting health (and) through physical activity which the EU made available for Member States. It is symptomatic in this regard that although being an associated country and being

³ G., Dumitru, *op.cit.*

allowed in 2003 already, as suggested before, no Romanian project with the objective of promoting health through physical activity and funded in the CAP FPH 2003-2008 (Programme of Community Action in the Field of Public Health) existed⁴. But this inability to access funds from the CAP FPH 2003-2008 which are used for the health of citizens, is not restricted to institutions and professionals relating to physical activity. A proof of this is the fact that in the title of the projects on the site previously indicated nobody from Romania is mentioned to coordinate a project (while Bulgarians had one in 2004), Romanians were content, at best, with the position of employees in projects coordinated by specialists from other countries.

It is regrettable that our country wouldn't „get up” and become aware of this matter even now, after accession, which is fully demonstrated by the fact that at the Information Day concerning the Work Plan for 2007 and the new rules of financing projects in CAP FPH 2003-2008 held in 28.02.2007, Luxembourg⁵ (www.ec.europa.eu), Romania was not present. And all this given that almost all the other former socialist countries were represented; Poland even being represented by two governmental institutions (Dumitru G.). Moreover, due to the fact that this action enjoyed a real interest (more than 300 participants), and the information provided was considered very useful, very quickly after that event – usually in March 2007 – representative institutions in some countries organised „National Information Days” (2), so as what was discussed in Luxembourg could reach all interested parties in their countries. Such actions have taken place in six countries, among which three former socialist countries: Bulgaria, Lithuania, Poland. In such conditions it becomes easy to understand why these countries access funds from the CAP FPH, while we still struggle, perhaps expecting to be threatened by safeguard clauses. A „scarecrow” the EU unfortunately does not use for the field of health, considering that this cannot be done, and that our government must understand that Brussels can not turn into a nagging and annoying nanny.

On the other hand, as you know, several international medical companies are highly envolved and represent constant and truly efficient

⁴ www.ec.europa.eu, Funded projects programe 2003 – 2008 last consulted 25. 03. 2008.

⁵ www.ec.europa.eu, last consulted 28. 02. 2007.

partners of the EU, WHO and its various states, in promoting physical activity as a means of good influence for the health of its citizens. Unfortunately, the medical associations in Romania are either not affiliated to these companies, or even if they are, they are not involved in the campaigns which those companies, by themselves or with other institutions, dedicate to promoting physical activity among population.

It seems hard to believe, and is anyway impossible to understand, why our country is absent from many international meetings (European and global), where matters concerning the promotion and implementation of physical activity as a sanogenetic factor are being discussed and regulated. We do not believe that it is appropriate to draw up a list of these absences, but we will refer to one of the most recent, regrettable and meaningful of them, namely that of „The WHO European Ministerial Conference on Counteracting Obesity. Diet and physical activity for health.”, held between 15 and 17 November 2006 in Istanbul.

