

# NEWS RELEASE

From the office of the Green MEPs

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## MEPs CALL ON EU TO PROTECT KIDS FROM JUNK FOOD

JUNK food advertising aimed at children should be outlawed by the EU to tackle spiraling levels of childhood obesity and food poverty, Green Party Euro-MP Caroline Lucas said today.

Launching a written declaration calling on fellow MEPs to demand a junk food advertising ban, South-England MEP Caroline Lucas said: *“Advertising of junk food is not generally designed to impart information but to encourage unhealthy choices based on the lack of it.*

*“We have a specific responsibility towards children. They don’t have free choice and they don’t have the necessary information or understanding to make informed choices either.”*

Dr Lucas’ declaration, which is today open for signature by all MEPs, calls on the European Commission to draw up detailed proposals to regulate marketing of unhealthy food and children, citing foods with high sugar, salt and fat contents.

*“There is a strong link between poverty and obesity – and we need a food revolution to confront poverty, corporate control of food choices and the global trade of produce if we are to break this link,”* said Dr Lucas.

*“A first step must be to ban junk food advertising – we have seen the public health benefits of banning tobacco advertising and governments must now have the courage to take the same approach with unhealthy food, at least where children are concerned.”*

Fellow Green Party MEP Jean Lambert, who represents London and is also a signatory to the declaration, added: *“We mustn’t blame obesity on the victims, especially children, or concentrate on weight and body shape to the exclusion of fitness and health. The responsibility for tackling obesity and poor diet extends to the food industry and those with the power to curb its excesses in government at all levels. Promoting health isn’t nanny state-ism – it’s central to what government should be all about.*

*More follows...*

*“EU-wide regulations are needed to supplant any national bans such as those being discussed in Ireland and here in the UK to ensure they are not undermined by digital and satellite broadcasts reaching audiences beyond frontiers and thus escaping national regulation.”*

Dr Lucas’ written declaration – which is open for signature until May 6<sup>th</sup> and would become the European Parliament’s official policy if it attracts more than 314 signatories – was drawn up in conjunction with food and farming NGO *Sustain: The Alliance for Better Food and Farming*.

Sustain policy officer Charlie Powell welcomed the declaration: *“This is an enormously valuable initiative which will bring us one step closer to protecting children from junk food promotions – in line with the wishes of the majority of voters.”*

Sustain is coordinating a UK campaign on protecting children from junk food ads, and has already attracted pledges of support from 113 organisations.

The declaration opened for signature just days after Green MEPs from across the EU launched a campaign for fairer, safer food in Ireland last week.

The Green Group’s campaign centres on the message that food is a political issue and that the Greens across Europe will offer an integrated approach to combining opposition to GM and factory farming together with the promotion of organic agriculture, local production, fair trade and animal rights.

**ENDS**

Notes to Editors

For more information on the Greens’ Food Campaign, visit [www.eat-better.org](http://www.eat-better.org)

For copies of the Written Declaration contact the Press Office or visit:

[http://www.europarl.eu.int/Declaration/document/2004/P5\\_DCL\(2004\)0031/P5\\_DCL\(2004\)0031\\_EN.doc](http://www.europarl.eu.int/Declaration/document/2004/P5_DCL(2004)0031/P5_DCL(2004)0031_EN.doc)

For more information on Sustain, visit [www.sustainweb.org](http://www.sustainweb.org)

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