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Answer given by Mr Várhelyi  
on behalf of the European Commission  
(28.7.2026)

Nutrition and promoting healthy diets remain the competence of Member States, which establish their national health and nutrition policies. The EU supports Member States in this task. The Commission is already supporting local governments in their efforts to ensure that healthy foods are served in public institutions such as schools, hospitals, and government facilities. Public procurement relies on criteria to be followed by food service providers. The Joint Research Centre of the Commission<sup>1</sup> published a report on criteria for sustainable public procurement for food, catering services and vending machines<sup>2</sup> as a supporting tool.

Voluntary initiatives such as the Healthy Meal Standard (HMS) can support or complement regulatory initiatives and as they aim to promote healthy diets, which is within the remit of Member States, Member States can consider their relevance from a consumer protection and child health perspective.

In relation to the scope for recognising frameworks as examples of good practice, the Commission supports the collection and sharing of best and promising practices, including on promoting healthy eating in schools and other community settings, through the EU Best Practice Portal on Public Health<sup>3</sup>. In addition, best practices can be transferred between Member States, such as through the joint action PreventNCD<sup>4</sup>, which is funded with EUR 76 million from the EU4Health programme. These are non-regulatory approaches, and implementation remains with the Member States.

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<sup>1</sup> [https://joint-research-centre.ec.europa.eu/index\\_en](https://joint-research-centre.ec.europa.eu/index_en).

<sup>2</sup> Criteria for Sustainable Public Procurement (SPP) for Food, Food services, and Vending machines: <https://publications.jrc.ec.europa.eu/repository/handle/JRC139495>.

<sup>3</sup> Best practices Portal: <https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/dyna/bp-portal/>.

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.preventncd.eu/about/>.