THE COUNCIL

— EMPHASISES its great concern about the serious health, social and economic impact of the increasing prevalence of overweight and obesity in individuals, particularly children, and in the European Community,

— REFERS to scientific results showing that obesity is the major cause of a range of serious associated diseases, and indicating that 15% of children and adolescents in Europe are suffering from obesity, and that this number will increase dramatically in many Member States unless appropriate action is taken,

— REAFFIRMS the Council Resolution of 3 December 1990 regarding the action programme on nutrition and health (1), the Conclusions of the Council and the Ministers for Health of the Member States meeting within the Council of 15 May 1992 (2) on nutrition and health, and the Council Resolution on health and nutrition of 14 December 2000 (3),

— REFERS to the focus, which the EU Conference on Obesity in Copenhagen on 11 to 12 September 2002 put on the multiple problems caused by obesity, and the urgent request from leading international experts to act as quickly as possible on the basis of the existing documentation, simultaneously with the gathering of new knowledge,

— UNDERLINES the need, in preventing and responding to the problems resulting from obesity, to take a cross-sectoral approach, including, inter alia, the health, social, food educational, cultural and transport sectors.

INVITES THE MEMBER STATES to take account in their national public health policies of the need to address the issue of obesity.

INVITES THE COMMISSION TO:

1. reinforce its efforts to prevent and combat obesity and, in particular, its response to the invitations of the Council in its Resolution of 14 December 2000;

2. support the Member States in their efforts to prevent and manage obesity, taking into account the potential risk of eating disorders, particularly by developing innovative measures and approaches concerning nutrition and physical activity;

3. continue to strengthen the research on obesity;

4. ensure that prevention of obesity is taken into account in all relevant Community policies, and, in particular, in the framework of the programme of Community action in the field of public health (2003 to 2008).