



Fighting **O**besity Through **O**ffer and **D**emand

Balanced Nutrition at Work

THE EUROPEAN FOOD PROJECT:

A Successful Public Private Partnership

31 May 2011 / European Parliament . Brussels

Conference Report



Fighting Obesity Through Offer and Demand

Balanced Nutrition at Work

THE EUROPEAN FOOD PROJECT: A Successful Public Private Partnership

Table of Contents

Introduction	3
The FOOD pilot project	3
Opening speeches	5
"An innovative project"	5
"An important opportunity to improve employees' health"	5
Priorities of the Hungarian Presidency of the EU	6
Roundtable 1 - The importance of balanced nutrition at work	6
Introduction	6
Changing the food environment	7
Incentivizing companies	9
The power of public-private partnerships	9
Roundtable 2 - FOOD: a public-private partnership for a successful initiative	10
Introduction.....	11
Results of the inventory of current practices.....	11
Main findings of the surveys	11
Evaluation of the FOOD project.....	12
Actions in restaurants	13
Promoting Workplace Health Promotion in European Companies	13
Role of the Advisory Board.....	14
Workshop 1 - Companies and the FOOD programme.....	14
Facts and figures - the importance of nutrition and well being at work	15
Methodologies, tools and evaluations	16
Testimony of a company	17
Workshop 2 - Understanding the programme - meeting the partners	18
Introduction	18
Implementing nutritional guidelines - national specificities	18
Sweden - encouraging people to make healthy choices	18
Tackling "toxic restaurants" in the Czech Republic	19
Face-to-face meetings with restaurateurs in Belgium	19
Using the Mediterranean diet as a framework in Spain	20
Innovation in France	21
The Slovak Republic joins FOOD	21
Conclusion - the future of the FOOD project	22

Introduction

More than 160 participants attended the conference **Balanced Nutrition at Work**, The European FOOD project : a successful public-private partnership, held at the European Parliament in Brussels, 31 May 2011. The conference was a showcase for the two-year FOOD (Fighting Obesity through Offer and Demand) pilot project, which ended in April 2011.

In 2008, the European Commission launched a call for proposals for initiatives to fight obesity. Obesity affects one adult in 10 worldwide and accounts for 8% to 13% of deaths in Europe; 53% of Europeans are overweight. According to the World Health Organization, obesity is one of the most important health challenges of the 21st century.

Edenred designed the FOOD pilot project, based on experience with its 2005 Nutritional Balance programme, introduced by Ticket Restaurant™ and deployed in 13 countries. This laid the foundation for Edenred to create synergies among companies, employees and restaurants, which have proved invaluable in unrolling the highly successful FOOD pilot project.



The FOOD pilot project

The objective of the FOOD pilot project is to promote balanced nutrition to restaurant managers and to employees in companies. Organised as a public-private partnership within a consortium and coordinated by Edenred, the project is focusing on the serious problem of obesity in Europe by addressing the business community directly through restaurant managers and company employees.

Experts from six countries – Belgium, the Czech Republic, France, Italy, Spain and Sweden – collaborated for more than two years on ways of promoting balanced nutrition in the workplace and in restaurants. Project partners included academics, public health authorities, nutritionists and others. The EU Platform for Action on Diet, Physical Activity and Health provided the policy for the framework. DG SANCO co-funded the project through its Executive Agency for Health and Consumers. The project's two main objectives are to:

- ▶ Improve the nutritional habits of employees by raising their awareness to health issues; and
- ▶ Improve the nutritional quality of the food on offer through working with restaurants.

To meet these objectives, the FOOD project consortium has created channels of communication between the companies and the restaurants using its unique network of contacts. Project activities included the following:

- ▶ A review of exiting health promotion programmes in the workplace and in restaurants was followed by two questionnaires. The first was a quantitative study addressing employees (52,000) and restaurants (5,500) to better understand the project's needs. The second was a qualitative study involving 60 interviews in restaurants in 12 countries.
- ▶ Project partners then made recommendations for companies and restaurants.
- ▶ Simple, interactive communication and information tools were developed, adapted and piloted for restaurants and companies, including brochures, online games, cards with recommendations, placemats, and inserts in Ticket Restaurant™ meal vouchers.
- ▶ Pilots were evaluated.
- ▶ Following the evaluation, tools were adapted and best practices disseminated.

A Road Show in October 2009 officially launched the project. A double-decker bus brought cooking demonstrations, conferences, vegetable gardens and entertainment to the six participating countries, attracting numerous visitors and journalists.

Balanced Nutrition at Work

THE EUROPEAN FOOD PROJECT: A Successful Public Private Partnership

Selected recommendations

Here are some selected recommendations for restaurants to improve the nutritional content of the dishes on offer without additional costs.

For restaurants:

- Favour cooking methods that do not require adding too much fat, such as steaming, roasting, grilling. (This is the only common recommendation for the six pilot countries.)
- I do not put salt on the table. (Belgium. Parallel mode with the employees advised not to add salt to their dish before tasting it.)
- Increase the range of vegetable salads, especially with olive or rapeseed oil added. (Czech Republic. Seasoning is determinant in the salads and vegetables offer.)
- I automatically offer tap water to my clients. (France. Parallel mode with the employees advised to choose water at lunchtime.)
- Offer dishes in two portions sizes. (Italy. May suggest having a plate of vegetables on the side.)
- Clearly identify the healthy options on the menu. (Spain. To help customers to choose well.)
- Use the "tray model" as information about balanced meals. (Sweden. Customers are encouraged to use the FOOD recommendations through the use of the country-specific tools.)

For employees:

Here are some recommendations for employees to enable them to choose a more balanced meal at lunchtime or more generally during the working day. The first six recommendations are common to the six pilot countries.

- Taste food before adding salt and/or try other condiments. (The recommended daily intake of salt for adults is no more than six grams - about one teaspoon.)
- Lower the use of fat and preferably use vegetable oils. (Try and replace saturated fats, which can increase the risk of heart problems, with unsaturated fats such as olive oil, to improve blood lipid levels.)
- Eat at least five portions of fruit/vegetables per day. (The recommended minimum daily intake of fruit and vegetables in most countries is 400 grams or five portions.)

- As a dessert, choose a fresh fruit based option and sometimes as an alternative, a dairy product. (Dairy consumption recommendations vary per country.)
- Choose types of cooking that do not add too much fat, such as steaming, roasting or grilling. (This minimizes the addition of fat, which is already present in many foods.)
- Choose water to accompany your lunch. (Water is essential to the body. Consumption should be 1.5-2 litres.)
- I only have treats on special occasions. (Belgium. Following a balanced nutrition does not mean frustration and completely avoiding sweets, cakes, crisps, etc. The key is moderation.)
- Fruit or vegetables could help suppress hunger between main meals. (Czech Republic. Snacks are not a problem. Simply choose healthy ones.)
- Why not choose fish as a main dish? (France. The consumption of fish twice a week is recommended.)
- Do not consume too much bread, especially in between dishes. Choose whole grain bread. (Italy. Grains are an important part of the diet yet should not be excessively consumed.)
- Some days we could do without meat. The combination of legumes and cereals is a good alternative. (Spain. Meat offers proteins, but also fat.)
- Choose the Keyhole meal. (Sweden. The Keyhole programme, well-known to Swedish consumers, guarantees a healthier choice.)

Results

- More than 85 communication initiatives launched;
- 350,000 restaurants informed about the project;
- 1,900 restaurants in six countries enrolled in the FOOD network;
- 4 million employees informed
- 66,623 visits to the European website (since February 2009);
- 11,973 visits to the Belgian website (since February 2010); and
- 150 anonymous visits to restaurants.

The project is continuing as the FOOD programme. The Slovak Republic recently became the seventh participating country in the consortium. For more information: <http://www.food-programme.eu/>



Opening speeches

MEP Mario Mauro

Head of the PdL, Italian Delegation in the EPP Group

Jacques Stern

CEO, Edenred

Gábor Baranyai

Deputy State Secretary for EU Sectoral Policies, Hungary

An innovative project

Public Private Partnerships (PPP), such as the FOOD project, are best way to reach shared objectives, said **MEP Mario Mauro**, Head of the PdL, Italian Delegation in the EPP Group. Mr. Mauro emphasised the importance of healthy eating during workers' lunch breaks and said the FOOD project should be diffused across businesses and in public offices.

"Only six member states took part in the project. I hope the project will welcome all European member states. It is an innovative project emphasising balance and nutrition," he said. Mr. Mauro added that broad dissemination of the project's results could be adapted to local specificities.

An important opportunity to improve employees' health

Edenred CEO **Jacques Stern** gave an overview of the project and explained Edenred's commitment to fighting obesity and related diseases - cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes, hypertension, osteoarthritis, obstructive sleep apnoea, stroke, and certain types of cancer.

"Today more than 130 million people in Europe are obese – and 53% of the European population is considered overweight," he said. "We want to participate in the understanding of how we can solve or better manage the issue."

Edenred's business is to provide vouchers to companies to increase the purchasing power of employees for dedicated purposes, such as getting access to meals during the working day.

"We have a good knowledge about what people are thinking about nutrition and food. Employees have new demands and expectations. Though, it is difficult to have a proper, healthy meal at lunchtime during the working day," Mr. Stern said. "The food offer around companies [typically] lacks variety. This is an important opportunity to improve employees' health, increase productivity and reduce absenteeism."

The needs of companies include the safety, health, well being and productivity of their employees. "There is a growing need for raising awareness, information and action from complimentary networks and expertise," he explained.

Mr. Stern told participants that in Edenred's experience, meal vouchers are a "powerful communication vector" for promoting good practices in terms of balanced nutrition.



Balanced Nutrition at Work

THE EUROPEAN FOOD PROJECT: A Successful Public Private Partnership

Priorities of the Hungarian Presidency of the EU

Hungary took on the rotating presidency of the EU on 1 January 2011. **Gábor Baranyai**, Deputy State Secretary for EU Sectoral Policies, Hungary, told participants that 1.5 billion people worldwide have weight problems. "This number has doubled since 1980, which is a very radical curve going up. When we try to tackle the roots of this problem, we have to look at cultural issues, as well as lifestyle issues," he said.



Mr. Baranyai pointed to the importance of food information for consumers and lamented the "unhappy experience with food legislation" at European level. "Both the European Parliament and the European Council have strong ideological positions and the differences cannot be bridged," he said. However, the Hungarian Presidency is hopeful that there will be an agreed text on food legislation by 7 July 2011.

"Legislation concerning GMOs (genetically modified organisms) is less relevant in the debate about obesity, but it is an important issue when we are talking about healthy food and traditional biological agriculture," he added.

The Hungarian government's proposed Hamburger Tax is being "hotly debated". Under the proposal, unhealthy foods, including fast food meals, sodas, coffee and sweets, could be taxed. The principle is that those who live unhealthily must contribute more to support the health system. "The government has realized that we have obese and unhealthy people dying at a young age. This is [also] unstable in terms of social security," Mr. Baranyai told participants.

Roundtable 1

The importance of balanced nutrition at work

Moderator - Christopher Wanjek

Author of Food at Work, published by the International Labour Organization (ILO)

Commissioner Antonio Tajani

Vice-President, Industry and Entrepreneurship

Giulia del Brenna

Head of Unit, Competitiveness in the Pharmaceuticals Industry and Biotechnology, DG Enterprise and Industry, European Commission

MEP Elisabetta Gardini

Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety, European Parliament

Olivier Christiaens

Federal Public Service for Health, Food Chain Safety and Environment, Belgium

Juan Ballesteros

Spanish Food Safety and Nutrition Agency (AESAN)

Ulf Bohman

Keyhole Restaurant Association, Sweden

Professor Ambroise Martin

Medical School, Claude Bernard University, Lyon, France

Caroline Bollars

World Health Organization (WHO), Regional Office for Europe

Despina Spanou

DG SANCO, Chair of the EU Platform for Action on Diet, Physical Activity and Health

Introduction

The European Commission's 2007 White Paper concerning nutrition confirms that companies have a major role to play in promoting health in the workplace. Simple, cost-effective measures can improve their employees' well being and at the same time, make important inroads into tackling obesity.

Companies with canteens are increasingly promoting healthy, balanced nutrition options. However, employees of small businesses that do not provide food typically go out for lunch where it is often much more difficult to find healthy options.

An ILO study, Food At Work, reports that good nutrition at work is good business and leads to considerable gains in productivity, higher worker morale, prevention of accidents and



premature deaths, and reductions in healthcare costs. Adequate nourishment can raise national productivity levels by 20%. A 1% kilocalorie (kcal) increase results in a 2.27% increase in general labour productivity.

"The food at work concept is not just a health issue, but a health, safety and productivity issue," said Moderator **Christopher Wanjek**, author of the ILO's Food at Work study. "Better food leads to higher productivity. We are not talking about mandates. It is important to give workers the education and the opportunity to seek out healthy food." Mr. Wanjek referred to healthy food as "protective clothing" for workers.

Despina Spanou, DG SANCO and Chair of the EU Platform for Action on Diet, Physical Activity and Health, told participants that the EU's disease prevention strategy is to make healthy nutrition options available when people are at work. "We don't tell people what to eat; it is allowing them to make an informed choice, making a healthy choice available . . . and telling them why it is good for [them]," she said.

Ms. Spanou noted that Europe still does not have a final law on nutrition and labelling. The Commission proposed the legislation to curb the rise in obesity in the EU, stating that consumers are confused by food labeling standards and that a new system was needed to ensure they were able to make an educated choice.

The European Commission is focusing on prevention programmes and is using the economic downturn "to seize the moment" and help national governments deal with healthcare budget cuts. "The FOOD project can offer opportunities to member states from an economical point of view," she added. "Spreading the project to more member states is one of our objectives."

Changing the food environment

Mr. Wanjek reminded participants that in the past, food used to be about friendship, relaxation and sharing. "We've lost our focus. People try to get as much food in their mouths as quickly as possible," he said. "In post-World War II Europe, food



vouchers were introduced to put the continent back to work. Are we rebuilding the continent or destroying it by the way we are eating now?" he asked.

By choosing to implement a policy of healthy nutrition, companies are aligning their interests with those of society, said **Giulia del Brenna**, Head of Unit, Competitiveness in the Pharmaceuticals

Industry and Biotechnology, DG Enterprise and Industry. "Food is part of a chain . . . there is an impact from farm to fork. By implementing these types of policies, companies can shape the market and promote responsible consumption across the chain of food production," she added.

Panellists agreed that eating habits across Europe reflects each country's diversity and culture. "We each have our own strategies," said **Juan Ballesteros**, Spanish Food Safety and Nutrition Agency (AESAN). In Spain, communications campaigns have been launched to "change the food environment". Standards have been launched for school canteens, including what can be sold in vending machines. A network of restaurants working with Edenred and AESAN is committed to offering healthy options on their menus, such as offering whole grain bread, fish and fruit.

"We are making progress step by step," he said. "Consumers are not rejecting our efforts." Mr. Ballesteros pointed out that in 2008, all EU member states made a commitment to

Balanced Nutrition at Work

THE EUROPEAN FOOD PROJECT: A Successful Public Private Partnership

reduce salt intake, which has resulted in negotiations between national health administrations and the food industries.

There is no single solution to the obesity crisis. Progress is being made in Belgium, according to **Olivier Christiaens**, Federal Public Service for Health, Food Chain Safety and Environment. "Consumption of fruit and vegetables is on the rise, but sadly, so are obesity levels, especially with children," he said. Working within the framework of the 2006 World Health Organization's European Charter on Counteracting Obesity, Belgium has developed a national food and health plan.

"In a broad domain of subjects and diverse range of actions, we are trying to improve eating habits and promote a higher level of physical activity," Mr. Christiaens told participants. The government is working with the food industry to lower salt content and with nutritionists to avoid under nourishment in hospitals. Recognizing the breastfeeding-obesity link, the practice is also being promoted.



The Belgian government is collaborating with nutritionists in hospitals to improve the health of patients, as many are malnourished. It is also working with the food industry to lower the salt content of products.

In Italy, the daycare centres with the best canteens are those where parents were involved in setting the menus. "Everyone should know how to eat well, but that is not the case. We need to focus on eating," said MEP **Elisabetta Gardini**, Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety. Pointing to the need to create more networks involving restaurants, businesses and the food industry, she predicted the FOOD project would have "a very important impact".

Ms. Spanou emphasised the importance of awareness and information. "We don't want to create the food police . . . it's more important to make people aware of balanced nutrition and to give them the option," she said. "Prevention doesn't sell." However, the medical community should become involved because people generally listen to their doctors.

Ms. Gardini argued for very clear guidelines at European level that member states could implement according to national specificities. "We can only be efficient if we apply the subsidiarity principle," she said.



Incentivizing companies

Responding to a comment from the audience that prevention is a "classic market failure", panellists debated how best to incentivize companies to promote a balanced diet to their employees - and to take concrete action. Companies are an important setting for promoting health eating and as an information channel to employees.

Workplace meal programmes - in canteens offering healthy choices, supplying meal vouchers or through partnerships with restaurants - are a missed opportunity. Many European companies are promoting balanced nutrition as part of their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives.

"The problem must be tackled at all levels and enterprises have a role to play. The European Commission is pushing the idea that enterprises have a societal impact that can be good or bad. CSR is voluntary... but it can shape values inside and outside of the company," said Ms. del Brenna. Today, many young people choose an employer because of benefits and working conditions. "Perhaps one day they [will consider] how they will eat at the company," she added.

Ms. Spanou discussed the trend of nutrition becoming a CSR issue and argued that when a company acts on providing healthy choices, "it should be part of its competitive profile". Actions taken by companies within the framework of the EU Platform for Action on Diet, Physical Activity and Health are increasingly becoming a component of CSR programmes, she added.

Sweden's Keyhole Restaurant Association's programme is well established. However, as Ulf Bohman explained, "One of the biggest challenges is getting new restaurants and keeping restaurants in the programme. They ask, 'why should we serve a healthy meal?' One would think it's customer demand, but that is not our experience," he said. Incentives are needed, for example catering contracts and "showing the world", even if 90% of the offer is the standard burger and fries.



Another factor in Sweden is engagement by CEOs and chefs. "If they are interested in health, it gets implemented," Mr. Bohman told participants. Mr. Wanjek agreed and pointed to Canada's Husky Energy company, which is headed by a CEO who is vegetarian. The company's heavily subsidised canteens offer healthy and vegetarian choices.

Panellists and participants discussed incentives such as a "Hamburger Tax", currently being debated in Hungary. Mr. Bohman argued for a positive tax push. **Caroline Bollars**, World Health Organization, Regional Office for Europe, agreed: "The best policy action would be an increase in tax on unhealthy food and a decrease in tax for subsidized healthy foods." However,

she noted that WHO is still trying to define exactly what healthy food is.

"What about considering procurement rules?" Ms. Bollars proposed. "Healthy options are expensive and unhealthy options are inexpensive. Procurement rules are not linked to nutrition or healthy options."

The Swedish Ministry of Health is looking at economic incentives for better health



outcomes. One solution could be an incentive scheme for vouchers. If a voucher is used for healthy foods, there is tax break. A participant argued for a "Carrot Tax" - a simple corporate tax break for providing a voucher for a healthy lunch.

The power of public-private partnerships

The WHO's European Charter on Counteracting Obesity has created the policy framework for the 53 signatory member states. Member states have pledged to work together with the private sector to fight obesity, perhaps within public-private partnerships. WHO is also supporting member states to develop action plans and has joined with the European Commission to monitor progress.

"For all countries in Europe it is different. There is no common definition of what a public-private partnership is in health and nutrition," said Ms. Bollars. "Every member state has its own culture. We need a clear commitment and we need to distinguish who is a partner and who is a stakeholder."

Balanced Nutrition at Work

THE EUROPEAN FOOD PROJECT: A Successful Public Private Partnership

Public-private partnerships in France are “difficult”, according to Professor Ambroise Martin, Medical School, Claude Bernard University. “There are so many different and variable stakeholders that it is difficult to [bring them together] in a partnership. There are also economic constraints. As public authorities, we know nothing about this complex world,” he said. “In France, the private sector is the enemy, not the partner for people high in the administration. There is always a suspicion that it is about money.”

Professor Martin praised the FOOD project, particularly for engaging with restaurants, as that was the starting point for the very successful Gustino programme.

Ms. Spanou stressed the challenge of the project to be conducted in six countries. The European Commission would like to see this best practice spread more. “We are delighted to have such a project funded by the European Public Health programme which supports this partnership approach” (...) “I would like to see it applied in other parts of Europe. So we call for the support of those who are interested, of those who have the means, and we, as European Commission, we try to promote this kind of work as much as possible.”

Indicators, monitoring and evaluation are key to proving the value of public-private partnerships. Ms. Bollars argued it “should not be so difficult” to monitor whether there are healthy options at the workplace. She pointed to Portugal where a policy framework has been created and clear indicators spelled out. “Monitoring and evaluation by an independent entity is very crucial,” she added.

Ms. del Brenna agreed, but reminded participants that SMEs do not have the resources to measure success against set indicators. “Public authorities need to details what has to be done and they need to help companies with exchange of best practices,” she said.

Presentation of the FOOD project

Nathalie Renaudin, Coordinator, Edenred, presented the main steps and methodology that has been followed during the 28-month project.

It was also the opportunity to explain the context of the project and how the Consortium was built.

The intention of the partners was not to reinvent the wheel, but to benefit from the shared expertise of the complimentary entities taking part and to contribute to the national objectives and guidelines.

Roundtable 2

FOOD: a public-private partnership for a successful initiative

Moderator: Professor Martin Caraher

City University, London

Ghislaine Dufourny

Information and Research Centre about Food intolerances and Hygiene (CIRHA)

Charlotte Pedersen

Centre of Research of the Institut Paul Bocuse

Iva Malkova

STop OBesity project “Healthy Living the Easy Way” Association

Professor Agneta Yngve

Karolinska Institutet & Akershus University College

Professor Giuseppe Masanotti

University of Perugia, Coordinator, European Campaign Move Europe

Toni Colom

Public Health, Balearic Islands, Spain



Introduction

Panellists reported on results from the FOOD project's methodology and discussed lessons learned from the highly successful public-private partnership approach. Moderator Martin Caraher pointed out that long-term change regarding balanced nutrition could take 15 to 20 years, but the FOOD project proves much can be accomplished in the short term. The challenge ahead is, "How in the short-term do we convince funders about the impact?"

Results of the inventory of current practices

Ghislaine Dufourny, Information and Research Centre about Food Intolerances and Hygiene (CIRHA), explained why an inventory was necessary. "We surveyed existing programmes of balanced food and health in workplace and focused on companies and restaurant owners. We needed to know and understand strengths and weakness to avoid making mistakes," she said.

The inventory covered the EU and worldwide. Data and information were analysed from 71 programmes of which 17 were relevant - 74% percent of the programmes were for employees from both the public and the private sectors, but rarely both. "In the FOOD project we have a collaboration that generated an interesting level of synergy," Ms. Dufourny noted.

"We analysed the link between offer and demand because ... it is about giving consumers information and giving them choices in a workplace," she explained.

Only half the programmes inventoried were assessed, two-thirds of which were free. Commonly used tools include websites, brochures and posters. "We used the same tools, but we also [conducted interviews]. In our project there are things to keep in mind - interdisciplinary cooperation, providing information and action, and interactivity."

Interactivity is key in the FOOD project to respect specificity and various cultural habits. Communication and information tools developed during the project are also interactive, have visibility and are easy to use.

Main findings of the surveys

The Centre of Research of the Institut Paul Bocuse had two objectives: provide the content for the guide used in France and in collaboration with CIRHA analyse the results of the FOOD project's surveys.

"Our role was to apply our know-how and expertise in the culinary arts and best practices in the hospitality industry," explained Charlotte Pedersen. "Our institute is in direct contact with the professional field."



Balanced Nutrition at Work

THE EUROPEAN FOOD PROJECT: A Successful Public Private Partnership

Ms. Pedersen said that in 2009, there was a general consensus regarding the need for information regarding balanced food. "A European level action could be a real possibility," she told participants.

Another important finding concerns the form and type of information for employees. The surveys revealed employees prefer concrete information such as guides and lists of restaurants, rather than nutritional information over each category. In 2010, the surveys revealed that the majority of customers will consider choosing a balanced meal if it is indicated directly on the menu.

Evaluation of the FOOD project

Professor Agneta Yngve, Karolinska Institutet & Akershus University College, told participants: "This is not a research project; it is a health promotion project with an evaluation component. Research in applied nutrition is not promoted in the EU as it should be and that is a big problem." The impact factor for applied nutrition research is not funded as much as research on molecular nutrition. She called for work to start now evaluating research from the health impact point of view, not only the journal impact factor, which seriously overvalues molecular nutrition, pharmaceutical research and clinical trials.

Ms. Yngve explained that it is important to look at the reach of the project, including the use of the tools developed in each country. As important is the impact factor – the actual change eating habits and health outcomes, which would take a couple of years.

At the same time, the FOOD project is "very important" in terms of reviewing how a project should be run as nutrition is "rather complicated".

Ms. Yngve noted that research in the 1990s in Stockholm revealed that the meals with the highest fat were vegetarian and fish dishes. Salads were also found to be high in fat content. "You can't see if a dish is fatty or lean. Consumers have no clue how much fat is in the food served in restaurants. This is why it is very important for restaurants to take their responsibility," she said.

People who eat a healthy lunch may snack on unhealthy foods during the day or at dinner, which is a factor to consider in the future. There are "vast cultural differences" in lunch habits. One is the "tray model", as in Sweden. People across Europe have very diverse ways of looking at food.

Ms. Yngve pointed to Sweden's Keyhole Programme and noted that the public initiative is pushing for a new market for good products, such as low-fat cheese, in supermarkets and in restaurants..

"Our private partners need to understand research needs and they should work together with researchers. We need win-win partnerships," she said. "It is also important to look at the economic aspects of workplace canteens from a health point of view. When employees are served non-nutritious meals for lunch every day during a long working life, it imposes a real health threat to these individuals."



Actions in restaurants

Iva Malkova, STop OBesity project, "Healthy Living the Easy Way" Association, explained the results of a FOOD pilot study in the Czech Republic. The country's restaurants are a "toxic environment", where meals have "high energetic value" because of the extra large portions and several courses featuring high calorie soups, main dishes and desserts. Restaurants have an incorrect nutritional composition with too many carbohydrates, animal fats and a lack of vegetables.

"From the psychological point of view, if the objective is permanent change in habits, the change must not be unpleasant," she said.

Keeping this in mind, recommendations included serving the same meal with fewer calories, smaller portions, less fat, fewer side dishes, and more vegetables, but with the same taste. It is very important that the aspect of the plate remains the same (to avoid a feeling of an empty plate). This is why we decrease fat side dishes and increase the portion of vegetables. The plate looks the same, with fewer calories.

An example is a meal of roasted pork, sauerkraut and dumplings. The original portion was 1,200 k. calories and 50 grams of fat. The recommended meal features the same ingredients but



with less meat, fewer dumplings and more sauerkraut, totalling 350 k. calories and 12 grams of fat.

"We trained restaurant staff in the composition of a healthy plate. We couldn't train all of them so we developed a self-coaching programme that features a huge database of recipes," Ms. Malkova told participants.

The database allows chefs to change the amount and type of ingredients to facilitate healthier meals. In this way, people can choose foods that are classic but use less unhealthy ingredients and in smaller quantities. An example is serving 100 grams of potatoes on a plate rather than the typical 200 grams.

"We have influenced many restaurants at a low cost," she said.

Promoting Workplace Health Promotion in European Companies

The objective of the Move Europe campaign is to create a Europe where healthy workers create healthy companies. Strengthening the importance of workplace health promotion throughout Europe was the campaign's aim as the seventh initiative of the European Network for Workplace Health Promotion (ENWHP). The campaign, delivered through 30 national contact offices, focused on physical exercise, smoking prevention, nutrition and mental health.

Professor Giuseppe Masanotti, University of Perugia, Coordinator of Move Europe campaign, said the campaign also included work on indicators, standards and models of good practice. Within eight years, 500 public and private companies promoting the health of their workers were certified by the ENWHP.

"In 2005 we then changed our strategy and came up with a simple campaign based on involving our private partners" he



Balanced Nutrition at Work

THE EUROPEAN FOOD PROJECT: A Successful Public Private Partnership

said. Several networks of companies have been generated in several countries and one international – Enterprises for Health – created in Germany involving companies across Europe that promote health and collaborate with at the local level, involving others and in particular SMEs and microenterprises.

The campaign included 3,500 companies across Europe. Eighty models of good practice were identified and 40 presented at a conference in Perugia, Italy. The conference, held in April 2009, concluded the Move Europe campaign and focused on comprehensive workplace health strategies. Today, the campaign continues under the ENWHP and is focusing on Mental Health Promotion.

"Partnerships are easy to create when there is a common interest and objectives," Professor Masanotti said. "Public health policies must not stop outside the workplace. Employees are interested in public health initiatives and are willing to contribute to improve the health of their communities."

Lessons learned from the Move Europe campaign are that partnerships work. "It is not a question of looking for money and spending millions. It is not only a question of money, it is also a question of creating the right strategy to reach our objectives," he added.

Role of the Advisory Board

An external Advisory Board for the FOOD project brought together collaborating partners from Prevent, Belgium; City University of London, England; EuroToques; the European Network for Workplace Health Promotion (ENWHP); the International Labour Organization (ILO); the National Food Administration, Keyhole programme, Sweden; the Medical school of Lyon; and FOOD Pro-Fit (Government of the Balearic Islands).

Toni Colom, Public Health, Balearic Islands, Spain, said his organisation's role in the Advisory Board was to bring a public health perspective to the project and contribute specific expertise. "We also contributed advice and recommendations. We put a special emphasis on ICT to avoid a feeling of déjà vu," he said. "Managing public-private partnerships for food and diet processes has become a health priority and a competitive market strategy."

The means lie in the principle of measuring to know, share, compare, improve and to predict the Health Impact Assessment (HIA) of these public-private partnerships actions.

Workshop 1



Companies and the FOOD programme

Moderator - Nolwenn Bertrand

Co-coordinator, Edenred

Karla Van den Broek

Prevent, European Network for Workplace Health Promotion (ENWHP)

Marie Cordiez

Fearghal O'Connell

Gianni Fontana

Daniela Pedret

Gustavo Bazan

Chen Liu:

Edenred's six national offices, presented the tools adopted for companies, the methodology and the evaluation of the actions.

A presentation from Prevent, a multidisciplinary institute aimed at promoting the quality of working conditions and improving work organisation, sparked debate and set the stage for the first workshop, where participants shared information about which tools were created for companies in the six participating countries. Prevent is the National Contact Office of the European Network for Workplace Health Promotion (ENWHP). In January 2011, Prevent became the host of the ENWHP secretariat.

Facts and figures -the importance of nutrition and well being at work

The ENWHP was founded in 1996 with the objectives to establish workplace health programmes structures, disseminate good practice to increase the number of healthy organisations, and to contribute to sustainable social and economic development.

"We are sitting on a new kind of time bomb," Karla Van den Broek, Prevent, told workshop participants. Chronic diseases are skyrocketing. Diet is the modifiable risk factor for heart disease, stroke, cancer and diabetes. Obesity is an intermediate risk factor for all of these diseases, as well as for respiratory disease.

The workplace is an interesting setting for healthy nutrition programmes because a large proportion of the adult population is employed. The social and organisational characteristics of workplaces contribute to the success of healthy nutrition programmes. Healthy nutrition programmes are an investment for companies, but the returns include benefits such as lowered costs and improved productivity.

Influencing factors on employees' health include long working hours and shift work, stress, sedentary work and organisational aspects such as lack of facilities or breaks and the lack of onsite healthy food options.

Ms. Van den Broek described actions of the Move Europe initiative, which involved 22 countries. A questionnaire was filled out by 1,696 companies. This Company Health Check included questions on active living, healthy living, combating stress and tobacco prevention.

"Health nutrition programmes are most successful if viewed from a comprehensive approach to promoting healthy lifestyles," she told participants. The health of employees is directly related to company performance.



Slide 10 from
Ms Van Den Broek's
Presentation

Individual outcomes from workplace health promotion programmes include:

- ▶ Healthy attitudes.
- ▶ Improved motivation.
- ▶ More commitment
- ▶ Healthier lifestyles.
- ▶ Fewer accidents and diseases.
- ▶ Improved health status.
- ▶ Better quality of life.
- ▶ More job satisfaction.

Organisational outcomes from workplace health promotion programmes include:

- ▶ Better working conditions, social climate and organisational processes.
- ▶ Fewer costs from absenteeism, accidents and diseases.
- ▶ Improved company image and position in the labour market as well as customer satisfaction.
- ▶ Less turnover, better job retention.
- ▶ Higher productivity.



"These tangible outcomes are linked to company goals and are linked to business performance," Ms Van den Broek added. "Healthy food choices improve the general health and well being of employees. If you invest in the health and nutrition of employees, they will be healthy people and healthy employees. Workplace health promotion programmes stimulate investments in human capital which is essential for a sustainable growth."

Balanced Nutrition at Work

THE EUROPEAN FOOD PROJECT: A Successful Public Private Partnership



Methodologies, tools and evaluations

To present the FOOD tools developed in the six countries with a more dynamic approach, three groups of two countries were formed: the Czech Republic and Sweden (1), Belgium and France(2), Italy and Spain (3). The participants interested in the recommendations of one group gathered around the country representatives. The latter are from Edenred's national units as their value added within the project is the know-how in communication and marketing.

Working Group 1

Daniela Pedret from the Czech Republic FOOD project said information concerning healthy eating was spread during a large public relations campaign, Tell me what you eat. A questionnaire concerning the nutrition habits and healthy FOOD recommendations was online for almost four weeks and was promoted among the online population with help of web banners campaign, a large mailing and also presented to 25,000 Facebook fans. Almost 11,000 filled-in questionnaires and more than 160 media outputs proved that the project was interesting to the public.

It is quite challenging to contact the restaurants and persuade them to change their cooking practice, but a lot of them offered

at least one healthy option. How is such a restaurant easily found? Cooperation with a web portal presenting lunch menus was set-up. This new cooperation enables the public to be informed about the network of restaurants in Czech Republic that serve healthy options.

"The challenge is how to eat Czech but to eat healthy. People like to eat and the Czech cuisine is traditionally quite heavy," she explained. "But repetitive promotion of simple FOOD recommendations and network of restaurants with healthy options could be a good way to improve national habits."

The results have been measured with two surveys and a third is planned for next year.

Social media also played a role in Sweden, where there are so far 296 twitter followers (with an increase every day). In Sweden, the Social media, ex: FOOD in Sweden national blog, Facebook page and Twitter account are closely connected with the purposes of generating network traffic and communicating for FOOD project. **Chen Liu**, Edenred Sweden, pointed out that there are already many restaurants (around 300) that are Keyhole certified. The keyhole standard and a close partner relation with the Keyhole certified restaurant is a unique feature for FOOD project in Sweden.

National specificities are important. "The tray model will not work in Norway where they have a sandwich style lunch, for example," she explained. Communications tools in Sweden include a placemat depicting the tray model with information about healthy choices, as well as displays (table talkers and FOOD recommendation flyers) on tables in the restaurants.

Working Group 2

The central communication tool for FOOD Belgium is a website, www.foodprogram.be, offering the stakeholders practical tools and concrete information: video, posters, leaflets, texts for intranet, the opportunity to join the program online and to win a free training for restaurant staff.

The FOOD project in Belgium joined forces with Nutri-Challenge, a company that organises healthy days and seminars in companies. Employees learned about the impact of bad food habits on work, health and well being. Stands were set up where employees could a.o. wear a 10-kilo belt to feel the impact of weight gain and find out the proportion of water, muscle and fat in their bodies.

"Practical and concrete are the key words," said Marie Cordiez, Edenred Belgium.

Gustavo Bazan, Edenred France, presented the communication strategy, directed at 3 key targets

1. Communication to employees, using the Ticket Restaurant booklet with 1.2 millions daily users to promote our 10 recommendations. We also take advantage of our existing website: www.ticket-restaurant.fr website to promote FOOD cooking game and employees recommendations, as well as www.beneficioclub.fr to promote the FOOD cooking game thanks to a banner.
2. Communication via employers through an e-welcome pack to our current and new clients, composed of an emailing, a poster, set of cards for employees and the FOOD cooking game to integrate to their intranet. We also organize concrete actions with a 'health day' in the client's headquarters.
3. Communication via restaurants: we developed an e-learning DVD and a video interface to present the programme and the recommendations to 164 000. With complimentary face to face meetings, it enabled us to launch the network of FOOD restaurants in France. In 2011, we plan to use the Ticket Restaurant Stickers to sensitivze restaurants to the FOOD programme.

Working Group 3

The FOOD project in Spain is centred on the Employee FOOD Guide. Firstly, an ad on the booklet for Ticket Restaurant encouraged 500 people to ask for guides, which could either be mailed or sent as a PDF. **Fearghal O'Connell**, Edenred Spain told participants of their campaign to 7.500 clients offering the Employee FOOD Guide and was subsequently distributed to over 13.000 employees. The guide is also available in the Edenred and AESAN web pages for download.

Edenred promoted the themes of FOOD Programme privileging the aspects of corporate social responsibility and underlining the value in terms of public health and social policy. The interlocutors of the programme, the demand and the offer, have been solicited directly but also through the clients. Messages sent on companies websites (newsletter, ticket carnet, etc.) and especially new digital channels such as the web and an iPhone applications have been added to the conventional tools such as information guides for restaurants and consumers, précisedstated **Gianni Fontana**, Edenred Italy.

Testimony of a company

Pascale de Greef, Director of Human Resources at Cegedim, Belgium, described her company's programme as very simple. "We have not imposed anything on our employees. We educate by showing and by being an example," she said. Ms. de Greef said she lost 16 kilos by changing her eating habits. "Balanced nutrition is the key to success. It works and the whole company is part of the [FOOD] project."

Folders and leaflets were distributed to employees. Previously free snacks and sodas were available and were supplemented by fruit and water. Now, no one is eating the snacks. Through negotiations with the trade union, it was decided that employees had to pay for soda. Within three months, the soda vending machine was taken off the premises.

"It is an easy process if you have an easy message and do not impose," she said.

Balanced Nutrition at Work

THE EUROPEAN FOOD PROJECT: A Successful Public Private Partnership



Workshop 2

Understanding the programme - meeting the partners

Moderator - Nolwenn Bertrand
Co-coordinator, Edenred

Ulf Bohman
Keyhole Restaurant Association, Sweden

Iva Malkova
STop OBesity project, "Healthy Living the Easy Way"
Association

Olivier Christiaens
Federal Public Service for Health, Food Chain Safety and
Environment, Belgium

Anna Bach
Fundación Dieta Mediterránea (FDM), Spain

Professor Ambroise Martin
Medical School, Claude Bernard University, Lyon, France

Dr. Iveta Truskova
Public Health Authority, Slovak Republic

Livia Sunova
Edenred, Slovak Republic

Introduction

A major challenge of the FOOD pilot project was avoiding duplicate messages to companies and employees concerning balanced nutrition and healthy eating. "The messages [and recommendations] are based on existing nutritional guidelines in the countries," explained **Nolwenn Bertrand**, Co-coordinator, Edenred.

Partners from Sweden, the Czech Republic, Belgium, Spain and France shared their experiences in introducing the FOOD pilot project in their countries and implementing the guidelines.

Implementing nutritional guidelines - national specificities

According to **Ulf Bohman**, Keyhole Restaurant Association, Sweden: "All countries have similarities when you get into the nutritional level. The difference is how we promote different additions to the meal and how we compose it. We have more similarities than differences."

Sweden - encouraging people to make healthy choices

Sweden's government-controlled programme was built upon the existing Keyhole initiative. A challenge was how to encourage people to make healthy choices. Sometimes healthy branded food is a "red mark" so it is important that the offer has other values in addition to good nutrition.



"It has to be tasty," Mr. Bohman added. "To lure people into trying other dishes, in Sweden we have daily specials. If the healthy choice is on the top of the menu, more people will choose it."

Sweden is also working with labelling systems. In addition, there are two versions of serving lunch. Food is either served on a plate or as a self-serve version. It is

important how chefs and staff use ingredients in the kitchen and how many vegetables they serve.

Tackling "toxic restaurants" in the Czech Republic

Changing eating habits is not a diet, it is about permanent diet, explained **Iva Malkova**, STop OBesity project, "Healthy Living the Easy Way" Association. "I need to stress again the importance of psychology. We need to stress not only what to do, but how to do it," she said.

The FOOD pilot project partners worked with restaurants regarding caloric values, ingredients and portions. The objective was to decrease the "toxic environment" in the Czech restaurants that forces people into unsuitable lifestyles. Restaurants typically serve extra large portions, too many carbohydrates and animal fats, and not enough vegetables.

To increase the health and labour productivity of employees, courses based on cognitive behavioural therapy are run in the workplace. Topics include weight reduction and maintenance and for improving lifestyle and preventing lifestyle diseases.

The recommended course is eight weeks involving 1.5 hours of group therapy and exercise.

Supporting materials include self-help manuals in the form of booklets, books, journals, and DVDs with exercises. About 50,000 per year are distributed. A Self-coaching website enables people to record what they eat and how much exercise they do. Participants get daily feedback on their lifestyle habits.

"At a time when lifestyle diseases [are becoming] an epidemic, it is necessary to look for programmes that are inexpensive and that influence many people . . . FOOD is exactly that type of programme," Ms. Malkova told participants.

Face-to-face meetings with restaurateurs in Belgium

The USP - Unique Selling Point - of the FOOD project in Belgium was that partners targeted the hospitality sector. Under the existing National Food and Health Plan, it was difficult to reach that audience.



Balanced Nutrition at Work

THE EUROPEAN FOOD PROJECT: A Successful Public Private Partnership



"We had no idea how to contact them as a whole. Federations don't have that much leverage in Belgium, so it is every restaurant for itself," explained **Olivier Christiaens**, Federal Public Service for Health, Food Chain Safety and Environment, Belgium. At the same time, recent studies revealed that increasingly, more Belgians are eating in restaurants during the working day and that restaurant visits were increasing during the week.

"We thought it would be very helpful to participate in the FOOD project," he said. "The unique thing we did is that we went face-to-face with restaurants and explained the project. We sent emails but received no response. But when we visited, they were really interested and ready to join on the spot. That was a very big success for us."

If a restaurant met seven of the 10 recommendations, it could join the project. Eighty out of 150 restaurants joined in two weeks. "One out of two is a good result when you go face-to-face," Mr. Christiaens added. "We gave a quick course in FOOD. Our recommendations in Belgium are very simple. We could tell in five minutes whether a restaurant could be part of the project. In our recommendations, [a restaurant] just needs to offer healthy choices."

Using the Mediterranean diet as a framework in Spain

In 2010, the Mediterranean diet was awarded UNESCO World Heritage status within the framework of the organization's Intangible Cultural Heritage List. In Spain, FOOD project partners used the diet as a framework to issue recommendations. The Spanish recommendations are similar to those issued in Italy.

"The Mediterranean diet is set as a reference prudent dietary pattern and is a proven pattern with substantial scientific evidence of its health benefits," explained **Anna Bach**, Fundación Dieta Mediterránea (FDM), Spain. "It has a plant-based core, and the whole dietary pattern can be represented so that it can be easily understood."

The dietary pattern consists also of moderate dairy and wine at mealtimes, together with less consumption of red and processed meats and sugars. In Mediterranean countries, the diet is a common framework that has been represented in a new food pyramid. The Spanish recommendations include five portions of fruit and vegetables daily, choosing fruit for dessert, and drinking water for lunch rather high-sugar caloric beverages. Reducing the use of fat (steaming or grilling over frying) and using olive oil and other vegetable based oils over animal fats is emphasised and consumers are encouraged to taste their meal before adding salt or other condiments (sauces can be served separately from the dish) and offering two portion-sizes and a combination of legumes and cereals as a meat alternative.

"Everything is in the Mediterranean Diet new pyramid," Dr. Bach explained. "With choosing those recommendations we tried to fulfil energy and nutritional requirements, but also build healthy habits. For the visibility of those healthy options, it is important for users to generate demand and for restaurants to differentiate themselves. It is all a question of balance!"



Innovation in France

In the French context, the public health authority can receive proposals from stakeholders for nutritional improvement. "We have implemented the possibility for industry to sign charters for public health improvement," said **Professor Ambroise Martin**, Medical School, Claude Bernard University, France.

"In an innovative way [the project reaches out] towards stakeholders and proposes validated tools adapted to their economic context," he explained. "I was convinced that public authorities do not have the culture, tools, means, time, and money to reach out to the stakeholders along the food chain. [This could be possible] with both Gustino and the FOOD project."

According to Professor Martin, another challenge involves sensitive questions about conflict of interest, for example, where both Gustino and the FOOD project are being delivered by the private sector, but are supporting the public interest.

"There is [also] a question about the offer and demand issues and the tension with public health [issues]. We are very interested in this tension," he added.

"In France, there are 10,000 tonnes of sugar and fat that are eaten every year. The application of simple ideas can be very effective. Slight modifications can have a huge impact," Professor Martin concluded.

The Slovak Republic joins FOOD

In February 2011, the Slovak Republic joined the FOOD project via the National Public Health Authority and Edenred's national office. **Livia Sunova**, Edenred Slovak Republic, explained that project partners first approached the National Public Health Authority about cooperation. "They were very open with their cooperation and in the beginning put together recommendations to employees," she said.



Dr. Iveta Truskova from the Public Health Authority of Slovak Republic said implementation came with the printed materials. A leaflet has been prepared for employees and restaurants. Facebook started being used as a communication tool in May and already there are 4,000 followers.

Project partners are now contacting restaurants and inviting them into the partnership.

Balanced Nutrition at Work

THE EUROPEAN FOOD PROJECT: A Successful Public Private Partnership

Conclusion

The future of the FOOD project

The FOOD project partners are pursuing their efforts for at least another three years even though the pilot has ended. "The project is becoming a programme and is open to new partners in existing and new member states," explained Nolwenn Bertrand, Co-coordinator, Edenred. "We can still improve the programme and we can work with different kinds of partners."

There is no further funding from DG SANCO, but partners are seeking funding at national level, including from various ministries. The objectives of the FOOD consortium include:

- ▶ Disseminating the communication and information initiatives in the six pilot countries;
- ▶ Introducing the FOOD programme to other countries;
- ▶ Continuing to exchange best practices within the consortium; and
- ▶ Ensuring annual evaluations of initiatives, commitments and the use of tools by target groups.

The methodology developed and the deliverables are expected incentives for new partners from other countries to join the consortium. Edenred continues to coordinate the programme and is actively encouraging new partners to join the consortium.

For further information about the European Food Project or any of the issues raised in the conference please contact:

Nathalie Renaudin

Public Affairs Director

Edenred

E. nathalie.renaudin@edenred.com

T. 0033 6 15 59 70 60

Nolwenn Bertrand

European Affairs Developer

Edenred

E. nolwenn.bertrand@edenred.com

T. 0032 493 69 10 87



Fighting Obesity Through Offer and Demand