



Press release embargoed until 20 May 2016

European Dietitians committed to reducing Obesity

20 May 2016 The Hague

European Obesity Day highlights the fact that obesity is rising to alarming levels in Europe. In most countries more than 50% of the adult population is overweight and 15% are obese. In children the prevalence has raised greatly: one in four and in Southern European countries one in three children is overweight or obese. Estimates are that these figures will rise dramatically in European countries in the coming years.

Individuals that are overweight or obese are likely to develop a multitude of related illnesses that will reduce the quality of life and may even shorten the life span.

This is well known among scientists and health professionals. What is needed now is the awareness of politicians in Europe, the media and the general public that overweight and obesity are serious health problems. Individuals that suffer from obesity need competent support from trained health professionals. Society needs prevention strategies at local, national and European level to tackle the obesogenic environment. The European Federation of Associations of Dietitians (EFAD) is working together with other stakeholders, with Member States, the European Commission and food industry on a process to reformulate foods and drinks in Europe in order to offer more and healthier choices to the consumers. The food industry is further called upon to cooperate in developing a labelling system that can be understood by the general population, to make the healthy choice the easy choice.

Dietitians are key to fostering positive dialogue in the implementation of public health policies to combat obesity. The European Dietetic Action Plan¹ (EuDAP), is a commitment by the European Federation of Associations of Dietitians (EFAD) to collectively take actions that will improve health for all.

As Anne de Looy, President of EFAD, points out: “In Europe EFAD and its members have clearly stated their commitment to action for health improvement through nutrition across the social gradient. Whether it is in healthcare, food provision/service (restaurants), research, industry, public health or in the homes of individual citizens, dietitians will work with their national food and nutrition plans and colleagues to implement the European Dietetic Action Plan 2015-2020, which focuses on driving health improvements through food and nutrition, with the aim of achieving better nutrition and sustainable health”.

The geographical range and specialist expertise of EFAD members gives its dietitians’ a unique insight and perspective for improved health solutions. They remain a key contributor to the health debate, and driving positive and sustainable outcomes for the future of European citizens and beyond.

EFAD strongly supports the initiative of the European Association for the Study of Obesity (EASO) for European Obesity Day² and calls upon the European Parliament to take obesity seriously.

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¹ <http://www.efad.org/eudap>

² www.europeanobesityday.eu

ABOUT EFAD

EFAD is the voice of 35.000 European dietitians - more than half the profession – and is the only organisation advocating for dietitians in Europe.

EFAD alerts MEPs, the European Commission, WHO European Region and others about how dietitians, as key nutrition professionals in Europe, are contributing to a healthier Europe.

The aims of EFAD are to:

- Promote the development of the dietetic profession
- Develop dietetics on a scientific and professional level in the common interest of the member associations
- Facilitate communication between national dietetic associations and other organisations – professional, educational, and governmental
- Encourage a better nutrition situation for the population of the member countries of Europe.

Membership of the Federation is open all National Associations of Dietitians from member states of Europe. EFAD currently has 34 member associations, representing over 35,000 dietitians in 27 European countries.

You can find out more from the EFAD web site www.efad.org

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