

Feedback on Qualitative Mapping

Food and nutrition system – the Austrian perspective

The food system is a critical determinant of health. The European food system experienced dramatic changes during the last century. After the Second World War ensuring access to appropriate energy intake and fighting undernutrition was a priority of European nutrition and agriculture policies. Successful policies resulted also in increased production, availability and affordability of low cost energy dense, high in fat, trans-fats and sugar processed foods.

The past few decades have also been characterized by an alarming rise of overweight, obesity and NCD prevalence rates. High prevalence rates are associated with negative impact on citizens' health, quality of life and life expectancy, but also with reduced labour force and increased health care expenditures in MS and the EU.

To tackle this problem and mitigate against the rising incidence of overweight, obesity and NCDs a move from a "silo" to a "collaborative and systemic approach" is needed. Well-being and health are the common goal for joint action.

ACCESS TO A SUSTAINABLE AND HEALTHY DIET:

Multifaceted, sometimes new or customized, policies, (research) strategies and actions are needed to support provision and access to a sustainable, diversified healthy diet. These policies encompass the entire food system and the sectors along the food value chain: agricultural production, food storage, transport and trade, food transformation, retail and provisioning and empower European citizens to make the healthy choice. Consequently interventions can be undertaken by a.) one sector alone or b.) multi- and cross sectoral cooperation, both including SIMULTANEOUS considerations about not posing barriers to internal trade AND impact on public health ("health in all policies).

Research and coordination are needed for:

1. The development of a **sustainable, equitable and health promoting food system** within an effective functioning internal market and without posing barriers to internal trade
2. Health impact assessment of any kind of intervention in association with any sector along the food value chain.
3. co-ordination/harmonization with other DGs, the EU/commission, MS

Furthermore, Austria will facilitate discussions through organizing a conference about **“Transforming food systems – adding value for better health in Europe”** during the EU presidency.

Organisationseinheit:

BMGF - III/8 (Ernährung, Mutter-, Kind- und Gendergesundheit)

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