



Official Participant

Report - EU Event at EXPO

Event Title :	'Nutrition, Health and Food Information – Know what you eat'	Date:	3 July 2015
Event Organiser:	DG SANTE		
Event Target Group:	Government experts, food business operators, retailers and their associations, NGOs, other stakeholders, academics, 3 rd country delegations, students, press		
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Event Concept

The aim of the event was to bring together key international actors on nutrition strategy who would describe their experiences on the interconnected topics of nutrition strategy and food information and identify 'hot' issues and current challenges. There was an exchange of views on their visions for the future and they conducted an informed debate on current policies and engaged with the public on a discussion on the future of the above-mentioned policies.

It consisted of an opening by DG SANTE, a key note speech by the former Commissioner for Health and Consumers Dr. Tonio Borg and four moderated panels on the following subjects:

- International dialogue on sound strategies on nutrition, and promotion of better nutrition through food information
- Food information to consumers and its impact on consumer behaviour
- Food information on allergens – the situation in the EU
- Innovation and future technological applications on nutrition and food information

The programme featured 14 speakers notably from organisations such as the US FDA, the WHO, national authorities, university professors and stakeholder organisations.

Attached below is the Conference brochure:



Updated Brochure -
DG SANTE 3 JULY.pdf

Outcomes

The Conference was well received by participants and was well attended (111 confirmed participants). Participants included Stakeholders from the EU and third countries as well as members of academia, nutritionists and Member State Competent Authorities.

The issues discussed were pertinent to the sector, a fact which was confirmed by the active dialogue that took place during the panel discussions and the ensuing questions from the public. The moderator's role was key in this respect, as she managed to steer the discussion towards fruitful conclusions and to keep the attention high throughout the entire event.

The organisation of the Conference was excellent. There was sufficient time to cover all subjects and the programme also provided a 1.5hrs lunch break at the terrace of the Cascina Triulza restaurant where participants had the opportunity to mingle and discuss over a well prepared menu and refreshments where fruits had a prominent place.

The questions raised by participants covered all panel subjects with a particular interest in consumer behaviour and allergens. The morning panel was also of central importance due to the fact that it presented an occasion for a truly international discussion on nutrition policy given the attendance from the WHO and the US FDA.

There was also media coverage from specialized press and Italian national television.

This Conference took place in the context of the general DG SANTE presence in EXPO (other events cover food waste, plant health and breeding, food safety and nutrition, additives and enzymes). It also took place in the same week as similar events organised by DG GROW. This allowed synergies between events in terms of raising awareness on the issues discussed and allowed participants to attend a series of events within the same visit to EXPO.

Main Conclusions

- Sound nutrition policies have a positive impact on public health. In this context, consumer empowerment/information is key. Different views still exist however on how to choose between different policies and on how predictable can their impact be.
- Continuous investments in research are essential in order to advance the reflection on nutrition and consumer information policies (e.g. on consumer behaviour). Taking into account the increasing importance of the Better Regulation agenda in the EU, all actions will even more need to be strongly evidence-based.
- It is important to keep nutrition and consumer information policies high in the policy agenda of decision makers at country, and international level. In order to achieve this, robust economic data need to be available on the impacts of these policies on economic indicators that tend to be attractive to policy makers, in particular in times of crisis (e.g. growth/development, SMEs, savings in public health/welfare spending).

What follow-up actions emerged from this event?

DG SANTE will enhance its contacts with relevant stakeholders on the issues discussed and take into consideration the conclusions of this Conference in any future initiatives. It will also provide feedback for the EXPO legacy to be prepared by the EXPO Task Force.