

EGEA 2007 STATEMENT

European action to increase fruit and vegetable consumption

To address the growing challenge of chronic diseases - cancer, coronary heart disease and obesity - on health, the economy and development, EGEA 2007 adopted the following statement, following valuable input from Egea scientists,

- DG Health and Consumer Protection;
- DG Agriculture;
- DG Research;

and the WHO Regional Office for Europe.

Increasing fruit and vegetable consumption is an important part of comprehensive prevention of chronic diseases. Currently only a minority of European citizens eat the daily recommended amount of 400 g of fruit and vegetables.

The WHO European Charter on counteracting obesity sets goals for curbing the epidemic and reversing the trend in children and adolescents by 2015. It recommends increasing consumption of fruit and vegetables.

The German government has given, during its Presidency, commitment to increase fruit and vegetable intake by 2010, so that 20% more people are consuming at least 5 portions of fruit and vegetable each day; and that by 2010, an extra 30% of catering (such as kindergartens, schools, cafeterias and old people's homes) serve healthy meals, which include fruit and vegetables.

The 2007 EGEA conference "The Role of Fruit and Vegetables in the Fight Against Obesity" has identified a number of effective and innovative solutions to increase consumption of fruit and vegetables.

Among these effective solutions, three main areas of action should be given priority:

- **Increase access to and availability of fruit and vegetables in school.**
- **Improve information on the health benefits of fruit and vegetables and increase advertising for fruit and vegetables.**
- **Reduce social inequalities in fruit and vegetable consumption.**

