
Editorial

**THE EUROPEAN DECLARATION ON FOOD,
TECHNOLOGY AND NUTRITION**

The term ‘declaration’ is used for various international instruments. International declarations are not legally binding. However, the term is often deliberately chosen to indicate that the parties do not intend to create binding obligations but merely want to declare certain aspirations to develop or introduce systems of values that should be respected not just by professionals and policy makers but also by the general population, which we understand today as consumers.

The development of food making/processing along the history gives us many opportunities to develop new concepts how to look at this basic ingredient of life. Along different approaches a lot of effort has been done to improve it. We were successful on many different levels. But now it is time to connect and interact and integrate all these activities. The Congress on Food and Nutrition which took place in Ljubljana, inspired the ambassadors of this movement who were enthusiastic enough and capable to prepare in one year the declaration which was signed in Ljubljana in City hall at 7th of November 2008. This event was part of the *First European Food Congress*. The congress was taking place from 4th to 9th of November 2008 in Ljubljana and was organized with the essential impact of the Slovenian Nutritional Society. Invited distinguished experts delivered 18 plenary lectures, which were accompanied by more than 200 oral presentations in more than 30 symposia together with workshops, poster and round table sessions in the scientific program. The congress will stay in our memories for several reasons. First “pre-congress event” was introduced which enabled dissemination of COST, NATO and EU programs and projects of framework FW6/7.

This was the first European congress, which introduced a “country day” where one could enjoy presentations of scientists and professionals on the state of the art in food and nutrition of the host country. Ambassadors were glad to deliver the European Declaration on Food, Technology and Nutrition as completed document to the participants of the Congress at the Closing ceremony. The Declaration was accepted and signed after intensive discussion, voting, and addition of a few amendments to the draft document. The declaration is addressing food and nutrition issues based on European food science, technology and nutrition status and promotes cohesion of European food science, technology and nutrition within top issues in food area and asks for basic principles to be maintained and promoted, and declares key actions to be promoted in the future.

Congress ambassadors were questioned many times why we in Europe need this type of declaration. The answer matured with the time elapsed is because we have to:

**Enhance awareness about food,
Formulate relevant knowledge and skills about it,
Fertilize this knowledge at all levels of society,
organize societies in food and nutrition area in geographical Europe,
Stabilize activities in this area and
Transfer all experiences we gain to daily practice.**

We trust that the spirit of the declaration will enhance activities at different levels and will bring food to proper understanding to all stakeholders on relevant levels not just in Europe but also in the rest of the world.

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The Declaration was prepared by the Congress Ambassadors Committee from European countries and signed in Ljubljana City Hall on 7th November 2008

The European Declaration on FOOD, TECHNOLOGY and NUTRITION

Preamble

We participants of the First European Food Congress (Ljubljana, Slovenia 2008) endorse the FAO/WHO Declaration of Nutrition (Rome 1992) and the WHO Declaration on Food Safety (Beijing 2007). Through this Declaration we would like to emphasize issues related to food, technology and nutrition that are of importance to Europe

TARGET AUDIENCE

The European Declaration on FOOD, TECHNOLOGY and NUTRITION is targeted at the European Consumers, Policy Makers, Scientists, European Food Industry, and other Stakeholders.

FOOD AND NUTRITION

Food is necessary for human growth, development and the functions of the body. Good nutrition demands a well-balanced diet that provides an adequate daily amount of all nutrient classes and optimal intake of energy for the human body. Food must be safe, nutritious and provided in a sustainable way that maintains consumer's dignity and cultural identity.

EUROPEAN FOOD SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND NUTRITION

European professionals in food science, technology and nutrition continuously contribute to important advances in food production, conservation, processing, storage and distribution, as well as in nutrition and human well-being by implementing basic sciences to these applying research fields. They have also organised themselves into many scientific and professional associations. These are normally based in single countries but also in clusters of regions with the same eating habits and may be either general or organised into single science- and vocational-based disciplines such as biology, chemistry, biochemistry, biotechnology, microbiology, engineering, nutritional sciences, medical sciences, and other related sciences.

It is the aim of this Declaration to provide a focus for all these disciplines and serve the general population of Europe as well as the community of scientists, politicians, regulators and industry in the most optimal way. This cohesion will enable Europe to compete successfully in the international market, to increase the availability of healthy food, and to lead the world in standards of scientific rigour and integrity.

COHESION OF EUROPEAN FOOD SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND NUTRITION

This Declaration aims to initiate debate amongst European food scientists, food technologists and nutrition professionals to establish mechanisms through which, hopefully, future integration can be achieved. A second objective is to assist the harmonisation of the European food industry and food quality and safety standards. All of these initiatives can help to promote the expanding influence that the food science, technology and nutrition professions should have on technological, scientific, political, environmental, social and cultural thought in Europe. Of course, this must be done without harming nutrition and regional specificities of food and diets in Europe since it is this diversity, which will generate future discoveries and innovations.

TOP ISSUES

This Declaration should specifically stimulate debate on the following issues:

- Food is a very important strategic and political issue;
- Contamination of food with microbiological, chemical and physical agents or food allergen remains a key public health concern;
- Local food production influences regional culture, preserves biological diversity, and contributes to regional social and economic stability;
- Long-distance transportation chains may reduce food quality and may have an adverse effect on the environment;
- Food has a key role in establishing and maintaining good dietary habits as part of a healthy lifestyle along the whole human life span;
- Increasing incidence of obesity and diet-related chronic non-infectious diseases are among major public health concerns and causes of social security expenditure;
- Education levels and current knowledge transfer in the field are not adequate for consumers to make informed choices;
- Training and education of stakeholders of the food chain constitute a huge challenge.

BASIC PRINCIPLES TO BE MAINTAINED AND PROMOTED

A nutritionally adequate supply of safe food is a basic human right of every consumer:

- Everyone has the right to reliable information on foods, diet and their health impacts;
- Food production, processing, transport and distribution must be carried out in a sustainable manner taking into consideration environmental, societal and ethical consequences as well as regulatory issues including traceability;
- Technological achievements in developments of food that is suitable for targeted groups with special nutrition requirements should be welcomed;
- Honest and appropriate labelling of foods in cooperation with food industry and official legislation authorities has to be obeyed;
- Understandable and scientifically evidence-based media communication is recognized as an essential requirement;
- Adequate nutrition and healthy lifestyles that have a key roles in prevention and reduction of diseases should be promoted;
- Everyone has the right to get early education about food and nutrition to be able to take personal responsibility for own health and apt food choices;
- Managers of food industry must recognise the need for expertises in nutrition and food safety and ensure that resources necessary for food safety assurance are adequate.

KEY ACTIONS

This Declaration promotes the following Key Actions:

- Food producers, processors and retailers should consider, in addition to regulation, ethical measures in all processes in the food chain;
- Experts should work in accordance with professional and ethical guidelines;
- Governments and other responsible authorities and institutions should harmonise regulations between national food policies so as to adapt more readily and efficiently to future global changes;
- Governments and other responsible authorities and institutions should develop national food policies that take into account social and cultural differences, experiences and specific needs;

- All food science, nutrition and technology professionals should campaign for the establishment of educational systems that will result in better-informed consumers by effective knowledge transfer;
- Everyone should be able to take responsibility for own health and apt food choice;
- Signatories will do all that is in their power to ensure that the principles enshrined in this Declaration will be achieved.

Signed by

Professor Peter Raspor, President of the First European Food Congress on behalf of the Congress Ambassadors Committee from 41 European countries.



Ilijana Boci represented by Haxhi Allmuca, Albania; Ashot Saghyan, Armenia, Wolfgang Kniefel represented by Gerhard Schleining, Austria; Koen Dewettinck represented by Bart Heyman, Belgium; Faruk Čaklovića, Bosnia and Hercegovina; Iordanka Alexieva represented by Laska Rangelova, Bulgaria; Mate Bilić replaced by Martina Piasek, Croatia; Athina Panayiotou, Cyprus; Jana Hajšlová, Czech Republic, Henning Otte Hansen, Denmark; Toomas Paalme, Estonia; Anu Kaukovirta-Norja represented by Helena Pastell, Finland; Paul Colonna represented by Michel Franck, France; George Kalantzopoulos replaced by Ioannis Samelis, Greece; Giorgi Kvesitadze replaced by Tinatin Sadunishvili, Georgia; Sabine Kulling, Germany; András Salgó, Hungary; Inga Thorsdottir, Iceland; Francis Butler represented by Brian McKenna, Ireland; Rosangela Marchelli, Italy; Daina Karklina replaced by Aija Mengaile, Latvia; Rimantas Venskutonis, Lithuania; Torsten Bohn, Luxembourg; Vladimir Kakurinov, Macedonia; Anna McElhatton, Malta; Slavko Mirecki, Montenegro; Bernd van der Meulen represented by Sarah De Vito, Nederland, Wenche Frølich, Norway; Włodzimierz Grajek, Poland; Xavier Malcata represented by Ana Oliveira Madsen, Portugal; Mona Popa, Romania; Iosif Rogov, Russia; Miomir Nikšić, Serbia; Peter Šimko represented by Norbert Bomba, Slovakia; Božidar Žlender, Slovenia; Manuel Vázquez, replaced by Ascension Marcos, Spain; Anne-Marie Hermansson, Sweden; Klaus Zimmermann replaced by Yasmine Motarjemi, Switzerland; Fatih Yildiz, Turkey; Sergey Fedosov, Ukraine; David White, UK.