

Towards sustainable food research (INPROFOOD)

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Food-related health problems as a grand challenge for European societies

Over the past decade, most EU Member States have identified food and health as key priorities. This is in response to increases in obesity and diet-related chronic diseases such as diabetes and cardiovascular diseases amongst their populations. Also an insufficient nutrient supply in subgroups of the populations and special demands in ageing societies are identified as abiding challenges.

Attempts to increase public awareness of appropriate ways to eat more healthily though do not seem to have led to significant changes in patterns of food purchase and consumption. It has become obvious that the development of effective measures for improvement requires further systematic research and innovative approaches. One main question that INPROFOOD will tackle is the role of innovations in foods and what they could do in counter-acting the alarming rise of food-related health problems.

Advocating and promoting the production of knowledge that is close to the concerns of European citizens the European Commission has emphasized that simply inventing new technologies is not enough to overcome the pressing societal challenges in Europe (European Commission 2009). Therefore, it requires a purposeful communicative exchange between research, business, and civil society actors on the nature of the problem and the role that innovative technological approaches (besides or complementary with social measures) could play in tackling it. In relation to the food and health problem this implies taking into account the various factors that determine diet, physical activity behaviors and uptake of technologies by citizens.

18 partners from 13 European countries have joined forces in INPROFOOD to address this hugely ambitious task during 3 years of intensive activities (project start date 1st November 2011). Their aim is to foster dialogue and mutual learning between industry, academia and civil society already in the earliest stages of the research processes - directed towards developing innovative approaches (technical and social) for dealing with the food and health challenge.

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For more information, visit the project website at: https://cordis.europa.eu/project/rcn/102222_en.html

Podcast: [Open Space Conference for public engagement](#) (November 2013, Brussels, Belgium)