



The Diogenes project at <http://www.diogenes-eu.org/>

## **EXPERTS AGREE ON MEASURES TO CHALLENGE OBESITY**

Product innovation and reformulation, along with appropriate nutrition labeling, are key measures that the food industry can take to challenge obesity concluded academic and food industry experts meeting recently in Munich.

“Based on joint past experience, experts agree that the fight against obesity must not focus on changing consumer food behaviour alone. The food industry must continue to work on product reformulation, based on sound research and evidence and through setting standards for nutrition labelling, to move specific products into healthier categories.” states Professor Wim Saris, Co-ordinator of the EC funded Diogenes project\*. “However, it’s also important to promote overall healthy lifestyle choices, including physical activity.”

The meeting, part of the EU-funded Diogenes project, was held in Munich on 16-17 October 2007, to discuss how stakeholders could work together to fight obesity most effectively. The event was hosted by Kraft Foods R&D Inc, with attendees from the Nestle Research Centre, Unilever, Pepsico International, Coca Cola European Union Group, and fifteen academic research centres and organizations from ten European countries\*\*.

Diogenes meeting attendees acknowledged that “stealth health” products, such as those with reduced caloric intake unnoticed by the consumer, will play an increasingly important part in the obesity fight, with a long pipeline of products in the wings.

“Evidence is emerging that the EC consumer is generally well informed, but disinclined to action,” Saris noted. The challenge for Diogenes partners then is both to increase understanding of consumer behavior and to research and develop products that will motivate consumers to make health choices.”

“All stakeholders, from producers to distributors to retailers and restaurants, must play a part,” Saris continued. “While major food companies are leading the way, all companies and organizations, regardless of size or geographic reach, must participate if we are to challenge obesity effectively.”

An article covering the meeting in full is in preparation and will be published within the next few months. To receive notification of publication of the article, email your request to [PLL.Goyens@nutrim.unimaas.nl](mailto:PLL.Goyens@nutrim.unimaas.nl).

For further information on the Diogenes project log on to <http://www.diogenes-eu.org/>

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#### FOOTNOTES:

\* Diogenes is an Integrated Project of the EU Sixth Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development (2005-2009). The name Diogenes is the acronym and stands for "Diet, Obesity and Genes". More information at <http://www.diogenes-eu.org/>

\*\* The meeting was attended by – Kraft Foods R&D Inc., Germany; Nestlé Research Centre; Switzerland; Unilever, the Netherlands; Pepsico International, UK; Coca-Cola European Union Group; Belgium; University Maastricht, the Netherlands; University of Leeds, UK; Institute of Endocrinology, Czech Republic; Budapest University of Technology & Economics, Hungary; Institute of Preventive Medicine, Denmark; VU University Amsterdam, the Netherlands; Wageningen University, the Netherlands; EASO; ILSI-Europe; EUFIC; ETP Food for Life; European Federation of the Associations of Dieticians; Slimming World Ltd, UK; Matforsk AS, Norway; NIZO Food Research, the Netherlands; GfK NOP.

#### NOTE TO EDITORS:

Contact: Dr. Petra LL Goyens, +31 43 388 1779, [PLL.Goyens@nutrim.unimaas.nl](mailto:PLL.Goyens@nutrim.unimaas.nl)  
Prof Wim HM Saris is available for interview. Contact Dr Petra Goyens for arrangements.  
Dr Gerd Harzer is available for interview. Contact Mrs Birte Olesen for arrangements,  
+49 89 62738 6274 ; [bolesen@krafteurope.com](mailto:bolesen@krafteurope.com)  
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