

Subject: Importance of a good diet in the prevention of eating disorders

Eating disorders are on the increase in Europe and, with them, socio-medical costs. Advertising models put forward the concept of a waif-like figure, while the statistics on obesity, especially among the young, are disturbing. Nowadays, eating disorders are pathologies with serious repercussions, for which patients also require psychological support.

There is therefore a need to educate new generations in how to eat healthily, because a good diet also means physical and psychological balance, sound health and longevity.

There is a European NGO, namely the European Association of Hotel and Tourism Schools (EAHT), which could, if properly funded, put forward an educational model, for all its associate European schools (currently 320 in 30 countries), via which to promote a healthy diet, conduct research on the quality of products used in recipes, revive traditional recipes and – not least through chefs, who are by definition also ambassadors for their countries of origin – represent Europe in the world.

Publicity alone will not convert the young to good food. Organisations that promote 'slow food' are usually made up of lovers of refinement, while vocational training in this sector could play a decisive role in instructing new generations how best to combine the foods they eat and which drinks will enhance their flavour, and making the young understand that the inappropriate and immoderate use of alcoholic drinks can constitute dependence.

In the light of the above, can the Commission state:

- whether it is in possession of statistics on the extent of eating disorders in the EU and on their social costs;
- whether it intends to run a training programme to instruct new generations in how to eat healthily, whether it has plans for an information campaign on this theme and what role schools will play in this;
- whether it would not be worthwhile involving the EAHT in educating the young and in disseminating a safe, balanced dietary model consisting of healthy products and designed with the utmost care, which would make an effective contribution to a European-level plan for the prevention of eating disorders?