



Strengthening Food Safety and Nutrition Services in the South-eastern Europe

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The right to health



“The right to health is also the fundamental right to healthful food and drinking water, which are still unavailable in some European countries. Where nutrition is concerned, we are constantly reminding people that access to health for all depends on quantity and quality considerations.”

Dr Marc Danzon
Regional Director
WHO Regional Office for Europe
16 November 2004



Servicing countries, responding to people`s needs



“The Food Safety and Nutrition Project for south-eastern Europe has managed to launch a joint action of the eight countries of the region and to mobilize the international community for a good cause; it has helped the SEE countries themselves to plan better their national food and nutrition policies, to look critically into their food safety legislations, services and systems and to coordinate the interventions by different stakeholders.

The aim of the project is to ensure that these interventions result in progress for the public health services and their health systems and, ultimately, in better health for their populations. They will contribute positively to other economic sectors’ developments, such as agriculture, food processing, trade, tourism, and ,finally, on the overall economic development of the countries. This is a good example of an initiative that was facilitated by the WHO Regional Office for Europe built on the ownership and leadership of the member States themselves. The project fully reflects the vision, principles and directions of our country strategy matching services to needs.

Dr Maria Haralanova

Regional Adviser, Public Health Services
WHO Regional Office for Europe”

Servicing

The regional project office of the Food safety and nutrition project for south-eastern Europe acknowledges with gratitude the political support and generous financial and technical contributions of the WHO Regional Office for Europe, the Council of Europe and of the Governments of Greece, Italy, Belgium and Switzerland.



Project

Strengthening Food Safety and Nutrition Services Project for South-eastern Europe

In 1999, the international community established the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe to strengthen social stability in the region by fostering peace, democracy, human rights and economic prosperity. The founding document was signed by 40 partner countries and organizations. In 2001, the Pact added health to its agenda as one of the five subject areas of its Social Cohesion Initiative.

In September 2001, the WHO Regional Office for Europe and the Council of Europe established the South-eastern European (SEE) Health Network to improve the health of people living in the region. Initially the network comprised seven countries: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Romania, Serbia and Montenegro, and The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. Subsequently they were joined by an eighth, the Republic of Moldova. Seven donor countries supported the initiative: Belgium, Greece, Hungary, Norway, Slovenia, Sweden and Switzerland. The first political document to make a specific commitment to develop health in the region was The Dubrovnik Pledge: Meeting the health needs of vulnerable populations in South East Europe. The pledge was signed by the first seven countries and the WHO Regional Office for Europe in September 2001 at the Health Ministers' Forum for south-eastern Europe, held in Dubrovnik, Croatia.

In 2002, two international meetings in Budapest, Hungary (*FAO/WHO Pan-European Conference on Food Safety and Quality. To restore consumers confidence in food products, 25-28 February 2002*) and Hillerød, Denmark (*Health Development Action for South-Eastern Europe (SEE): fourth meeting of senior government health officials from SEE, 26-28 May 2002*) recognized the need for capacity building in Europe to improve food safety and quality. In May 2002, Component One of the SEE food and nutrition project was formulated. Partners and donors include WHO, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), Greece and Italy. With the official signing of Component One in 2004, the project changed its focus to action at country level, and the regional and country project managers were selected.



Aim

The purpose of the Food safety and nutrition project is to improve food safety and nutrition in the South-eastern European region and to decrease the number of food-borne and diet-related diseases through control and

Organizational Structure

Regional project office (RPO) located in Belgrade	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Regional Project Manager
Country project offices (CPOs) with country project managers (CPMs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Albania• Bosnia and Herzegovina• Bulgaria• Croatia• Republic of Moldova• Romania• Serbia and Montenegro• The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

Aim



18-19 March 2005, Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina



Component

Project

Component One

Regional coordination infrastructure will be established through the creation and operation of a regional network for food safety and nutrition. This network will contribute to following international recommendations, including EU directives, norms, guidelines and methods of data reporting and surveillance.

Policy of legislation development and harmonization among SEE countries should be based on standards of the WHO FAO Codex Alimentarius Commission and the EU for food safety and prevention of food borne diseases.

Component One

Steps:

1. Government commitment
2. Organisational framework
3. Implementation
 - Food legislation analysis and revision
 - Food and Nutrition Policy and Action Plans
 - Forum on Food Safety Agencies
 - Sub-regional Network on Food Safety
 - Capacity building, planning and management of new investment project proposals
4. Evaluation and fund raising



Deliverables

Deliverables

In the period when accession to the EU and preparations for this accession is an ongoing process for a group of countries, a challenging beginning for others, and a goal and prospect towards we strive, we need to Strengthen food safety and nutrition services through harmonization of markets, policy, laws, legislation, codes of practice and we need to strengthen regional food safety and nutrition network, with intersectoral, in-country and inter-country cooperation and collaboration through exchange of information and mutual technical support. These instruments will help us to reach the common goals, going along the same path, and passing the challenges easier.

- Information on the status of food and nutrition in SEE countries
- national food and nutrition policies and action plans
- national food safety strategies
- regional network on food safety
- cooperation and collaboration
- community awareness of the importance of food and nutrition
- harmonisation of markets,
- early warning systems



First

Technical workshop of the SEE nutrition and food safety counterparts

The planned sub-regional and national activities for the modernization of food legislation, as well as fund raising strategies, were presented and discussed. Participants presented information on the existing legislative framework on food safety in their countries and discussed the needs and strategies to develop a modern national food law and legislation.

Results from the discussion were included in a project proposal on food policy and legislation. A staged approach for the implementation of the first component of the project in Albania, Bulgaria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Moldova, Serbia and Montenegro, and Romania was submitted to the 5th Meeting of the SEE Health Network (12-13 November 2002).

First



Belgrade, Serbia and Montenegro
12-13 November 2002



Second

Workshop on food policy and legislation



Second

A WHO workshop for public health experts responsible for the development of a regulatory framework on food safety at national level.

Main objectives

- Provision of basic principles for the modernization of national food legislation (basic food law and secondary legislation) in south- eastern European countries.
- Introduction to the EU legislative framework and to the Codex Alimentarius Standards related to public health.
- Promotion of the concept of independent food safety agencies.
- Discussion with countries and collaborating institutions about possible further cooperation to ensure an appropriate follow-up on capacity building for food safety legislation at national level.



Belgrade, Serbia and Montenegro
12-16 May 2003



Third

Sub-regional workshop for the development of national food safety strategies in south eastern Europe



At the workshop on food policy and legislation held in May 2003, Member States requested international agencies to provide essential elements for the development of national food safety strategies. In response to this request, WHO and FAO organized jointly this workshop for the development of food safety strategies in south eastern Europe (SEE).



Main objectives

- Discussion and joint assessment of country needs
- Presentation and discussion of essential elements to support national authorities in developing their respective food safety strategies, incorporating new approaches in food safety within WHO/FAO and the European Commission
- Strengthening intersectoral collaboration between the ministries of health and agriculture to promote food safety.
- Provision of a platform for discussion on how to better coordinate current capacity building initiatives in food safety with other international agencies.

Participants

The workshop was addressed to food safety officers from public health and agriculture sectors responsible for the development of national food safety strategies.

Third



Brijuni, Croatia, 5-7 July 2004



Fourth

First meeting of Country Project Managers



This was the first meeting of the newly selected project officers, the staff of the SEE regional project office and the project managers in the eight SEE countries. The purpose of the meeting was to introduce a standardized managerial approach to project implementation at regional and country levels.



Fourth



18-19 March 2005, Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina



To be continued at



Second Health Minister`s Forum
With the special participation of ministers of finance

**Health and economic
development in south-eastern
Europe in the 21st century**

To be continued at



Skopje, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
25-26 November 2005



Strengthening Food Safety and Nutrition Services in South-eastern Europe

Project for south-eastern Europe



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Donors and Partners

Project partners



Albania



Bosnia and Herzegovina



Bulgaria



Croatia



Republic of Moldova



Romania



Serbia and Montenegro-lead country



The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

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