

Report of the 3rd meeting of the UNU/SCN Network for Capacity Development in Nutrition Central and Eastern Europe: NCDN-CEE

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Background and justification

Regional networks to foster capacity development have been initiated by UNU-Food & Nutrition Program, and the UN System Standing Committee on Nutrition (SCN), in Africa, Asia, Latin America, the Middle East and Central and Eastern Europe. The regional initiative in Eastern and Central Europe (CEE) commenced in 2005. The second meeting took place in Budapest in February 2006, and this meeting took place Belgrade 1st and 2nd November 2007. This report covers an overview of the activities initiated in the period November 2006 to November 2007.

The workshop was organized in cooperation with, and logistic support from, the Institute of Medical Research, Department of Nutrition, University of Belgrade, and the Institute of Public Health of Serbia “Dr Milan Jovanovic Batut”, Belgrade. EURRECA (European Micronutrient Recommendations Aligned) provided financial assistance.

Objectives

The objectives of the meeting were to:

- To review the progress made since February 2006.
- To discuss in depth specific disciplinary topics as requested by the participants at the 2006 meeting of the Network, including the 2nd WHO European Action Plan for Food and Nutrition Policy, 2007-2012, and European Micronutrient Recommendations Aligned (EURRECA).
- To discuss a SOCRATES application to EC and select follow up activities for the next year (2008).

Summary of final conclusions

- The Network will thank Public Health Institute in Belgrade, Batut, in particular the Director, Ms Tanja Knezevic, for very important and valuable support, and for providing the meeting venue for the Network, and to Professor Maria Glibetic, Department of Nutrition, for her professional support, participation and back-stopping for the organisation of the meeting.
- The outcome of the present meeting of the Network, including the capacity development sessions, was considered very positive and useful by the participants. Specifically the participants presented an impressive amount of activities following

the guidance plans from the previous meeting of the Network.

- The Chair of the Network Dr. M. Pavlovic, reported on the outcomes of the work since the second meeting (ANNEX 2).
 - The WHO Growth Standards were introduced; some had started using the Growth Standards while others had communicated information to colleagues and arranged for training sessions (see ANNEX 3-9).
 - Most countries had arranged activities on the Right to Adequate Food as part of the World Food Day activities. Some countries will have follow-up activities since children had contributed in various ways (see ANNEX 3-9).

Capacity Development activities

- The 2nd WHO European Action Plan for Food and Nutrition Policy, 2007-2012, was presented by Dorit Nitzan Kaluski, WHO (ANNEX 10). After a discussion the members were divided into two groups, addressing some of the challenges of the Action Plan seen from their point of view (ANNEX 11 and 12).
 - Countries would consider how to address the 2nd WHO European Action Plan for Food and Nutrition Policy, 2007-2012, based on questions provided by Kaluski linked to the various parts of the Action Plan.
- EURRECA: L. Pijls, coordinator of the EURRECA FP6 EC project, presented the 5 year Network of Excellence (NoE). M. Pavlovic presented the ongoing and future activities in several research activities in CEE and European countries. The countries were invited to join the projects research activities in Current Recommendations, RA1.4: To collate all the existing current micronutrient recommendations from each European country, with EURRECA questionnaire (Micronutrient Recommendations, FBDG, Options for actions, Policy application); and in RA 1.1 Intake Methods, task 3, with another EURRECA questionnaire on Food Consumption, and later RA 2.7 Low Income & Immigrants 18-60 months. This would be addressed in future activities (ANNEX 13 and 14). Also the draft programme for the Nutlife course for CEE countries was presented and discussed (Annex 14). EURRECA Course on Nutritional Epidemiology in the framework of public health policy – focus on Nutrient recommendation, that will be held in Warsaw on September 9-14, 2008 is based on the Advanced course on Nutrition and Lifestyle Epidemiology that is held every two years in Wageningen (last edition was in June 2007 and three members of NCDN- CEE have taken part in it) and important input was brought also by EURECCA. Two participants of the Wageningen course as NCDN- CEE members reported on it and also presented the draft of EURECCA Course on Nutritional Epidemiology in the framework of public health policy – focus on Nutrient recommendation. They stressed that Wageningen course was effective and especially interesting for young scientists. Then during the discussion the NCDN- CEE members concluded that the Warsaw course can with little changes in design and content be able to fulfil requirements and needs of participants from CEE countries (the special sessions included in the June 07 as for example on statistics will not be given in Warsaw). The above mentioned course will be the intensive one intended for young scientists and policy makers (2 from each countries) with the focus on

programme topics interesting and important for CEE countries (nutritional research – e. g. dietary exposure assessment, nutrient recommendations, levels of evidence, statistics, nutrient recommendations; Nutrition policy – e. g. strategies and research, consumer and stakeholder issues). The course will be the combination of lectures, debates and exercises. It is important that the organizers make clear in the announcement what level of basic epidemiologic knowledge is needed to participate in the course effectively. It was concluded that more basic epidemiology training cannot be offered under the umbrella of a Network of Excellence as EURECCA. Very big paragraph compare to the others. It is almost like we discussed only EURRECA.

- EuroFIR: Training and capacity building through the EuroFIR and CEE Network. M. Pavlovic presented the issue and linked it to EURRECA (Annex 15).
- The Network Portal: M. Demes presented the present portal and its functions. It was decided that K. Kromerova and M. Ranic, would go to Budapest before the summer of 2008 to work with M. Demes and S. Peter on the present format, update the information, and learn to be co-managers of the Network Portal in order to ensure flexibility and sustainability. The aim of this work would be to enable each member country to up-date information regarding national information.
- SOCRATES: The SOCRATES EC programme was presented by V. Prsic and the participants discussed the challenges of embarking on a new proposal to the EC. It was decided that F. Pepping and V. Prsic would collect ideas for topics of courses, discuss them with colleagues in the Network and outside, and based on that develop and present an application to EC. They would also be responsible for the follow-up.
- The Chair (M. Pavlovic) will present the activities of the Network to the SCN working group on Capacity Devolvment, in Vietnam 2008.

Programme and participants

The detailed programme is presented in Annex 1 .The meeting was attended by 20 participants (Annex 16), including CEE-countries: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, FYR Macedonia, Romania, Serbia, and Slovakia, and facilitators representing UNU-FNP, SCN, EURRECA and WHO. One FAO REU staff member took also active part in the event. Department of Nutrition, University of Belgrade, and the Institute of Public Health of Serbia “Dr Milan Jovanovic Batut”, Belgrade, provided support staff and back-stopping activities.