

In May 2006, many years of discussion and attempts to harmonise European rules on what claims can be made on foods reached a milestone. With the agreement between the European Parliament and the European member states on the EU “Regulation on Health and Nutrition Claims made on Foods” a new chapter has begun and the phase of implementing the rules and aims of the regulation is initiated.

In the regulation a link has been made between claims and nutrient profiling. However, the setting of nutrient profiles is a complex and controversial issue. As a result nutrient profiling has been much debated in Europe.

In the beginning of 2005, ILSI Europe’s Functional Foods Task Force initiated an expert group to look closer at nutritional characteristics of foods and the setting of nutrient profiles. For the purpose of exploring a number of specific concerns and questions related to the issue of nutritional profiling of foods the task force hosted a workshop “Nutritional Characteristics of Foods: Science-based Approach to Nutrient Profiling”, 25–27 April 2006 in Mallorca. In this supplement, you will find the summary report of this workshop and three papers that resulted from the work of the expert groups and their colleagues. We

hope that this supplement will contribute to the debate on nutrient profiling and provide background for further research.

Many nutrient profiling schemes already exist from the highly complex to the very simple and from the all embracing to food category specific. Current nutrient profiling schemes should be considered as decision-making tools. Looking ahead it is vital that nutrient profiling models are linked to nutrient intake and nutritional status to bring more objective criteria in the scientific discussions on profiling models.

We would like to thank all the people that have been involved in this project. Firstly, the expert group members and their colleagues who worked hard to put together the articles and the workshop summary report. Also, we wish to extend our appreciation to all workshop participants who with their active involvement in this highly charged issue made the workshop a success. The outcome of this workshop was a very important first step towards bridging the differences and reaching consensus on nutrient profiling.

■ **Disclosure** The authors have no conflict of interest to declare.

Carina Madsen
ILSI Europe
Scientific Project Manager

Thomas Hatzold
Kraft Foods
Chair of the ILSI Europe Functional Foods Task Force

Michael Gibney
University College Dublin
Chair of the ILSI Europe Expert Group on
Nutritional Characteristics of Foods