

*Fédération européenne de la Restauration Collective Concédée*  
*European Federation of Contract Catering Organisations*

## **FERCO 2006 COMMITMENTS TO DIET, PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND HEALTH**

### **Contract Catering in Europe**

67 million consumers served every day  
1 in 4 meals eaten outside the home  
Annual turnover of some €22 billion  
600,000 jobs

### **Who are we?**

Contract Catering is part of the daily lives of 67 million consumers across Europe who are served healthy and balanced meals every day by Contract Catering companies and their 600,000 employees.

Contract Catering is about much more than processing food. It covers all the services related to food management and involves preparing and serving meals to people working and/or residing in collective organisations, such as companies, administrations, schools/higher education establishments, nurseries, hospitals/clinics, retirement/nursing homes, prisons and military barracks.

Contract Catering companies are developing **high food hygiene and safety standards** and are providing **a model of nutritional balance**, especially with regard to more vulnerable groups such as young children, the elderly and hospital patients.

### **What sets the Contract Catering sector apart from traditional and modern restaurants, the food industry and the retail sector?**

The existence of a **written contract** between the client organisation and the Contract Catering company providing the service. This contract determines the content and the price of the food service provided.

A **well-defined group of users** comprised of employees, officials, pupils, students, patients, inmates the elderly and others residing or working at the client organisation.

**A service provided on the premises of the client organisation**, which determines how the food service will be delivered. Contract Caterers operate in units and use equipment over which they have no managerial control because they are owned by the client organisation.

**A social price.** By providing consumers with a food service at a social price that is usually substantially lower than that charged by commercial caterers, Contract Catering meets an important social need by feeding people at work, at school, in healthcare centres, in retirement/nursing homes and day care establishments, for example. For many consumers, contract catering provides the only hot, healthy, balanced meal of the day.

**The nature of the sector's activities determines the role that Contract Catering Companies could play over time in changing consumers' dietary habits and lifestyles.**

### **Client requirements**

The content of the catering service may change considerably depending on the constraints and requirements of each client that determines:

- The nature of the food service to be provided, including choice/diversity of daily supply and frequency of each type of food.
- The general qualitative requirements. The type of supplies is important, particularly the difference between fresh products or ready-made products. Indeed a food service based on raw supplies (fresh produce) is more costly than a service based on ready-made products.
- The nutritional requirements, for example, the exclusion or inclusion of certain products.

### **Awarding of contracts**

Most catering contracts are awarded to the company that submits the lowest bid. This predominance of the price criteria can be partly explained by budgetary restrictions in the public sector and cost-cutting policies of private companies. There is also a lack of instruments that could help clients select the Contract Catering company offering the best quality/price ratio.

FERCO considers that choosing service providers on the basis of price alone is damaging as it induces Contract Catering companies to streamline their costs as much as possible, sometimes to the **detriment of the quality of the meals and services** provided. Awarding contracts at the lowest price cannot help promote a healthy diet. This is particularly true in the case of schools, hospitals and retirement homes, where low quality service has a significant impact on people's nutrition, health and education.

As a result, FERCO and its social partner EFFAT (European Federation of Trade Unions in the Food, Agriculture and Tourism Sectors) have decided in the context of their European Social Dialogue to propose a method for awarding catering contracts that accounts for both quality and price. To facilitate the practical implementation of this procedure, EFFAT and FERCO have created a ***Guide to the Economically Most Advantageous Offer***.

FERCO and EFFAT believe that the choice by both public and private entities of the “economically most advantageous offer” can contribute to a higher level of nutritional balance and improved food hygiene and safety standards. (The economically most advantageous offer represents the best quality for the best price.)

### **Subsidy of the cost of a meal**

The subsidy policy of the client organisation, whether private or public, has an impact on the quality of the food service provided. It is the client organisation’s prime responsibility to decide whether the offer of affordable, varied, well-balanced and tasty meals is a priority.

### **“Captive” consumers**

End consumers have little or no opportunity to choose another form of catering. Contract Caterers must meet the challenge of promoting nutritional balance while serving the same consumers every day.

### **Cooking methods**

Contract Caterers promote traditional cooking by using a wide variety of seasonal ingredients supplied by local companies. At the same time, they are upholding regional and national culinary traditions. Today, it is well known that varied menus using a diversity of ingredients are fundamental to a well balanced diet. Too strict standards would be detrimental to such cooking methods and would encourage the use of standardised processes.

## **FERCO 2006 COMMITMENTS TO DIET, PHYSICAL ACTIVITY, AND HEALTH**

**FERCO and its Members recognise the need for a global strategy on diet and healthy lifestyles, where all stakeholders meet their responsibilities and work in partnership. This includes:**

**Consumers** who are responsible to make choices for a healthy diet and lifestyle.

**National public authorities** that should develop strategies to influence consumers' behaviour and take nutritional principles into consideration when awarding catering contracts.

**Client organisations** that should stipulate healthy food options in the terms of reference when outsourcing to food service providers.

**Suppliers** that should work with the Contract Catering companies to review the composition of food products and to make understandable and relevant information available to the client organisation and eventually to the end consumer.

**Contract Catering companies** that should in agreement with their clients promote diversified meals respecting culinary traditions, based on fresh and seasonal products that when possible are sustainably produced, come from local suppliers and contribute to the end consumers' education about nutrition.

**Therefore,**

**1. FERCO encourages its members and Contract Catering companies to adopt and implement general nutrition recommendations based on the following principles:**

### ***Implementing national guidelines***

FERCO members and Contract Catering companies are committed to following national guidelines on nutrition if they have been drawn up in such a way that they are applicable to the Contract Catering sector.

### ***Serving varied food***

FERCO members and Contract Catering companies are aware that most of their regular consumers are bound to frequent the food solutions they provide. They are committed to increasing their clients' awareness of the need to offer varied food to the end consumers as part of a well-balanced diet. This could be achieved primarily by rotating menus and diversifying the food offered as often as possible.

### ***Promoting the use of less fat, sugar, salt and encouraging smaller servings***

FERCO members and Contract Catering companies are committed to working with their clients to promote the use, whenever possible, of vegetable fat/oil, a daily offer of low-fat and fat reduced food, and to limit the offer of fried food. Contract Catering companies will promote the reduction of sugar and salt used in preparing food. Contract Catering companies are committed to limiting promotion and communication about sugar added products and beverages, and to promote products and beverages with no or less sugar added. They are also committed to proposing to their clients an offer of smaller helpings on a daily basis.

### ***Promoting the consumption of “at least five portions of vegetables and fruits a day”***

FERCO members and Contract Catering companies are committed to proposing to their clients that they serve more fresh and diversified vegetables and fruits to the end consumer.

### ***Encouraging the consumption of high fibre products***

FERCO members and Contract Catering companies are committed to proposing to their clients to develop a daily offer of high fibre products.

### ***Offering a well balanced, varied choice of protein and calcium source products***

FERCO members and Contract Catering companies are committed to developing on a daily basis an offer of well balanced and diversified protein and calcium source products, such as a varied assortment of milk and dairy products, meat and a reasonable offer of products such as sausages and eggs. They are also committed to increasing the offer of fish, if possible from sustainable sources.

### ***Plenty of liquid***

FERCO members and Contract Catering companies are committed to ensuring a fair availability of plain water and propose to their clients that they serve more diversified sources of liquids to the end consumer.

### ***Time to enjoy food in an appropriate environment***

Consumption conditions also determine a healthy way of eating. FERCO members and Contract Catering companies are committed to working with their clients to improve consumption conditions and to offer advice about environment, time constraints, noise, decoration, and so on.

## **2. FERCO encourages its members and Contract Catering companies to work with their clients and suppliers to improve the availability of understandable and relevant information for the end consumers.**

FERCO members and Contract Catering companies are committed to keeping records containing relevant information about their food service and to work with their clients to make it available onsite upon request to the end consumer.

FERCO members and Contract Catering Companies are committed to working with their suppliers to establish an appropriate communication and traceability framework. This will

ensure the availability of understandable and relevant information about products and ingredients to enable Contract Catering companies to inform their clients and the end consumer.

### **3. FERCO encourages its members to participate in public authorities' initiatives and to develop educational campaigns in partnership with relevant stakeholders.**

Dietary habits and lifestyles are part of the culture and traditions of each Member State. As a result, FERCO believes that the primary responsibility for action plans to encourage healthier eating habits and lifestyles lies with national governments.

FERCO encourages its members to voluntarily participate in national campaigns on diet, physical activity and health implemented by Member States.

FERCO members and Contract Catering companies are fully aware of the importance of education to motivate consumers to make more healthy choices. Recognising that food service represents an educational opportunity, especially for pupils, parents and educators, they are committed to developing, where possible and appropriate, educational programmes adapted to pupils' age and eating habits. Such programmes should be implemented in coordination with parents' associations and responsible local authorities.

### **4. Through the EU Social Dialogue of the Contract Catering sector, FERCO will strive to gain EFFAT's support to promote healthier lifestyles and will encourage its members to develop sustainable training programmes in this area.**

FERCO and its trade union counterpart, EFFAT, recognise the role the Contract Catering sector can play and are committed to using the Social Dialogue as a platform for encouraging their members to promote healthier diets and physical activities.

FERCO and EFFAT are in the process of signing a branch agreement on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). Within this framework, FERCO and EFFAT have identified the fight against obesity as one of the suggested areas for integrating CSR into business practices.

FERCO members and Contract Catering companies are committed to developing effective, sustainable training programmes for their employees in agreement with their clients. Such programmes will tackle the issues of healthy eating habits and physical activities. They will focus not only on technical matters, but also on service related issues such as taste, presentation and display of food.

### **5. FERCO will set up a monitoring system of the FERCO 2006 Commitments**

As an EU federation of national organisations, FERCO's primary role will be coordination. The implementation of the FERCO 2006 Commitments will be the task of the national associations and Contract Catering companies, in line with national nutritional recommendations, local culinary traditions and eating habits.

Therefore, FERCO invites its 11 members and multinational Contract Catering companies acting in at least four European countries to sign the FERCO 2006 Commitments, together with the FERCO's President. By signing, they pledge to promote the implementation of the

2006 Commitments: FERCO's national associations by Contract Catering companies at national level, and multinational companies through their subsidiaries.

**FERCO will set up a monitoring system comprised of a Common Checklist of Progress to review the implementation of the FERCO 2006 Commitment by national associations and Contract Catering companies.**

FERCO will circulate the Common Checklist of Progress to its members associations and to the multinational Contract Catering companies that are signatories to the FERCO 2006 Commitments. These parties will collect all available information on outputs and outcomes and will report to FERCO.

FERCO will submit a report at the end of 2006 to the EU Platform for Action on Diet, Physical Activity and Health.

*Signed*



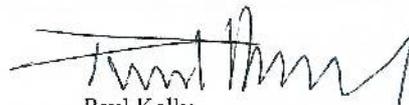
Hans Rijniense  
President of FERCO



Damien Verdier  
SODEXHO ALLIANCE



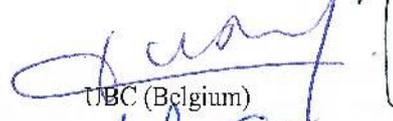
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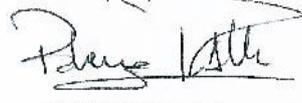
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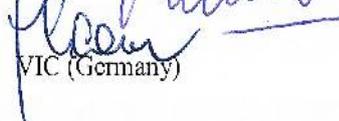
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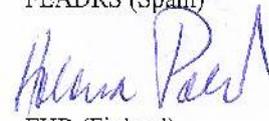
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