



HEALTHY EATING FOR A BETTER LIFE

CONTRACT CATERING FIGHTS
AGAINST OBESITY



THE CONTRACT CATERING SECTOR

Who are we?

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

The industry is represented by FERCO, which brings together the national contract catering associations from 12 EU Member States – over four-fifths of the European market. FERCO provides a forum for the industry to share and develop best practice.

EU industry snapshot

- 30% of firms or collective organisations have a contract with a contract catering company.
- The sector represents 600,000 jobs.
- 67 million consumers served are every day.
- Industry annual turnover is some €21.4 billion.
- The sector has a share of 30% of the social foodservice market value.
- One in four meals consumed outside of the home is delivered by the contract catering sector.

What is contract catering?

Contract catering covers the wide range of services related to food management and involves preparing and serving meals to people working and/or residing in organisations such as companies, administrations, schools, higher education institutions, nurseries, hospitals, clinics, retirement facilities, nursing homes, prisons and military barracks. This is a craft industry, where qualified professionals trained in food hygiene and safety deliver a service that is both cost-effective and tailor made.

This is a clearly-defined sector of activity whereby the service provider is bound by a specific, detailed contract, which sets it apart from public catering, modern restaurants, the food industry and the retail sector. The contract determines the content and the price of the food services provided by the contract caterer. The food service is provided on the premises of the client organisation at a social price.



FIGHTING AGAINST OBESITY

The World Health Organization reports that obesity and overweight – the result of unbalanced diets and lack of physical activity – have reached epidemic proportions on a world scale. The consequences of obesity make this disease one of the greatest challenges of public health for the 21st century. Given the multifaceted nature of obesity, facing the challenge requires the involvement over time of all stakeholders and of society as a whole to reverse this rising trend. This includes consumers, public authorities, economic operators and community organisations such as schools and workplaces.

FERCO members recognise the need for a global strategy on diet and healthy lifestyles, where all stakeholders take their responsibilities and work in partnership. Contract catering companies must meet the challenge of striking the perfect balance between healthier and tasty food, while respecting regional and national culinary traditions and meeting the demands of client organisations.

FERCO's Commitments to

The EU Platform for Action on Diet, Physical Activity and Health

FERCO has been an active member of the European Platform for Action on Diet, Physical Activity and Health since 2005. FERCO's Commitments are being implemented and monitored by national associations, contract catering companies and multinational companies through their subsidiaries.

They are developing specific initiatives to help consumers make informed choices and offer a range of affordable healthy options to choose from, while taking into account lifestyle, age, culture and culinary traditions.

FERCO is committed to:

- Encouraging its members to adopt national nutritional guidelines and implement nutritional policies within the FERCO guidelines.
- Working with clients and suppliers to provide consumer information.
- Developing education campaigns in partnership with other stakeholders.

Nutritional guidelines

FERCO members are committed to:

- Serving varied foods.
- Promoting the use of less fat, sugar, salt and encouraging smaller servings.
- Promoting the daily consumption of at least five portions of vegetables and fruits.
- Encouraging the consumption of high-fibre products.
- Offering a well-balanced, varied choice of protein and calcium source products.
- Offering plenty of liquids.
- Providing the time to enjoy food in an appropriate environment.



WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP

Promoting a healthy diet

Under the framework of the EU Platform for Action on Diet, Physical Activity and Health, FERCO works in partnership with a wide range of stakeholders from across the food chain on issues such as product reformulation and the use of fresh fruits and vegetables.

As service providers, contract catering companies work in partnership with client organisations in the areas of choice and diversity of daily supply, frequency of each type of food, nutritional requirements and whether the food is fresh or processed. For example, large contract catering companies have developed company-wide nutritional strategies at the work place and in the education sector.

The social partners of the European contract catering sector, FERCO and EFFAT (European Federation of Trade Unions in the Food, Agriculture and Tourism Sectors), are committed to using the Social Dialogue as a platform from which to encourage their members to promote a healthy diet. FERCO and EFFAT have proposed a method for awarding catering contracts that accounts for both quality and price. To facilitate the practical implementation of this procedure EFFAT and FERCO, with the support of the European Commission, have created a *Guide to the Economically Most Advantageous Offer*, representing the best quality for the best price. The Guide is intended to promote the use of quality criteria for the awarding of catering contracts by the clients, whether they are public organisations or private companies.

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 Guide is available in nine languages (EN, ES, DE, FR, HU, IT, NL, PL, SW) online at www.contract-catering-guide.org



FERCO IN ACTION

Since FERCO joined the European Platform for Action on Diet, Physical Activity and Health in 2005, its members have developed specific initiatives. Following are examples of what companies are doing to step up the fight against obesity and overweight.

- FOLLOWING NUTRITIONAL GUIDELINES
- PROVIDING CONSUMER INFORMATION
- EDUCATION CAMPAIGNS

FERCO members are committed to following national guidelines, as well as those outlined by FERCO. Its members believe that an informed consumer is an empowered consumer who can make healthier choices and that education programmes, particularly for young people, are key. They are striving to put nutrition and food choice at the heart of their food services.

In Germany, the Compass Group (Eurest) has based its nutritional guidelines on those provided by the German Association for Nutrition. This includes varied foods, small helpings, plenty of vegetables and fruit, offering milk and dairy products, and using small amounts of fat, sugar and salt.

In the UK, Compass works with suppliers and manufacturers to improve the nutritional content of products. This has resulted in a 25% to 50% reduction in the salt content of the soups served and a baked bean that meets the specification of a 25% reduction in salt and sugar content.

Compass is introducing its Balanced Choices initiative in all EU Member States. For example, Eurest Hungary is the first company in the country to introduce a food offer supporting health choices. The company worked together with dietitians and experts from the National Institute for Health Development to put together a selection of well-balanced recipes with simple physical activities to promote a healthier lifestyle. It also conducted a survey that determined consumers prefer menus with low carbohydrate, low fat and high fibre content. The survey showed that customers were concerned about the guarantee of nutritional content in the food offer. To meet this demand, chefs select recipes from a central database and monthly random checks on meals are made by an external expert. Communication materials – posters and information cards and brochures – are being used by frontline teams. Piloted in public and private sector workplaces, Balanced Choices will be introduced in 25% of Hungarian workplaces during 2007.



FERCO IN ACTION

Elior Nederland, part of Avenance, developed five key values, one of which is 'taking our responsibility in catering'. The company is following guidelines for healthy nutrition that are reflected in staff training manuals. It is also developing a strategy for healthy and nutritious food in the education sector.

Since 2002, Sodexho France has been a partner in the Santal programme developed by PSA Peugeot Citroën in Rennes. Santal's objectives are to improve employees' health, as well as their working and living conditions. Santal combines information programmes, individual coaching and a healthier food offer. The introduction of the programme has resulted in increases of 11% consumption of fish, 12% of vegetables and 10% of fruit. The satisfaction rate of the employees dining in the two Sodexho-operated restaurants increased by 10 and 11 points.

In the UK, SODEXHO is pushing a 'whole school' approach, to ensure all parties work towards educating young people about nutrition. An annual survey is held on school meals and lifestyle that gives the company up to date information to ensure menu items are appropriate for school children.

In Portugal, contract catering companies have distributed CD-ROMs to primary school teachers containing information about healthy eating and a healthier lifestyle.

In Belgium, Sodexho became the first operator in the food service sector to be awarded the Ministry of Health's new PNNS-B logo (Plan national nutrition et santé). A Charte Santé (health charter) has been implemented in more than 1,200 units operated by Sodexho Belgium.

Albron, the Netherlands, has adopted 'Good Food, Happy People' as its company mission. Albron food statements are communicated at the company 1,200 locations, which serve 500,000 guests daily. The three food groups are clearly indicated by using name cards with a green smiley for preferred products, for which guests receive a 25% 'health' discount. Albron is also partner of 'The Kids in Balance' programme that aims to prevent the development of early health problems in children ages 8 to 12.

Mondial Catering in the Netherlands is coding its healthy food options with a green logo. Recipes have been revised and cooking workshops have been organised across the Netherlands for staff. Information is being provided to consumers through flyers and a special software programme.

Sodexho Italy is focusing on serving well-balanced meals to school aged children. There is a four-week rotation and two seasonal variations. Sodexho's Education Department has developed a range of 354 recipes that follow national nutritional guidelines concerning cooking methods and the reduced use of fats, added sugar and salt.

In Sweden, Fazer Amica, a Finnish company that is Volvo's primary contract caterer, is participating in Sweden's largest initiative involving 65,000 people. Organised by Volvo and the Gothenburg region, the objective of 'Lifestyle in the West' is to foster a healthier lifestyle through a number of projects using health coaches.



FERCO MEMBERS

FERCO President Antonio Llorens



"Ours is a profession that affects the daily lives of a wide cross-section of consumers across Europe. These are the millions of men, women and children to whom we consistently serve healthy and balanced meals. FERCO members are committed to meeting the needs of consumers and of the client organisations. We do this by leveraging not only resources and technologies but also by implementing and sharing best practice. Through our ongoing efforts, we ensure that Contract Catering remains a dependable service, both in terms of the standards it displays and the spirit in which it carries out its services."

FERCO's 12 members are the national associations representing contract caterers.

Belgium – Union Belge du Catering (UBC)

Finland – Finnish Hospitality Association (MARA) – www.mara.fi

France – Syndicat National de la Restauration Collective (SNRC) – www.snrc.fr

Germany – Verband der Internationalen Caterer in Deutschland (VIC)

The Netherlands – Vereniging Nederlandse Cateringorganisaties (VENECA) – www.veneca.nl

Ireland – Association of the Irish Contract Caterers (AICC)

Italy – Associazione Nazionale delle Aziende di Ristorazione Collettiva e servizi (ANGEM) – www.angem.it

Hungary – Magyar Vendéglátó Szövetség (MVSZ) – www.mvsz.org

Portugal – Associação de Restauração e Similares de Portugal (ARESP) – www.aresp.pt

Spain – Federación Española de Asociaciones Dedicadas a la Restauración Social (FEADRS) – www.feadrs.com

Sweden – Sveriges Hotell & Restaurang Företagare (SHR) – www.shr.se

United Kingdom – British Hospitality Association (BHA) – www.bha-online.org.uk

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