

## Foreword

The Institute of European Food Studies (IEFS) was established in 1995 under the auspices of the Irish Universities Nutrition Alliance, which is comprised of the academic nutrition units of University College Cork, Trinity College Dublin and the University of Ulster. The Institute has a five-year research programme in three areas: understanding consumer attitudes to nutrition and physical activity; food chemical intake studies in risk assessment; and food and nutrition policy. Reports in these areas are available at [www.iefs.org](http://www.iefs.org). The institute's research income comes from industry (Coca-Cola, Danone, Fyffes, Golden Vale, Greencore, Guinness Ireland, Kraft Jacob, Mars, Nestlé, Pepsi-Cola, Pfizer, Sucralose and Unilever), the European Commission (DGV) and the Department of Agriculture, Food and Forestry in Dublin, through EU structural funds. On behalf of the workshop participants, the project management committee would like to thank these sponsors. Thanks are also due to Jo Gibney (IEFS), who oversaw all the daunting administrative tasks of this project.

In an era when nutrition embraces molecular biology, it is sad to see how neglected are the complex relationships between nutrients, between foods, and between foods and nutrients. Perhaps it is unfashionable. However, the development of successful public health nutrition programmes urgently needs this to receive serious scholarship. This workshop, held in Dublin in March 1998, is a start to this

process. It has attempted, in as uniform a manner as is possible, to compare patterns of food and nutrient intake in the EU against prevailing dietary guidelines, and to examine prevailing dietary guidelines and variations in food intake at the upper end of common targets in public health nutrition: fats, saturated fats, fibre, and fruit and vegetables. In this evolutionary process of developing methodologies for establishing food-based dietary guidelines in the EU member states, the next phase will be to collate the data in this supplement and to ensure that like is being compared with like. It may be that some common solutions to the development of food-based dietary guidelines emerge or that European gastronomic diversity makes this difficult. All of this will lead to more complex and, hopefully, more successful food-based dietary guidelines that will materially contribute to improved public health to the citizens of the EU.

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