



EUROPEAN  
FEDERATION OF  
THE ASSOCIATIONS  
OF DIETITIANS

## Strategic Plan 2017 – 2021

Adopted by EFAD General Meeting 2016

### **EFAD's Mission statement:**

To support member Associations in developing the role that dietitians have in reducing inequalities and improving nutritional health in Europe.

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# 1.0 Introduction

In preparing the strategic plan for the next 5 years, EFAD has made use of its vision for the profession, and the future of nutrition and health, as we see it, with respect to dietetics and dietitians in Europe over the next decades<sup>1</sup>. It has also included the views of its member National Dietetic Associations, Standing Committees, European Specialist Dietetic Networks and Education Associate members<sup>2</sup>.

Dietitians are evidence based healthcare practitioners who have a unique scientific knowledge of food and nutrition together with understanding the psychosocial dimension of human health. This Strategy involves setting goals, determining actions to achieve the goals, and indicating how dietitians will evaluate and measure the results in reducing inequalities and improving nutritional health in Europe.

The challenges facing Europe and its population over the next decades will influence nutritional health and impact on the role of the dietitian. These challenges include not only the burden of non-communicable disease and acute illness but the impact of reducing energy supplies<sup>3</sup>, changes in demographics, technological advances and climate and environment shifts on sustainable food supplies. In the European Commission report 'Global Europe 2050'<sup>4</sup>, Smits (2012) states that, given the changes we face in the future *'business as usual is not an option: incremental changes, small adjustments to the current policy framework will not do the job'*. This means that EFAD, as well as dietitians and dietetics in Europe, must be committed to change<sup>5</sup>. While this current strategic planning only extends over 5 years it does so very much with the future in mind.

In 2012 Klug 2012 predicted a decrease in the number of health professionals due to difficulties in recruiting and retaining workers<sup>6</sup>. This is an opportunity for dietetic professionals to work more interprofessional and autonomously. EFAD foresees an increasing role for dietitians as educators<sup>7</sup>, researchers and health professional leaders.

New care delivery models for health will be required and a shift from single interventions to packages of interventions will support the reality of health system delivery and create efficiencies.

Dietitians will be increasingly involved in cost benefit/efficiency analysis and supporting an increased emphasis on balancing approaches towards prevention vs treatment.

Dietitians will increasingly work between systems of healthcare, industry and provision of services in the community. Effective ways of maximising health gains, will be evaluated

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<sup>1</sup> By using European reports, priorities of our members and workshop outcomes held at General Meetings

<sup>2</sup> Foresight planning workshop, 25<sup>th</sup> EFAD General Meeting

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.roadmap2050.eu/>

<sup>4</sup> Robert-Jan SMITS Director-General for Research and Innovation European Commission in writing in 'Global Europe 2050' [https://ec.europa.eu/research/social-sciences/pdf/policy\\_reviews/global-europe-2050-report\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/research/social-sciences/pdf/policy_reviews/global-europe-2050-report_en.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> The Knowledge Future: Intelligent policy choices for Europe 2050  
[http://ec.europa.eu/research/publications/knowledge\\_future\\_2050.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/research/publications/knowledge_future_2050.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> Hans Kluge WHO speaking at the 15th European Health Forum Gastein  
<http://www.ehfg.org/intranet/app/webroot/uploads/presentations/files/uploads/b73215d3f813389b8e91586a525207.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> For example to other healthcare practitioners, doctors, nurses, midwives, caterers, carers, parents, employers, restaurants managers

both at the level of the practitioner and working towards the integration of food and nutrition into policies such as health, transport and water.

Dietitians will initiate, manage and use technological and other service innovations related to food and nutrition. Innovations will continue at a very rapid pace and have a direct impact on economic, health and social development. Lifelong health promotion actions, eg where food safety measures will help to reduce waste and reduce calls on healthcare systems, will also increase as dietitians incorporate the use of information technology and communication into their practice.

Underpinning this dietetic activity into the future is the fundamental and essential emphasis for all dietetic professionals on evidence based practice. Dietitians will increasingly contribute to the evidence base through both practice and academic based research to improve nutritional health and reduce inequalities for people in Europe.

Higher education and academia specifically will respond with revisions of curricular, enhanced provision of lifelong learning opportunities and graduate research to support the changes in the delivery of cost effective healthcare, technology and the need for more emphasis on sustainable diets.

In future dietetics will have increased involvement in prevention, primary/community care and nutrition education, using technology as an essential means of communication and collecting data to contribute to cost-effective healthcare.

Associations and HEIs need to consider how they can prepare and empower dietitians to meet these challenges. For example to work in multi-faceted workplaces, lead innovations using technology, understand their fundamental role in collecting and analysing data and contribute to changes in policies concerning food and nutrition.

In this future scenario the three main types of dietitians may face the following challenges:

- Food service dietitians may need to take more of a leadership role in the public health agenda as they influence the provision of sustainable and healthy food which is increasingly consumed in diverse and novel venues due to societal changes
- Clinical dietitians will need to demonstrate cost effectiveness in view of many competing calls on healthcare resources. They will need to take on leadership roles, work in health personnel teams and more autonomously in both the clinical and in the national health care system.
- Public health dietitians will be challenged to show cost effectiveness of lifelong health promotion actions as they take on leadership roles in public health, nutrition education, technological innovations and managing health resources.

Dietitians and dietetics will be in high demand in the future as we respond and provide services to improve the health of the European citizen.

## 2.0 EFAD's strategic role in Europe and plan

EFAD works at European level promoting dietetics and dietitians. Our vision for European dietitians remains the same as do our values which can be found at <http://www.efad.org/aboutefad/5191/7/0/80>.

**Vision:** EFAD, national dietetic associations (NDAs) and dietitians are recognised leaders in the field of dietetics and nutrition. We will continue to pro-actively initiate and grow partnerships in order to improve nutritional health, reduce socioeconomic health inequalities and contribute to economic prosperity.

To achieve our vision EFAD supports the highest quality of dietetic education, professional practice, research activity and partnership.

The EFAD Strategy for 2017 – 2021 seeks to match our strengths with opportunities (Appendix 1) so that:

- Our members work in partnership with EFAD to raise the quality and profile of dietitians and dietetics through a strong emphasis on evidence based practice and professional development
- Together we prepare dietitians through collaboration, partnership and contribution with other entities to meet the needs of Europe.
- Our goal is a healthy society with sustainable economic and social prospects through better food and nutrition at local, European and international level

### 3.0 Strategic Objectives for EFAD 2017-2021

**Objective 1:** *To build European-level cooperation between stakeholders<sup>8</sup> who promote nutrition and dietetics*

What does this mean? EFAD and all its members will work with key stakeholders through productive membership of European/International Networks to promote dietitians, dietetics and nutrition.

**Goals:**

- a) We develop strategic partnerships and relationships to collaborate on topics of mutual benefit and interest for nutritional health
- b) We engage with stakeholders and recommends policy to promote nutrition and dietetics
- c) To promote and emphasise essential research partnerships and collaborations

**Objective 2:** *To continually enhance the profession by taking an approach that is flexible, innovative and can be experimental*

What does this mean? The changing roles for dietitians means that Higher Education, the focus of professional research, the leadership of EFAD and its committees needs to be open, anticipate change and solve problems in new ways.

**Goals:**

- d) EFAD, its committees, ESDNs and members anticipate change and respond to make sure the profession is fit for purpose, proactive and provides sustainable quality of service to meet the needs of society.
- e) EFAD, NDAs and Education Associates embed evidence based practice and knowledge creation through systematic enquiry

**Objective 3:** *To develop a system which encourages exchange of knowledge in Europe and leads to the sustainability of EFAD?*

*What does this mean?* Collecting and sharing data (surveillance) about the profession will help dietitians and stakeholders to fully understand the contribution of dietitians to health, increasing the demand for dietetic services which encourages further growth and development.

**Goals:**

- f) EFAD develops secure and transparent methods for collection, analysis and exchange of information
- g) EFAD selects and uses appropriate channels of communication to promote dietitians and dietetics in Europe.
- h) EFAD plans for sustainability as the primary voice for dietitians in Europe.

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<sup>8</sup> EFAD Stakeholders include EFAD member associations and their member dietitians, ministers of health, education and employment, other health professionals, dietetic service users (including patients), employers, food industry, non-governmental organisations

## **4.0 Implementation of the Strategic Objectives and achievement of goals**

European and global challenges will impact on dietitians and their role over the coming years. This plan is forward looking and lays the groundwork for meeting those challenges whilst remaining responsive to the professions needs on a yearly basis.

Each year EFAD, Committees and ESDNs will produce work plans<sup>9</sup> to meet the goals described in 3.0. Achievement of the goals will rely not only on EFAD's Committees, ESDNs and Education Associates but also on member National Dietetic Associations. The EFAD Executive Committee will work hard to make sure that work plans are carefully managed and we will work with our partners to meet the goals of the Strategic Plan.

A report on achievement of our objectives and goals will of course be available, as always, through the Annual Report and the minutes of meetings posted on the EFAD website.

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<sup>9</sup> The work plans are available on the website for all members to consult but will not be presented to the General Meeting.

# Appendix 1

## *EFAD's sustainable and competitive advantages*

### What is EFAD best at?

- Dissemination
  - to an EU-network of dietitians + internationally (35.000+ dietitians, 9000+ student dietitians and over 37 Higher Education Institutes)
  - to politicians, health professionals, non-governmental organisations
- Developing European positions on dietetic specialities
- Providing dietetic expert opinion on issues affecting human nutrition, food nutrition and on issues relevant to dietetics
- Surveillance of dietetic practice and effectiveness
- Providing guidance for development of the profession

### What is EFAD's uniqueness?

- EFAD is the only European-wide organisation for national dietetic associations and Higher Education Institutes teaching dietetics and nutrition
- EFAD represents over 35.000 dietitians and 9000+ student dietitians

### What can EFAD potentially do better than any other organization?

- Represent profession of dietetics to European level stakeholders:

- European bodies (European Commission, European Parliament, World Health Organisation, Food and Agricultural Organisation)
- Non-governmental organisations (EFPC, EPHA, ENHA)
- Food industry
- Media
- Be a cohesive force for cooperation between European NDAs, HEIs and other agencies
- Develop and embed European guidelines and monitor development of the European profession of dietetics on:
  - Education
  - Lifelong Learning
  - Evidence Based Practice
  - Safe and quality practice
  - Advanced practice
- Understand difference between dietitians and other professions

## **Glossary**

EFAD – The European Federation of the Associations of Dietitians

EFPC – European Forum for Primary Care

ENHA – European Nutrition for Health Alliance

EPHA – European Public Health Alliance

EU – European Union

HEIs – Higher Education Institutes

LLL – Lifelong Learning

NCD – Non-communicable Disease

NDA – National Dietetic Associations

WHO – World Health Organisation, European division