

# National Programme for the Promotion of Healthy Eating – Directorate-General of Health, Portugal

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*on behalf of the Joint Action on Chronic Diseases and Promoting Healthy Ageing Across the  
Life Cycle (JA-CHRODIS)*

*Joining Forces in Health Promotion to Tackle the Burden of Chronic Diseases in Europe – Vilnius, 24-25 November 2015*

## BACKGROUND

The National Programme for the Promotion of Healthy Eating (PNPAS) aims to improve the nutritional status of the population, encouraging physical and economic availability of foods that make up a healthy eating pattern and to create the conditions so that the population values, appreciates and eats them, integrating them into their daily routine.

This Strategy is based on the assumption that an adequate food intake and the consequent improve of citizens' nutritional status has a direct impact in the prevention and control of the most prevalent diseases at national level (cardiovascular and oncological diseases, diabetes and obesity) but should simultaneously allow for the economic growth and competitiveness of the country in other sector such as those connected to agriculture, environment, tourism, employment or professional qualification.

## METHODS

The Decree-Law no. 14/2011, of December 29th, approved by The Ministry of Health's structured and strengthened the authority of the Directorate-General of Health (DGS); the latter is now responsible for the monitoring of the Ministry of Health's policies and programmes. By Dispatch of the Secretary of State of the Ministry of Health, dated January 3rd, 2012, the following eight priority programmes were approved for development by DGS, where the National Programme for the Promotion of Healthy Eating is included, with a timeline of five years (2012-2016).

When developing PNPAS several guidelines and strategies were integrated: those proposed by the WHO and the European Union (DG SANTÉ, formerly DG SANCO), resulting from the Portuguese experience in work groups such as the European Commission's High Level Group on Nutrition and Physical Activity; the experience achieved by developing different national proposals since 1976, that led to the creation of the Platform Against Obesity; the vast experience of two countries – Norway and Brazil – in the implementation of policies and strategic measured in the field of nutrition; and the public hearing, set by the DGS, to consult stakeholders, which has contributed significantly to the final improvement of the strategy.

## RESULTS

Based on the goals of the Programme different strategies have been developed.

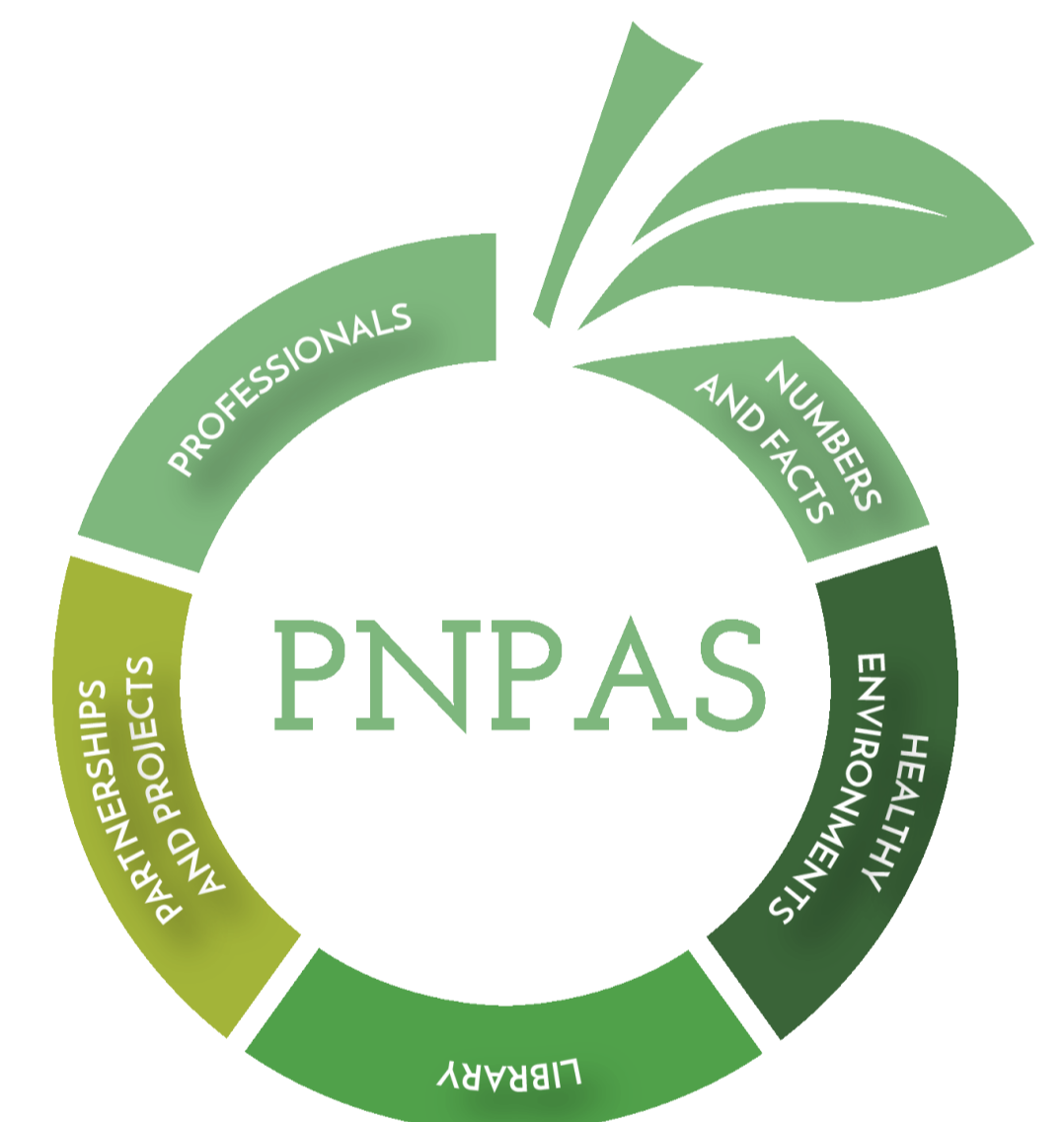
To increase the knowledge of food intake of the Portuguese population several studies were made, such as EPACI (0 to 3 years old), COSI (6 to 8 years old), HBSC and Epi-Teen (teenagers), SPEO/FCNA (adults), Nutritionup65 (olders), IAN and Infofamília/EPHE (inequities).

To modulate the availability of some foods, namely in schools, workplaces and public spaces, actions such as the Fruit School Scheme, iodine salt at schools and the food programme at workplaces, were put in place.

To inform and empower citizens, especially those in more disadvantaged groups, for the purchase, cooking and storing of healthy foods, different spaces were developed, namely the website and blog of the National Program with a number of 100 000 users and 400 000 page views since launch, podcasts about nutrition, videos, photos of Portuguese food, posters, recipes and guidelines.

To identify and promote cross-sectional actions that promote the intake of high nutritional quality foods, articulating and integrating other sectors, namely agriculture, sports, environment, education, social security and municipalities, by producing documents directed to municipalities, tourism and culture, environment, consumer and supermarkets.

To improve training and action of different professionals who, due to their activity, can influence knowledge, attitudes and behaviours towards food, projects such as Integrated Care Process, National Strategy for the promotion of physical activity, health and well-being and a workgroup on salt reduction were developed.



## CONCLUSIONS

Diet related chronic diseases are already the number one cause of death and illness in the western societies. Portugal, with a million obese and a sharp growth of social and economic costs associated with this type of pathology, began in 2012, and for the first time, a national strategy in the field of food and nutrition embodied in the National Programme for the Promotion of Healthy Eating. Portugal was one of the few European countries that did not have yet a national nutrition program.

In this time the program grew and the majority of the goals defined were achieved.

### Note:

The national program has a site with an English version at [www.alimentaosaudavel.dgs.pt](http://www.alimentaosaudavel.dgs.pt)

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This poster arises from the Joint Action on Chronic Diseases and Promoting Healthy Ageing across the Life Cycle (JA-CHRODIS), which has received funding from the European Union, in the framework of the Health Programme (2008-2013). Sole responsibility lies with the author and the Consumers, Health, Agriculture and Food Executive Agency is not responsible for any use that may be made of the information contained therein.



Co-funded by  
the Health Programme  
of the European Union



Programa Nacional  
para a Promoção  
da Alimentação Saudável