

EPODE EUROPEAN NETWORK (EEN)

Context, objectives and operational description

1/ Context

Increases in the prevalence of **childhood obesity** throughout Europe have focused attention on the need for large-scale **community based initiatives** to tackle the problem. It is now accepted that effective action by individuals must be set within the framework of an environment that supports and facilitates change. The **EPODE Program**, developed in France since 2004, is inspired by the experience developed in previous community and school-based interventions.

The EPODE initiative now extends to over 2 million inhabitants in **167 French cities, 32 Spanish** and **13 in Belgium**. The model consists of the strategic set up and coordination at a national and local level of concrete initiatives fostering **pleasant and balanced eating habits** and **greater physical activity** in everyday life. The methodology enables the creation of **new educational schemes**, mobilizing **local stakeholders** within their daily activities, thus empowering families and individuals in a sustainable way. These actions are coordinated by a local project manager, nominated by the mayor (or other local leader) and delivered under the guidance of a social marketing team and the expertise of an independent scientific committee.

The objective is to contribute to the reduction of childhood overweight and obesity through a methodology that establishes prevention at the heart of the city networks. Thus, the entire community becomes a vector within a health prevention strategy.

Success to date is measured by a **large field mobilization** in the French pilot cities and by the **encouraging evolution of the BMI** of children.

The EU Platform on Diet, Physical Activity and Health has highlighted the necessity of establishing multiple partnerships involving public and private stakeholders. This view, largely shared by DG SANCO and the World Health Organization, is a founding component of EPODE.

The EEN - **EPODE European Network** – is a European project to be run from 2008 to 2011 with the support of the **European Commission (DG Health and Consumers)**. It has been designed to **facilitate** the implementation of **CBI programs** using the EPODE methodology in other European countries. The EEN will contribute to the EU vision of a multi-stakeholders partnership united in its determination to **promote healthier lifestyles, improve diet and physical activity habits**, and to **prevent obesity** and other non-communicable diseases.

2/ **EEN objectives**

The EEN is a “**think and do tank**” gathering key experts, political and institutional representatives to implement strategies, learning from existing community-based experiences. The aim is to **facilitate** the **set up** and the **implementation** of efficient CBIs using the **EPODE methodology** in other European countries.

This will have to be achieved through:

1) **The production of concrete guidelines regarding:**

- The importance of political awareness, willingness and involvement
- Good practices for the design, delivery and especially evaluation of EPODE-like CBIs
- The interest of network expertise and social marketing approaches
- The legal and ethical framework of Public/Private Partnerships

2) **The dissemination of these guidelines**, in order to raise political, institutional and scientific awareness of the importance of local, long-term and multistakeholders approaches.

3) The **identification** and **follow up of relevant teams** willing to implement CBI networks, using the EPODE methodology in other countries and regions

This involves:

- Bringing together the different teams representative of Programs directly inspired by EPODE throughout the world (THAO, VIASANO...),
- Listing and evaluating the actions undertaken or planned in the field in Europe and throughout the world, in cooperation with existing networks, and institutional approaches (IOTF, WHO, European Commission...)
- Conducting qualitative surveys to conceptualize EPODE keys for success

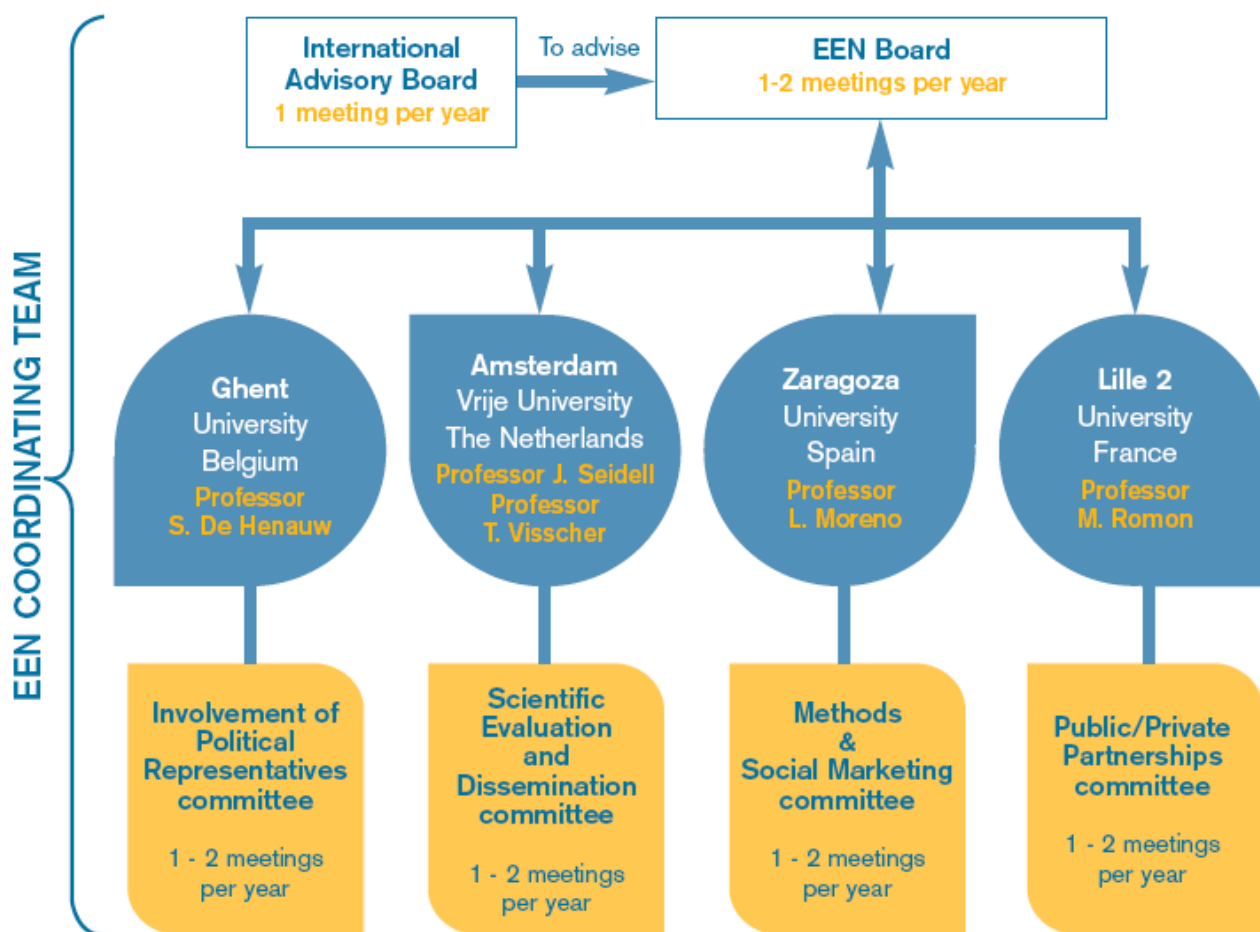
- Identifying countries or institutions expressing a motivation toward implementing CBI programs using EPODE methodology; Facilitating experience sharing between these teams and EPODE national coordination teams
- Publishing and disseminating findings in order to raise awareness of political and institutional representatives, experts, private stakeholders...

3/ EEN organization

For 3 years (2008-2011) of the EEN project, 4 specialized committees – gathering **key experts / associated partners** (universities, institutions) from different **European countries** – will follow a plan, deliver outputs and produce guidelines within a well-structured program.

The network, created and coordinated by the EEN coordination team, is structured around a **board** and **four committees** including workgroups: a **committee for the “involvement of political representatives”** (including the EPODE European Mayor’s Club), a **“scientific evaluation and dissemination committee”**, a **“methods and social marketing committee”** and a **“public / private partnership committee”**. These committees will cooperate within the framework of a work plan validated by the board.

Within this organization, an independent **International Advisory Board** will give a critical view on EPODE deployment and, as appropriate, contribute to the EEN dissemination activities.



European coordination team

The EEN Coordination team (based within Protéines Company) is the main partner of the project and is responsible for its overall conductivity. The team is composed of:

EEN Coordination Team – PROTEINES Company
Dr Jean-Michel BORYS , Co-director and scientific director of the EEN
Sandrine RAFFIN , Co-director of the EEN, General Manager of Protéines
Christophe ROY , Coordinator of the EEN
Yann LE BODO , Project manager, EEN

Its role and missions are multiple and crucial:

- EEN project **design**
- Strategic **conceptualization** of the EEN
- Ensure EEN **funding**

- Overall **coordination** of the EEN: Ensure interface between the members, preparation and debriefing of all EEN meetings (minutes, next steps), global agenda, organization of Board and IAB meetings, monitor and support the work in progress led by the universities between the meetings, logistic support for related EEN events, scientific topicality updates, administrative / financial management and monitoring

- Design and roll out of the overall **dissemination** of the work in progress and the final results (website design and management, PR management and monitoring...)
- Intervention in congresses and conferences

- Continuous process and outcome **evaluation** of the project

EEN board

The board is composed of:

- The 2 EEN Co-directors (Co-chairmen of the board)
- The 4 chairmen of the committees – (leaders from the associated universities)
- A representative from the EPODE European Mayor's Club
- A representative of the International Advisory Board
- A representative from DG SANCO
- A representative / private partner of the EEN

The board will convene twice a year and will:

- Determine the operational functioning that will govern the network (meetings, actions, international exchanges, financing...)

- Elaborate the agenda for the selection of topics of the committee's workplans
- Validate the content of the outputs of the committees / workgroups
- Design and coordinate the annual EEN symposium and publications on the EEN

International Advisory Board (IAB)

EPODE and the EEN are surrounded with an independent international experts committee recognized for their competences in public health field and community-based interventions in lifestyle diseases prevention field.

IAB members are totally independent experts, and opinions free. IAB membership does not link them to EPODE strategy.

IAB missions are particularly:

- Give a critical view on EPODE development at the international scale, its evaluation, its publications and influence.
- As appropriate, contribute to EPODE and EEN dissemination activities in scientific, institutional and political environments

IAB is constituted of permanent members who can, according circumstances, use invited members' skills. EEN Co-directors are not IAB members, but permanent participants.

IAB members are:

EPODE International Advisory Board	Countries
Pr Boyd Swinburn / Deakin University	Australia
Pr France Bellisle / CRNH Bobigny	France
Pr Jean-Pierre Desprès / Laval University	Canada
Pr Susan Jebb / Cambridge University	UK
Pr Jaap C. Seidell / Vrije University Amsterdam	Netherlands

IAB meets physically at least **once a year**, answering to European Coordination invitation made by PROTEINES.

Between two meetings and **every three months**, the coordination team can appeal IAB members, depending on their abilities, regarding **3 or 4 main issues** discussed in the workgroups or different committee's meetings.

EEN committees' organization

Within the EEN project, each main topic / issue will be discussed within work groups in order to fulfil the overall objective:

- Work group for the "**Involvement of political representatives**"
- "**Scientific evaluation and dissemination**" work group
- "Interest of **social marketing**" work group
- "**Public/private partnerships (PPP)**" work group

Each of these work groups is conducted by a scientific expert from one of the associated universities of the project, as followed:

Associated universities	Countries	Specific Work Group
J.C. Seidell / T. Visscher / Amsterdam University	Netherlands	Scientific evaluation
S. De Henauf / Gent University	Belgium	Political involvement
M. Romon / Lille University	France	Public / private partnership
L Moreno / Zaragoza University	Spain	Methods and Social Marketing

The university team is in charge of the **achievement of the continuous work plan** all over the year, in collaboration with the EEN coordination team. The university team is at least composed of a scientific expert and of a scientific assistant.

For each of these work groups, the work in progress will be discussed within a committee. Each committee will be composed as such:

- **Expert of the university team** - Chairman of the committee
- **Permanent members:** coordination team representatives, DG SANCO representative, representatives of the other committees, qualified experts in the field, and more specifically:

- EPODE European Mayor's Club representative (within the committee for the "involvement of political representatives")
 - EPODE/THAO/VISANO scientific committees' representatives (within the "Scientific evaluation and dissemination" committee)
 - EPODE/THAO/VIASANO Coordination teams' representatives (within the "Social marketing" committee)
 - EEN Private partners (within the "PPP" committee)
- **Invited experts**, possessing specific experience in the fields discussed and giving punctual advice on topics previously defined by the permanent members.

The university teams will work throughout the year in collaboration with the coordination team and **once to twice a year**, each committee members will gather within a meeting (5 meetings over the 3 years / committee).

Each meeting content will be duly prepared, and **key documents** will be sent to the members 15 days before the meeting, with a short **list of questions** to be treated the day of the meeting. The members can also send **complementary information** to the coordination team within 15 days after the meeting.

Outputs (section of the guidelines drafting...) will be produced by the university team and monitored by the coordination team (meeting's **minutes**...).

Besides these meetings, members will be sent a **monthly report** on the work in progress. Members will collaborate with the coordination team via e-mail, net meetings, phone meetings and an exchange platform (project dedicated website).

4/ EEN Committees

Committee for the "involvement of political representatives"

This committee will be responsible for recommendations regarding the necessary **political involvement in the support** of local, long-term and multi-stakeholders approaches in the field of obesity and non-communicable diseases prevention.

A focus will be made on fundamental questions as:

- Deeper understanding of the **power of political involvement** in childhood obesity prevention
 - Legitimacy, relevance and role of a political commitment in EPODE-like initiatives
 - Do we need it? At which level?
 - Is this a pillar in CBI approach and primary prevention?
 - What are the possible co-lateral effects?
 - Are there other case studies?

- Provide a **deeper insight of barriers and levers** to enrich the model of political involvement in EPODE Operational countries
 - What are the conditions to succeed and the barriers?
 - How to mobilize elected representatives in a sustainable way?
 - Which best scale for the set up of a CBI? Profile of town required?
 - Possible role of auxiliary actors in the cities
 - Expectations of political representatives in terms of communication on the program and its results
 - Relationships with local stakeholders, local private partners, scientific experts...

This committee will also contribute to ensure the **political support** of the network at the local, national and European scale as well as for developing **innovative multi-partner solutions** that could be implemented in order to facilitate dissemination of the projects.

Scientific evaluation and dissemination committee

This committee will be in charge of inventorying and analyzing existing initiatives, and especially creating a **new evaluation scheme** for EPODE-like CBIs. It will also be responsible for publishing methods and findings in a peer-reviewed journal.

A focus will be made for example on the following topics:

- Critical analysis of **existing CBI evaluation frameworks** applied to childhood obesity prevention
- Deeper insight on evaluation schemes designed and implemented in **EPODE operational programs**
- **Optimization** of a generic CBI evaluation scheme:
 - How to evaluate a community-based intervention initiative, with no control town?
 - Most adequate method to measure children weight/height in order to assess BMI
 - How to ensure a positive involvement of local teams and stakeholders?
 - How to ensure the funding and cost effectiveness of evaluation processes?
 - Evaluation design (methods, indicators...) and implementation (tools and staff for data collection and analysis)
 - What kind of expertise to guide the evaluation process
- **Dissemination** of the results (communication, relationship between scientific experts and political representatives...)

Besides, the scientific committee will also define the **most appropriate profile of scientific expertise** required in the design and implementation of EPODE-like CBIs, fostering a multidisciplinary approach integrating physical activity, behavior sciences, education, cooking...

Methods and social marketing committee

This committee will be in charge of defining the **operational structure** to create, implement and manage an **EPODE-like CBI network**, including a central coordination and local project management. It will also be in charge of producing guidelines regarding the interest of **network expertise** and **social marketing approaches** within an EPODE-like program.

A focus will be made for example on the following topics:

- Deeper insight of **social marketing approaches** applied to public health and especially **childhood obesity prevention** (existing methodologies, tools, results, best practices...)
- How to **optimize** an efficient Social Marketing Strategy to enable social norms changes?
 - Can social marketing thinking and approaches modify the social norms and what are the conditions of its successful use?
 - Social marketing techniques currently used in the framework of EPODE programs?
 - Type of message to be conveyed
 - How can action be structured?
 - How to involve in a sustainable and relevant manner local stakeholders in order to ultimately impact the environment?
 - How to contribute to a long-term creation of group dynamics to change behaviors?
 - How to reach specific targets? (eg: less educated people)
- What kind of **operational structure(s)** to coordinate an EPODE-like CBI network (Ad-hoc structure? Public or private? Central or Local? Competencies and human resources required?)
- **Relationships** of a national coordination team with the local teams, scientific experts, political representatives and private partners

Public / private partnership committee

This committee will be in charge of optimizing the **framework for Public/Private Partnership** (PPP) in the field of obesity prevention CBIs, including **ethical, legal** and **economical** aspects. This committee will also propose an “**ethical charter**” to be signed by potential relevant stakeholders willing to get involved in the set up of an EPODE-like initiative.

A focus will be made on the following topics:

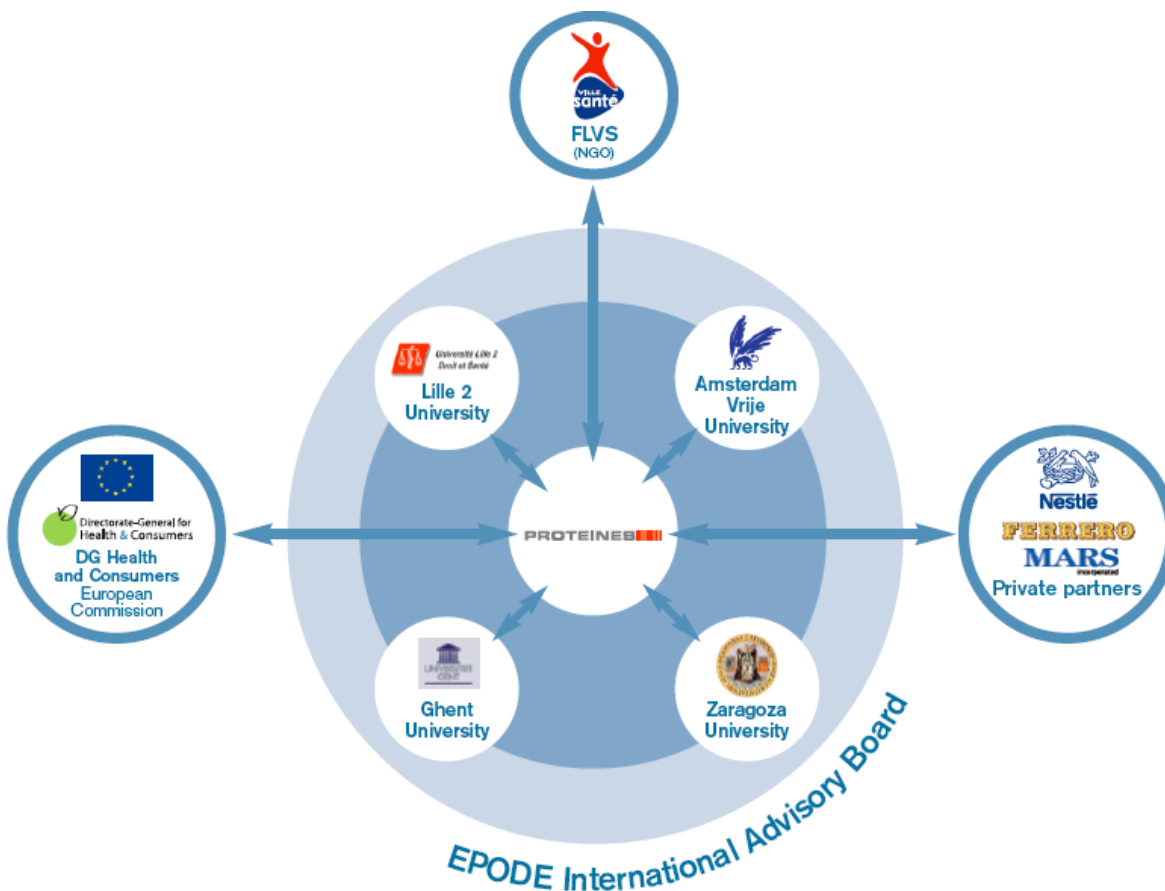
- **Successful PPP** in the field of health prevention and especially childhood obesity prevention? Dramatic experiences?
- **Levers** and **barriers** for successful PPP?
- **Optimization** of the rules for a successful collaboration between Public and Private partners:
 - Which partners to be motivated and considered?
 - How to protect the public interest?
 - How to offer an interesting approach to private partners?
 - How to create mutual confidence?
 - How to prevent and manage conflicts of interest?
 - What kind of structure to advocate transparency?
 - What type of charter / international code to be promoted?
 - Partnership to be built between the coordination structure, scientific experts, political representatives and private partners: legal, ethical and functional framework

This committee is also in charge of communicating, on the theme of multiple partnerships, with the national and international bodies concerned.

Protéines will ensure the coordination of the different committees and will publish information regarding work in progress, via a dedicated extranet website that will be accessible to all members of the network. In parallel, an Internet website will be created in order to make information concerning work in progress available to the public.

Over the 3 years, 2 **symposium** will bring together the **4 committees** in order to address different issues and share results, as defined on the agenda previously decided upon by the board. As part of this symposium, each committee will present its findings, and a summary will be submitted to the other groups for approval. The communication and dissemination plan will be validated, together with the main lines to be adopted for the following year.

4/ EEN Partners



Co-financing partners

Following the submission of an application form to the **European Commission** (DG Health and Consumers) call for proposal 2007 (Public Health Program 2003-2008), the EEN project has been selected for granting and negotiations are currently being finalized.

Private partners having confirmed their commitment are: **Ferrero, Mars and Nestlé.**

Institutional partners

The EEN has the support of the European Commission, EASO¹ (within the EEN Scientific evaluation and dissemination committee) and the European Alliance for EPODE.

Invited experts

Collaborating partners, bringing multidisciplinary expertise in the field of food and physical activity behaviors, childhood obesity, social marketing, public/private partnership are already involved in the different committees.

We are still working on enriching the network with new collaborators, especially:

- From **under represented European countries** in the EEN (Austria, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Portugal, Slovakia, Sweden)
- With contacts, politicians, and experts from **special fields** (Human and social sciences, Social Marketing, sport sciences...).

¹ EASO: established in 1988, the European Association for the Study of Obesity (EASO) has more than 2500 members in 28 countries. Members come from a wide range of professions including sport specialists, dieticians, doctors and scientists. EASO aims to promote research into obesity, facilitate contact between individuals and organizations, and promote action that tackles the epidemic of obesity

5/ Dissemination of outputs and Communication

The main output of the EEN will be the **concrete guidelines** to develop efficient sustainable CBIs using the EPODE methodology in other European countries and regions. Along the 3 years, continuous communication as well as long-term dissemination of the work in progress will be possible through:

- **Publications** describing the EPODE program, the EEN project and its added value and outcomes
- EEN **Newsletters** (4 issues / year, 1500 European contacts): to share information and make the political, institutional and strategic awareness of EPODE dynamics emerge
- EEN **interactive website** in English and at the end in 4 languages
 - Internet for general public
 - Extranet for EEN members and selected experts
- 2 EEN **symposium** gathering to 4 committees in order to have a cross-cutting vision of the results
- Participation to several **European events** and **congresses** related to public health and NCDs prevention
- **Press kits** and **press releases**

6/ EEN 2007 - 2008 milestones

- **Pre-meetings of the EEN:**
 - March the 29th, 2007 during the second national EPODE congress (Roubaix, France)
 - April the 23rd during the ECO 07 congress (Budapest, Hungary)
- First meeting of the **EPODE European Mayors' Club** (EEMC) and DG Sanco: June the 20th, 2007 (Brussels, Belgium)
- **Preliminary EEN and EEMC board meeting** including private partners: October the 8th, 2007 (Brussels, Belgium)
- **April 2008:** preliminary meeting of each committee (EEN coordination team and associated universities), Paris
- **May 14th 2008:**
 - First board meeting, Geneva
 - First International Advisory Board meeting, Geneva
- **EPODE European Mayors' Club** (EEMC) Congress supported by DG Sanco: June the 27th 2008 (Brussels, Belgium)
http://www.inforelais.net/PROTEINES/200803/e-Invitation_EPODE/invitation_200807.htm

NEXT STEP

- **October / December 2008:** meetings of each EEN committee, Paris / Brussels

7/ Dissemination and advocacy activities

- **"France - Mexico"** cooperation meeting on NCDs prevention, 09/07, Paris
- **Open Days**, European Week of Regions and cities, 10/07, Brussels
- **Food in Action Congress**, "Challenging obesity through motivation and behavioral change", 11/07, Brussels
- **US National Institutes for Health**, Obesity Prevention Conference, 10/07, Washington
- **National Obesity Forum**, "Obesity: the public Health Time Bomb", 10/07, London
- **WHO Regional Office for Europe**, Meeting with the Nutrition and Food Safety Department, conducted by Dr Francesco Branca, Regional Officer (Copenhaguen,02/08)
- **WHO meeting** on CBI to improve nutrition and physical activity, 02/08, Berlin
- **DG Regio "Sharing excellence" conference**, 02/08, Brussels
- **HSJ Tackling obesity conference**, 02/08, London
- **International Congress on Physical activity and public Health**, 04/08, Amsterdam
- **High Level Group on Nutrition and Physical activity** (EC), 2nd meeting, 04/08, Brussels
- **European Congress on Obesity**, 05/08, Geneva

EEN project leaders and contacts

○ **Project leaders:**

- Dr Jean-Michel BORYS Co-director and scientific coordinator of the EEN
- Sandrine RAFFIN, Co-director of the EEN, General Manager of Protéines
- Christophe ROY, Coordinator of the EEN : croy@proteines.fr
- Virginie BECQUART, General Secretary of the EEN

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EEN Partners

Institutional support



4 major European universities



Zaragoza



Private sponsors and partners to date

FERRERO

MARS
incorporated



EPODE programs websites

www.epode.fr

www.thaosalud.com

www.viasano.be