



BRUSSELS, 1<sup>ST</sup> DECEMBER 2017

REPORT OF THE  
4<sup>TH</sup> JPI HDHL CONFERENCE

**Working towards more societal  
impact of nutritional science**

On Friday 1<sup>st</sup> December 2017, almost 200 people from various backgrounds gathered at Hotel BLOOM in Brussels for the fourth conference of the JPI a Healthy Diet for a Healthy Life. We started off before dawn with our Early Bird sessions, with registration opening at 07.30 for the young scientists who were taking part in the Speech like Obama training. During this workshop on public speaking they received practical tips for the pitches about their research projects they were giving later that day. In the plenary room, a considerable number of people were present for the session on the role of the JPI HDHL in the challenge to ease the road from research to innovation. All speakers stressed that trust among parties is needed to allow for a fruitful collaboration. Good communication is another prerequisite. Before a project starts all partners need to be clear on the framework conditions of the collaboration, their expectations and their role within the project. Besides these two sessions, participants had the option to go on 'speed dates' in the morning. People who registered for this could pre-book up to five ten-minute chats with promising contacts.

## MORNING PLENARY TALKS

The main part of the conference was opened by dr. Pamela Byrne, chair of the JPI HDHL and chair of the day. After welcoming everyone, she introduced the theme of the conference, 'working towards more societal impact of nutritional science', and the first plenary speaker: dr. John Bell, director of Bioeconomy at the EC DG Research and Innovation. Dr. Bell inspired the participants with his talk, underlining the importance of initiatives like JPI HDHL, as food systems are front and centre of the major challenges the world is facing. He called on everyone in the field to work together, and stressed that societal impact of their research needs to be achieved quickly. One of the ways in which the projects within JPI HDHL can really have an effect on policies, was shown in the presentation of the new Policy Evaluation Network, which will start in spring of 2018. The coordinator of PEN, prof. Wolfgang Ahrens, told the conference how PEN aims to monitor and evaluate the impact of policies across Europe that affect dietary and physical activity behaviours. In the third plenary talk, prof. Lucyna Wozniak, member of the High Level Group on maximising impact of EU R&I programmes, expounded the various recommendations the group made in their LAB-FAB-APP report, which provides important input for the development of FP9. Overall, prof. Wozniak concluded that excellence in R&I is non-negotiable, and that stakeholders and society need to be included.

A lively end to the morning session was provided by the audience debate. It was set up as a house of commons debate, with participants choosing a side of the room depending on whether they agreed or disagreed with the motion, and making a case for their position to convince the other side. Fierce debates were waged about motions including the prohibition of industrially obtained trans-fats, and whether scientists should spend at least four hours per month on informing the public about their findings.

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<sup>1</sup>Also known as the Lamy Group

## AFTERNOON SESSIONS

Directly after lunch the first round of elevator pitches took place. In this part of the conference, 22 young scientists from all over Europe were given the opportunity to give a two minute pitch about the research project they are involved in, aiming to captivate and inspire their audience. Not an easy assignment, but very relevant when considering the importance of clear communication about research findings. A panel of judges was tasked with choosing a winner out of these young talents.

## PARALLEL WORKSHOPS

Participants could choose between five parallel workshops. There was also a second round of the Speech like Obama training, for young scientists who had not been selected to give a pitch.

## RESULTS OF THREE JPI HDHL KNOWLEDGE HUBS

In this workshop the findings of two finished projects, DEDIPAC and ENPADASI, and the findings so far of one ongoing project, MaNuEL, were presented. The aim of DEDIPAC was to create better understanding of the determinants of dietary, physical activity and sedentary behaviours. Over the course of three years, 40 systematic reviews were carried out to establish the state of the art. A roadmap for pan-EU monitoring was created and an online platform set up with information and tools. Knowledge gaps remain, and the PEN project now aims to tackle those in the area of policy evaluation. For an overview of results, see the **DEDIPAC website**. ENPADASI set out to create an open access infrastructure to store and share nutritional data according to the FAIR data principles, to stimulate integrated analysis. The results can be found on the **ENPADASI website**, including all deliverables, a training package, links to the different parts of the infrastructure and guidelines on data sharing. Finally, the objective of MaNuEL is to increase knowledge about malnutrition in the elderly, which is a prevalent problem. MaNuEL is a broad ranging project, which has already produced many results, including several reviews and overviews. The question remains how to optimize dissemination of the project results and translate these findings into practice. This could be a next, important step for the project.

## INDUSTRY

This workshop was geared towards senior scientists and representatives from the food industry that are already involved in public-private partnerships. The take-home message was that a trilateral collaboration of academia, industry and regulatory bodies is needed at an early stage to ease the way to innovation. Each party needs to understand the specific necessities of their respective partner beforehand. The situation of SMEs is different in comparison to big companies. Accordingly, other measures need to be taken to support SMEs on their way to innovation. This workshop was the first in a series of workshops

organised by JPI HDHL with the aim to work towards a guideline with recommendations on how academia and industry can collaborate within the scope of JPI HDHL. They will explore which kind of funding measures or other activities are suitable to meet the needs of both academia and industry, and how to overcome the identified innovation hurdles.

### **MULTI-STAKEHOLDER DIALOGUES BY FIT4FOOD2030**

During this workshop, participants came together to reflect on the conference's key aim; increasing the societal impact of nutritional science. Through experiential learning participants gained a taste of existing methods for holding multi-stakeholder dialogues and how these might be applied to the food system. This went through steps from creating a shared vision, to identifying actors and mapping outcomes, to developing key learning questions to both monitor the project and ensure ongoing multi-stakeholder engagement. Starting off in groups based around their own backgrounds (researchers, policy-makers, funders and communicators) participants also had the opportunity to reflect on the frames which emerged amongst other groups and identify points of alignment. The engaged and fruitful discussions highlighted the value of using such structured steps as the basis for dialogue and the results will be written up and shared, feeding back into the Fit4Food2030 project.

### **NUTRITION IN TRANSITION**

Nutrition sciences are meeting inherent boundaries that hamper conceptual and methodological progress, trust and translation of novel insights into societal benefits. In an interactive workshop these topics were extensively discussed. Evidence was seen as a concept that strongly builds on societal values to be combined with facts generated by multidisciplinary scientific research. Empirical research might provide a good foundation for the concept of health, distinguishing between biomedical, social and emotional aspects. Three layers are recognized in studying effects of nutrition on health; diet patterns, product groups and nutrients. These should be studied in a multidisciplinary approach through shared research questions where standardization is considered to be key for all scientific disciplines. To really address the scientific and societal needs in food and nutrition, more and specifically innovative research is needed. The EU should be leading the organizational harmonization, stimulating scientists from different scientific disciplines working together. Opinions differed on whether the food industry should be involved in nutrition research and if so to what extent. Public-private partnerships may be the way forward when research independency can be guaranteed.

### **UPDATE OF THE JPI HDHL STRATEGIC RESEARCH AGENDA**

This interactive workshop consulted a variety of stakeholders in order to update the current SRA via the Group Decision Room method. In the description of the societal challenge, there should be a stronger relation with the sustainability goals, including a link to food systems and the impact on the environment. For the update of the pillars, there was

general agreement that thematic areas should be better interconnected, rather than having pillars taken in isolation. For pillar 1 it was mentioned that more emphasis should be put on physical activity and on the influence of the built-in environment, beyond individual choices. How to encourage food producers to produce high quality food for an acceptable price should be included in pillar 2. Furthermore, the focus on whole diets rather than on single nutrients and foods was mentioned. For the third pillar everyone agreed to put more emphasis on health in a context of prevention than on chronic diseases.

## SECOND ROUND OF PITCHES AND CLOSING REMARKS

After the workshops, everyone came back to the plenary room for the second round of elevator pitches. When the last pitch was finished, the judging panel was able to unanimously decide on Anne-Esther Breyton from the FiberTAG project as the winner. She received a prize from the chair of the judging panel, prof. Helen Roche. Prof. Roche also reminded the participants how important it is to use the input generated during events like the JPI HDHL conference, where representatives from science, industry, funding and policy making come together, as all those partners need to have an equal voice in identifying the priorities. The closing remarks of the day came from the chair of the conference, Pamela Byrne. She emphasized the necessity of working together and good communication, and increasing the societal impact of all the important research that is being done. At this point, the vice-chair of the JPI HDHL, dr. Martijntje Bakker, took the opportunity to thank dr. Byrne for all her valuable work as chair of the JPI, as she will be leaving in the summer of 2018. She will be succeeded by Carlos Martinez Riera.

And with the closing remarks in mind, everyone headed to the goodbye drinks, to stimulate current and maybe start future collaborations.

The full report and the **aftermovie** are now available on the **JPI HDHL website**. The presentations are available on the **conference website**.

