

## **Promoting healthy diets: Commission-funded programme wins WHO Counteracting Obesity Award**

A project to encourage children to eat more fruit and vegetables, financed by the European Commission to the tune of €600,000, has just won a major international award. The Irish "Food Dudes" campaign won a World Health Organisation Counteracting Obesity Award 2006. The award was presented by Commissioner for Health and Consumer Protection Markos Kyprianou during the WHO European Ministerial Conference on Counteracting Obesity being held from 15 to 17 November 2006 in Istanbul. The initiative, which is one of the 146 commitments made to the Commission's Platform for Action on Diet Physical Activity and Health, was praised by Commissioner Kyprianou as "an innovative approach to promoting a healthy and balanced diet among children". The three-year programme was singled out for its success in promoting "fruit and vegetable consumption in a way that changes children's behaviour for the better on a permanent basis while ensuring the availability of the promoted product". This is just one of a number of EU co-financed agricultural promotion projects aimed at boosting healthy eating, at a time when Europe faces a growing problem of obesity, particularly among the young. The award comes as the Commission finalises its proposals to reform the way it supports fruit and vegetable growers across the EU. Better promotion of fruit and vegetables to stimulate consumption will be a major cornerstone of the reform, due to be unveiled on 24 January. Mariann Fischer Boel, Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development, said: "This is an excellent example of how our promotion efforts can make a real difference to the long-term health of our citizens. It's just the sort of thing I want to build on when we make our proposals to reform our fruit and vegetable market."

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