

Health Committee

Report: Obesity

Country: Greece

After shortages, dearths or privations of the military dictatorship between 1967 and 1974, the Greeks have totally changed their alimentary consumption. That is why; the Greek population has entered in an alimentary overconsumption, due to globalization. So, dietician Christina Makratzaki explains that the fear of running out of food is become worrying. She explains that Greek people had retrieved a better quality of life, since 1974. Consequently, they had turned towards some foods which they could not eat during the dictatorship, as red meat. This has resulted that Greeks have take weight. The government did not make some prevention programs or nutrition's education in school. However, this worrying problem will not be resolve because school canteens have been greatly reduced. It is also due to other impediments, like with a low formation of dietician, which will prescribe inadequate diets. In fact there is not a real medical monitoring with some medical specialists and even some psychologists. The inability governmental to resolve the problem has been provoked by the crisis and the important public debt. Thus, some municipalities had tried to care of it, for example the city of Chania, in Crete, has putted in place few action of prevention with visits or seminars to promote the Crete's alimentation. Withal, this initiative is too marginal to be a solution, due to the weakness of national coordination and the cruel lack of means aggravates the situation. Those economics difficulties strongly impact the daily obesity, thereby; the Greek population prefers eating fast-food than to eating traditional alimentary and vegetables, because it is too expensive. To compare, the price of a balance meal is a fortune compared to a gyros which cost 2, 50€. A gyros is the well-known sandwich of fast-food Greek alimentation, it is a sandwich of pita's bread with meat and vegetables. However gyros are very often made by fast-food and its ingredients are often fat and industrial, with many fatty sauces. Indeed, childhood obesity in Greece is the most important in the world, according to the OCDE and its results of the obesity in the world in 2014; Greeks' children are the most touching by it. Digits show it, 44% of the 5-15 years old Greeks are overweight or obese. So the lack of nutritional culture promotes obesity, for all generations.

To resolve this problem, the Greece has participated at the Ministerial Conference European of the World Health Organization (WHO) of the fight against obesity. This conference takes place on November 2006 at Istanbul. During the conference, the 53 members' states signed the European charter about the fight against obesity. The actual politic position of the Greece about this problem has been explained by the initiative of the health Minister Panagiotis Kouroumpli, in a press release on June 2014. The strategy of the new leadership of the ministry is based on three pillars. The first objective is to complete and improve the existing database about the levels of nutritional status and health of the general population and specific groups (children, adolescents, the elderly, vulnerable groups) to better target obesity. The second mission is to improve the lifestyle of the Greeks. With the collaboration of all agencies involved in the control of food, some studies will be made and then the Minister will take initiatives to put stricts limits of some substances which are not healthy, like saturated fats, sugar or salt, in foods. The Committee for Nutrition Policy will strengthen its role by dietitians and support special research centers. Indeed, it will create a Food Observatory. The third axis will be the prevention of childhood obesity, with seminars for teachers for applies nutrition education programs. This program is made of by the parental information, preventive medical checks of children but also with the cooperation between the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Culture and Sports. Therefore, to improve the current reality, it is imperative to have a cooperation of all stakeholders, based on informing the world through action and TV. The initiative to recruit 13,000 professionals of medical and paramedical personnel, including dietitians, is a political choice for ward the real lack of staff training in the health sector.