

The dynamic development of food production technology has led to the improvement of food safety in the traditional sense of the term. Nowadays, in the European Union, there are relatively rare cases of trade in dangerous food, i.e. dangerous due to contamination, both by foreign and other factors or due to rotting, spoilage or decay¹. This phenomenon still exists, but is not currently the main food hazard. The main threat today is not food contamination, but its composition, caloric content, additives and processing.

According to the World Health Organization, NCDs kill 41 million people each year, which accounts for 71% of all deaths in the world. More than 15 million people between the ages of 30 and 69 die from NCDs each year, and more than 85% of these deaths occur in low- and middle-income countries. Cardiovascular disease accounts for the majority of deaths from NCDs (17.9 million people annually), followed by cancer (9.0 million), respiratory disease (3.9 million) and diabetes (1.6 million). According to estimates by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), approximately 550,000 people of working age die prematurely from NCDs each year in the European Union (EU). They are the leading cause of death in the EU and account for the majority of healthcare expenditure, costing the EU economy EUR 115 billion a year, or around 0.8% of the GDP of all European Union Member States². The most important risk factors for NCDs incidence include: excessive salt intake and metabolic risks related to nutrition, i.e. increased blood pressure, overweight and obesity, hyperglycemia and hyperlipidemia³. In addition, numerous studies also indicate a relationship between diet and cancer incidence⁴.

The European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) in its opinion on "Promoting healthy and sustainable diets in the EU" points out that – „The old idea of simply aiming for enough food supply is no longer an adequate policy. We need to consider how food is produced and consumed and what its long-term as well as immediate impacts are”⁵. The planned project is a response to this need.

The main scientific objective of the project "Counteracting non-communicable diseases in the EU food law" is a bidirectional analysis of the impact of European law regulating the production, marketing and functioning (including advertising and standardization) of food in the context of its impact on the spread of non-communicable diseases, as well as the impact of the growing problem of non-communicable diseases on EU legislation. This will make it possible to find and understand the links between EU law and the spread of non-communicable diseases and the consequences of the legal status quo. This will facilitate the development of international law solutions leading to the improvement of the prevention of non-communicable diseases in European law, which will also be proposed during the project implementation. The impact of the spread of non-communicable diseases on the Sustainable Development Goals, which are currently an important factor in the creation of international and EU law, will also be examined.

The starting point for this research project is presumption that law plays a key role in the control of chronic diseases and the behaviors that lead to them. Appropriate use of legislation, regulation and policies that take into account the many factors that contribute to NCD formation can help in the development, implementation and evaluation of various concepts for the role of law in their prevention and control⁶.

¹ Pursuant to Art. 14 paragraph 5 Regulation (EC) No 178/2002 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 28 January 2002 laying down the general principles and requirements of food law, establishing the European Food Safety Authority and laying down procedures in matters of food safety, in determining whether any food is unfit for human consumption, regard shall be had to whether the food is unacceptable for human consumption according to its intended use, for reasons of contamination, whether by extraneous matter or otherwise, or through putrefaction, deterioration or decay.

² European Commission, *Non-communicable diseases*, https://ec.europa.eu/health/non_communicable_diseases/overview_en (accessed: March 15, 2021).

³ World Health Organization, *Noncommunicable diseases*, <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/noncommunicable-diseases>, 2018 (accessed: April 5, 2021).

⁴ World Health Organization, *Cancer: Carcinogenicity of the consumption of red meat and processed meat*, <https://www.who.int/news-room/q-a-detail/cancer-carcinogenicity-of-the-consumption-of-red-meat-and-processed-meat> (accessed: April 15, 2021).

⁵ Opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee on "Promoting healthy and sustainable nutrition in the EU", OJ 2019, pp. 9-16.

⁶ B. Dietz, W., Benken, D., & Hunter, A. (2009). Public Health Law and the Prevention and Control of Obesity. *Milbank Quarterly*, 87(1), 215-227. doi: 10.1111/j.1468-0009.2009.00553.x