In 1999 the Council of Europe decided to collect information regarding Nutrition programmes in hospitals and for this purpose a network consisting of national experts from eight of the Partial Agreement member states was established. The aim was to review the current practice in Europe regarding hospital food provision, to highlight deficiencies and to issue guidelines to improve the nutritional care and support of hospitalized patients. Five major problems seemed to be common in this context: 1) lack of clearly defined responsibilities; 2) lack of sufficient education; 3) lack of influence of the patients; 4) lack of co-operation among all staff groups; and 5) lack of involvement from the hospital management. To solve the problems highlighted, a combined 'team-effort' is needed from national authorities and all staff involved in the nutritional care and support, including hospital managers. (C) 2001 Harcourt Publishers Ltd.