Dear Colleagues,

The conference organized in Kraków concludes four years of activity of COST Action 926, a networking partnership sponsored by the EU through the European Science Foundation. The project had a strong genomic emphasis with the primary objective on ensuring maximum benefit gained in Europe from the application of new technologies in cellular and molecular biology for the study of bioactive components of fruits and vegetables in relation to disease prevention. The action was designed to cover all aspects of phytochemicals in food from scientific evidence for health effects, through food processing and preparation to communicating with consumers. The primary target was to improve public health and increase competitiveness of the food and related industries achieved by a variety of dissemination methods from promotion of scientific collaboration, integration of results, involvement of the food industry and consumer organisations, evaluation of plant-derived food/health supplements and processing methods ensured as optimal and safe.

Plant-based medicines have long taken advantage of the effects of phytochemicals, and modern molecular biology and medicine play key roles in understanding the mechanisms of action in the human body. The different research fields provide a fascinating insight into how nutritional factors may be involved in preventing or slowing down the development of diseases commonly called diet-related such as coronary heart disease, stroke, diabetes, obesity, hypertension, osteoporosis, certain cancers or gastrointestinal disorders. During the conference there will be an opportunity to overview recent developments in this high profile subject, which is attracting attention from the academic community, industry and media. Not without a reason has the conference been organised by two teams with such apparently remote fields of research as medicine and food science.

We hope that Krakow, with the oldest Polish university, will provide a stimulating atmosphere for this meeting where you can share, exchange or confront your ideas and opinions.

Aldona Dembińska-Kiec  Matthijs Dekker  Mariusz Piskuła