



I CHOOSE WATER- nationwide educational campaign Press conference relation

On Wednesday, 23rd September 2015 a press conference was held on the "I Choose Water" campaign launch. The three years educational programme "I Choose Water" is an opportunity for a meeting and a debate among the opinion leaders, bottled water producers and the tap water supply system. All have a common voice on the necessity of water resources protection and healthy hydration of the Polish citizens.

The educational programme "I Choose Water" was created with passion and commitment to promoting healthy lifestyle in Poland. It is based on one simple fact, that the water is still underestimated and yet indispensable for life. This nationwide social educational campaign is a joint initiative of the Polish Dietetary Association and Institute of Health and Diet Therapy Promotion. The programme will focus on the role of healthy hydration in maintaining physical and cognitive functions of the organism.

The experts' debate was led by a journalist – Iwona Schymalla. She has great expectations concerning the success of the "I Choose Water" programme. She had explained that healthy hydration of the body is especially important in pregnant and breast-feeding women, school children, young adults and elderly persons, as well as in all people who actively practise sports. D. Eng. Danuta Gajewska, the Chairman of Polish Dietetary Association, was among the specialists. Each of those groups should remember about choosing water of good quality and with composition matching their individual need, as was emphasized by PhD Halina Weker from the Mother and Child Institute.

The Head of Social Policy Coordination Department of the Warsaw Municipality, Marta Widz, is the expert who has advertised drinking water for a long time. The initiative of the Warsaw authorities to install "drinking spots" in Warsaw schools is one of actions that add to the worldwide policy of preventing overweight and obesity. The "drinking spots" provide all pupils with access to clean, fresh water and they are an alternative to bottled water that may be forgotten about by the parents while packing lunch. Following this observation, Dorota Jakuta, The Chairman of the Polish Water Supply Systems has forwarded the information on tap water. The investments in infrastructure resulted in clean and drinkable water available at our homes, but the final information on water quality should always come from the administrators and owners of the buildings.

The programme „I Choose Water” aims at promoting the advantages coming from drinking water, whether tap or bottled, so we had Tomasz Rasztaewicki, Chairman of Nestlé Waters Polska S.A., among the experts. He contributed data on consumer preferences concerning preferred kinds of bottled water.

During the conference we also emphasized the importance of water to the environment, economy, industry and agriculture. Due to the need of protection of the natural water resources, promoting balanced water management and saving water will be one of the key tasks, included in this project. This aspect was explained by prof. Kazimierz Banasik from the Warsaw Agricultural University.

The meeting ended with a toast, raised with water, as a symbol of the start of the new programme and the new trend for drinking water.



Representatives of various national media were among our guests.

Details available at www.wyberamwode.pl



On the photo, from the left:

- Tomasz Rasztawicki (Nestlé Waters Polska S.A.)
- PhD Halina Weker (Mother and Child Institute)
- Marta Widz (The Municipality of Warsaw)
- Justyna Steczkowska (Ambassador of the „I Choose Water” programme)
- Dorota Jakuta (Chairman of the Polish Tap Water Supply Systems Chamber)
- Izabela Zamyślewska (Institute for Promotion of Health and Diet Therapy)
- Phd. Eng. Danuta Gajewska (Polish Dietetic Association)
- Iwona Schymalla (Journalist)
- Prof. Kazimierz Banasik (Warsaw Agricultural University)



The speeches of the ambassador and experts of the “I Choose Water” programme.

Justyna Steczkowska, the ambassador of the „I Choose Water” programme:

I accepted the proposal submitted by the organizers of “I Choose Water” programme and became its ambassador with proud. The values promoted by this programme are close to me and I have been passing them to our children for a long time. Observing the increasing index of obesity in our society, I consider that building of proper nutritional habits among Polish people at any age as well as informing them how important component of our everyday nutrition is water - the source of life and main component of human organism, are especially important. Everyone should drink 2 litres of water a day to ensure a proper functioning of organism. Therefore I try to make my children aware that water and balanced diet play a very important role in our life. I teach them love to water and I regret that 15 years ago, when our youngest son was little, we had no such knowledge on this subject. I support the programme “I Choose Water” with all my heart, because I choose it myself every day!

Dr inż. Danuta Gajewska, Chairman of the Polish Dietetic Association:

Water is the main component of our cells, tissues and organs. It is indispensable for life and still its role in maintaining full health is often overlooked. That convinced us to undertake actions in order to educate the society about the importance of appropriate hydration of the body. With our programme "I Choose Water" we would like to reach the groups particularly exposed to insufficient consumption of water.

Consuming adequate amounts of liquids is extremely important in case of pregnant women. Educating future mothers we always emphasize that water is essential for the fetus to develop so they should include additional amounts of water in their diet. Unfortunately we have observed that even 30% of breast-feeding mothers is not consuming enough water. And lactation is a very specific time, when the demand for water increases by approximately 800 ml per day. Here I should add that women milk contains 87% of water and a breastfed baby does not need additional hydration.

The next group that drinks too little water are school-aged children and youth. The recent data shows that one in five pupils is overweight or obese. Apart from too little physical activity, this problem is also caused by consuming too much of high-calorie products, including sweetened drinks. Our data shows that even 57% of teenagers drink sweet soft drinks regularly. For this reason one of our goals is to convince the young to replace the sweet drinks with water.

Appropriate hydration is also important in old age. We need to consider here that older people due to physiological changes don't feel thirst. We often come across seniors who consume much less liquids than needed by their bodies. It's worth reminding that dehydration in older persons may lead to concentration of blood, thus to an increased risk of embolism, thrombosis, apoplexy and heart attacks well as disturbances of consciousness.

Appropriate hydration of the organism is also one of the key elements in achieving success in sports. Sufficient consumption of liquids has great influence not only on the achieved results, but also influences injuries prevention. Unfortunately in real life water is often underestimated as a component of the diet.



That is why we would like to include professional and amateur sportsmen in our programme.

We hope that the actions of the Polish Dietetic Association undertaken as a part of the "I Choose Water" programme will be effective and that during the next three years will increase the knowledge of the Polish society on the benefits that come from healthy hydration of the body.

Prof. Kazimierz Banasik, Warsaw Agricultural University:

The water issue is one of the main areas of research in the Warsaw Agricultural University, as a university specialising in nature and agriculture studies. It results from the significance of water in the environment shaped by the human beings. i.e. everywhere we live.

Water is necessary in our homes, in industry, power industry, and agriculture, It is necessary for the nature. In order to intensify research and education in the areas of hydro technology, land improvement and water management Warsaw Agricultural University has created (with the aid of European Union funds) the Water Centre - a complex of above twenty modern specialist laboratories.

The renewable water resources in our country, although one of the lowest in Europe - in calculation per one citizen - are sufficient to meet our vital living needs, when we consider this data in terms of the average amounts per year. This data is not that good when we take into account the changeability during a year, especially when we think of the months with the lowest renewable resources level (i.e. July and August) the demand of the main consumer of water in Poland, that is the power industry, using water as coolant - is the highest due to increased demand for electricity to power the air conditioning devices.

The situation was almost critical this summer, due to low levels of water in rivers to feed the cooling in power plants. The chance to meet the growing needs of the power industry, other industries and the modern agriculture is the sustainable water management, based on water retention during the seasons with excess of water (e.g. in spring) and using such reserves in water deficiency seasons.

The issue of water deficiency is a global problem. The quoted factors of renewable water resources per one citizen of Poland or Europe (1600 and 4600 m³/year respectively) have not changed significantly over the last 20 years, however the resources per one person in the world provided in the first half of the 90s amounted to 4,5 times higher than per one Polish citizen and they have decreased significantly at present (from 7300 m³/year to 5500 m³/year) due to the increase in the world population from 5,4 to 7,3 billion). Taking into consideration further increase in population and large variations in the access to water for inhabitants of the Earth, e.g. in Africa or in Arabic countries - the problem with access to water may be more important reason for migration than the ongoing military crisis in Middle East.



Dorota Jakuta, Chairman of the Polish Tap Water Systems Chamber:

Why are we afraid of the tap water?

In our country there still is a common belief that the tap water is suitable for watering gardens at its best. This opinion was justified up to the end of the 90's, but during the last 25 years the waterworks and sewage industry has experienced a great investment boom, resulting in hundreds of thousands of new waterlines, new sewage treatment plants and water treatment plants, and modern technologies. The investments, worth billions of zlotys, ensured that the water flowing from our taps is clean, healthy and safe to drink. The role of the institutions and employees of the water supply enterprises is to fight with stereotypes and promote knowledge about the quality and consumption of water. The "I Choose Water" programme organised by the Polish Dietetic Association is, in this respect, very consistent with the aims of the "Polish Tap Water Systems" Chamber and its members, i.e. the water supply and sewage enterprises. For this reason the "Polish Tap Water Systems" Chamber takes part in this programme.

Who takes care of the health safety of tap water?

The quality of the tap water is under strict monitoring due to the national regulations: the ordinance of the Minister of Health and due to European Union and WHO requirements. During each step of the production process the composition is tested by accredited laboratories and sanitary supervision institutions, who check the 62 various parameters, as listed by WHO. The cleanliness of tap water is checked not only by electronic devices, but also by alive shellfish. The shellfish are very sensitive to impurities and they close the shell immediately when they sense any harmful substance. The water supply enterprises provide access to information on tap water. It is worth remembering, though, that their responsibility ends when the water is supplied to the main flowmeter on the building. If the water pipes on the building are in bad condition, that may influence the composition, flavour and taste of the tap water. And here the concern for water quality is passed onto the owners of the buildings, but also on the residents, who should insist on regular controls and maintenance of the internal installations.

Tomasz Rasztawicki, Chairman of Nestlé Waters Polska S.A.:

Healthy family hydration is included in the vision of Nestlé Waters. That is why we proudly support the action "I Choose Water." We put a particular emphasis on education and we help parents to understand the benefits from a healthy lifestyle. Regular drinking of water is a natural and healthy manner of maintaining a proper water balance in our organism. In spite of that, many people choose sweetened beverages, and along with them needles calories, instead of a glass of plain water. Drinking water regularly, parents indicate a healthy custom to their children, forming appropriately their habits. It is a great satisfaction to observe how children grow loving water and knowing that it quench thirst the best and that drinking of it is one of the quickest and simplest ways to stay healthy. Being a part of "I Choose Water" programme, we invite all to pass the love of water to next generations.





Marta Widz, Head of Social Policy Coordination Department of the Warsaw Municipality:

When realising the goals of campaigns organised by the Warsaw Municipality: "I know what I eat" and "Warsaw Tap Water" we encourage also to change attitudes toward drinking water. All our actions, encouraging to drink water instead of sweetened soft drinks are in one line with the worldwide trend of preventing overweight and obesity. Drinking spots are installed in Warsaw schools and they provide the pupils, teachers and personnel with unlimited access to clean, fresh water. 150 out of 550 schools have declared willingness to install a drinking spot. In many of those schools the drinking spot is already under construction, part of them is preparing for the construction works.

For the first time we have tested the quality of water in so many of the school buildings. The results of the tests convinced us that the water in school is drinkable. And there are many advantages of unlimited access to water by means of the drinking spots:

1. Preserving health and promoting good nutrition:
 - a. Preventing dental caries in children and youth. The caries resulting from drinking sweetened soft drinks afflicts almost 87% of Polish children;
 - b. Preventing overweight and obesity. Giving up a half-litre bottle of a sweetened drink, containing 50 grams of sugar, we avoid consuming 18 kg of sugar per year!
 - c. Reducing the weight of children's backpacks carried everyday to school. Each child, who starts using the drinking spot, will carry 0,5 kg less. An average first-grader should carry a backpack of max weight 2,5 kg (GIS recommendation);
2. Promotion of pro-ecological behaviour.
3. Savings on bottled water purchased by the parents.
4. Savings on water purchases for the schools and parents' committees.

More information about our campaign "I know what I eat" and installing drinking spots available at www.wiemcojem.um.warszawa.pl, and about the quality of tap water in Warsaw at www.mpwik.com.pl.