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The first Avenance forums prove a resounding success

Making healthy eating an enjoyable experience for people of all ages

In Spring 2008, Avenance Enseignement and Avenance Santé-Résidences – major contract catering players and subsidiaries of the Elixior Group – launched its first set of three forums, in Marseille, Lyon and Paris. These forums brought together a panel of well-known experts to debate the fundamental issues of eating habits in France. The panel members were Pascal Hebel, Consumer Research Director at CREDOC, Michèle Le Barzic, a clinical psychologist, Dr Jean-Michel Lecerf, Head of the Nutrition department at the Pasteur Institute in Lille, and Dr Laurent Chevallier, a Nutritionist at Montpellier University Hospital. During the forums Avenance's clients and partners were able to put questions to the panel members.

The subjects discussed included trends and developments in eating habits and the importance of rediscovering the pleasure of eating.

- **New eating habits**

In general, French people are eating less and less fresh produce. At the same time, the younger generation is increasing its intake of ready-made dishes, due to both long working hours and a desire to put leisure first. Often the French will only now eat a main course and a dessert, bypassing the starter that traditionally used to form part of the meal. At the same time, economic constraints including lower spending power also have an influence on eating behaviour among the younger generation, and consumers in general are increasingly basing their food choices on price. In addition, the working-class generation used to grow its own fruit and vegetables but these people are now less self-sufficient as many of them have moved to towns and cities, and therefore have less access to fresh produce.

These new eating habits have given rise to the destructuring of meals and a certain nutritional imbalance. **And yet, paradoxically, over the past two years the French have become more and more concerned about their health.**

- **Rediscovering the pleasure of eating**

Education is vital for achieving nutritional well-being. As they grow up, children learn the eating habits of their social group. **It is essential to relay the notions of enjoyment and conviviality at meal times**, without neglecting the underlying principles of a balanced diet. Eating tasty, healthy food while taking the time to enjoy a family-cooked meal is undoubtedly the best way of reaching this balance. Grandparents also have a role to play in educating children's tastes and passing on traditional recipes.

- **Adapting food intake to energy output**

Adapting the amount of food we eat to our physiological needs and therefore our lifestyle is a fundamental notion. We don't have to eat less or deprive ourselves, but **the amount we eat must be in line with how much we burn off**. Basically, we can eat what we want as long as we respect two key principles: pay attention to portion sizes and above all exercise to keep fit and burn off calories.

Each age group has its own specific requirements:

- **Babies** need a moderate protein intake and a high fat intake.
- **Children** need to discover different types of food through touch, taste and smell, which can be achieved by initiating them in the art of cooking.
- **Teenagers** need to be guided in their food choices and eating behaviour.
- **Adults** need to keep an eye on how much they eat and the quality of the ingredients they consume.
- To stay fit and healthy **older people** need to exercise and eat varied meals. In no circumstances should they diet as this could lead to vitamin deficiencies or dehydration.

These Avenance Forums fall within the scope of the Elior Group's active policy of promoting healthy living and sustainable development. In line with the requirements of its clients and partners, Elior's objective is to stimulate the tastes of all age-groups and encourage healthy eating habits through pedagogical tools and providing guidance and assistance on a daily basis.

A summarised report of the forums can be viewed on www.elior.com.

About Avenance

Avenance Santé-Résidences, the catering specialist in the Elior Group's Healthcare & Seniors sector, provides catering solutions for patients in healthcare institutions, disabled people, and seniors in both retirement homes and their own homes. It offers a range of different catering formats adapted to its guests' daily lives and healthcare requirements including the "Patient's itinerary" (*Itinéraire du patient*), the "Growing Old Gracefully Restaurant" (*Restaurant du bien vieillir*) and the "Easy-to-Eat" concept (*Faciles à manger*). In 2006-2007, Avenance Santé-Résidences served some 34 million meals in 600 establishments.

The Elior Group subsidiary **Avenance Enseignement** is the leading contract caterer in the Education sector in France, serving 795,000 meals each day in 4,900 restaurants. As well as serving school meals, Avenance Enseignement provides catering services for vacation and day-care facilities and for school trips, and also prepares and delivers meals to nurseries and to people in their own homes. Avenance draws on the experience and know-how of the Elior Group in terms of purchasing, food safety, culinary techniques and product innovation.

Press contacts:

Avenance Santé-Résidences Media Relations:

Wellcom

Charlotte du Souich (cds@wellcom.fr) and Soline de Bentzmann (sbe@wellcom.com)

Tel.: +33 (0)1.46.34.60.60

Avenance Enseignement Media Relations:

Wellcom

Aelya Noiret (an@wellcom.fr)

Tel.: +33 (0)1.46.34.60.60

About Elior

Founded in 1991, Elior ranks third in the European contracted foodservice and related services market, holding leading positions in Contract Catering & Facilities Management, and Concession Catering & Travel Retail. Each day, Elior's 63,000 employees serve 2.8 million guests at some 13,500 restaurants and outlets in 15 countries. Elior is active in the Business & Industry, Education, and Healthcare & Seniors sectors, as well as travel (airports, railway stations and motorways), and leisure & culture (museums and exhibition centres). For further information please visit www.elior.com.

Media Relations Manager: carla.sauvet@elior.com