

Euro-Mediterranean Conference on Agriculture

**FINAL DECLARATION
OF THE
MINISTERS OF AGRICULTURE**

Palermo, 28 November 2014

At the invitation of H.E. Maurizio Martina, the Italian Minister of Agriculture, Food and Forestry Policies, the Ministers of Agriculture of the European Union Member States, the Mediterranean countries, or their representatives, met in Sicily, in Palermo, on 28 November 2014.

The Ministers and Heads of Delegation,

HAVING REGARD TO

- The first Euro-Mediterranean Conference on Agriculture, which was held in Venice on 27 November 2003, during which the participating 35 countries emphasized that *“the increased importance attached by the Community to the needs of sustainable rural development, the preservation of agriculture in less-favoured and mountain areas and the multi-functional nature of agriculture requires the Community to take due account of these topics in its dealings with its Mediterranean partners”*;
- The Declaration by the World Summit on Food Security, held from 16 to 18 November 2009 at the FAO in Rome, and in particular the commitment by heads of state and government to reverse the fall in national and international funding for agriculture in developing countries, to promote new investments with a view to increasing sustainable agricultural production, to combine their efforts and expertise to launch the Global Partnership for Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition, and take all the necessary measures – also at regional level – to improve food security;
- The Action Plan on Food Price Volatility and Agriculture agreed at the Meeting of the G20 Agriculture Ministers held on 22 and 23 June 2011 in Paris addressing the importance of food security and multilateral cooperation on strategic issues for the development and stability of the planet;
- The Euro-Mediterranean Conference on Research and Innovation organized by the European Commission in Barcelona in April 2012, calling for a renewed partnership in Research and Innovation that should be based on the principles of co-ownership, mutual interest and shared benefit;
- The Final Declaration of the 1st Ministerial Conference of the 5+5 Dialogue on Agriculture which was held in Algiers on 27 November 2013, including the proposal to set up an observatory on food security and nutrition;
- The recommendations of the 10th meeting of the Ministers of Agriculture of the 13 CIHEAM member states, which was held in Algiers on 6 February 2014 and the recommendations of the previous CIHEAM ministerial meetings launched in Rome in 1999;
- The Declaration of the World Summit on Climate which was held on 23 September 2014 at the United Nations headquarters in New York addressing, in particular, the challenges of sustainability, climate change and innovation;
- The conclusions of the second International Conference on Nutrition, held from 19 to 21 November 2014 at the FAO in Rome reaffirming the commitments to act more decisively to combat malnutrition;

- The initiatives undertaken throughout 2014, declared as the International Year of Family Farming, which are mainly focused on the role of young farmers and women in agricultural, food security and rural development, including the conclusions of the Global Forum on Family Farming, which was held on 4-6 March 2014 in Budapest, and also recalling that 2015 has been declared the International Year of Soils;

RECOGNIZING

- The progress made since the Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial Conference on Agriculture held in Venice in 2003 which has contributed to the strengthening of agricultural, food and rural cooperation between European Union Member States and Mediterranean partner countries and to the promotion of the regional dialogue on matters related to this sector crucial for the economies and societies of the Mediterranean basin;
- The wide range of youth initiatives promoted by the countries, the European Union (Erasmus, Tempus, EuroMed Youth Programme) or by international organizations (UNESCO, UNICEF, BM, FAO, CIHEAM, etc.), and the general agreement on the important role played by young people for the future of the Mediterranean;
- The cooperation activities carried out by CIHEAM in the field of education, research, networking of decision makers and experts, and technical assistance for the development of agriculture, regions and food security;
- Ongoing work in the Mediterranean Basin, as regards the implementation of: (i) MED Amin, to enhance transparency in the Mediterranean cereals market, (ii) the European Neighbourhood Programme for Agriculture and Rural Development (ENPARD) and (iii) the PRIMA Initiative (Partnership in Research and Innovation in the Mediterranean Area) about research on the Mediterranean food systems;
- ERA-NET/ERA-NET PLUS initiatives launched by the European Union as a follow-up to the conclusions of the "Euro-Mediterranean Conference on Research and Innovation" held in Barcelona in 2012, with a view to contributing to the preparation of a long-lasting and sustainable coordination mechanism between the European Union, its Member States and the Mediterranean Countries;
- The active role of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) in ensuring the long-term sustainability of living marine resources, sustainable development of aquaculture and protection of sensitive habitats ;
- The role played by the European Council of Young Farmers (CEJA), in launching the dialogue among young farmers between the two shores of Mediterranean;

AWARE

- That the development of agriculture, especially family farming, and of rural areas falls within the regional and national strategies promoting green and inclusive growth and this for a better environmental sustainability and to fight against poverty and exclusion, for a greater political stability in the area and to fight against forced migration;
- That this Euro-Mediterranean ministerial meeting marks the political will of Governments to give agriculture, food security and rural areas centre stage in the regional debates and cooperation initiatives between the two shores of the Mediterranean basin since these issues deserve greater visibility and commitment and countries intend to tackle them on a partnership and multilateral basis;
- Of the interest in strengthening Mediterranean cooperation through the exchange of experience on agricultural, food and rural policies with a special focus on the sharing of scientific knowledge and innovation and on the role of young generations in the economies and societies;
- Of the complexity of achieving a better food safety and security across the Mediterranean, an area of numerous natural constraints (land and water scarcity) and tremendous challenges (population growth, urbanization, climate change and environmental threats, poor infrastructure and lack of funding, displacement of populations, inequality, access to innovations, etc.);
- Of the variety of hazards (natural disasters, plant pests and diseases, animal health issues, conflicts, etc.) which may affect the resilience of populations' livelihoods in several countries;
- That the implementation of new agricultural, food and rural policies, at national and regional level, requires differentiated and specific approaches tailored to the local needs as well as long-term integrated strategies given the intersectoral dimension of issues;
- That the convergence between research and development activities is essential at all levels (local, national and regional), which implies harmonizing policies in these two sectors;
- That the networking and pooling of research and skills have become essential at a time when financial resources allocated to science and education shall promote synergistic and regional collective initiatives in order to fight against the waste of talents and knowledge;
- Of the need to adopt an ambitious approach aiming at linking agricultural research systems in the North and in the South of the Mediterranean in order to co-construct and co-fund a broad Euro-Mediterranean research and innovation programme on food security and rural development;
- That Mediterranean farmers and particularly family farmers are key players in research and in the implementation of solutions to current problems, and that the wealth of action-based knowledge must be recognized;
- That the International Organizations, encompassing European and Mediterranean member countries, active in the Mediterranean region, shall play an important role to facilitate start-ups by young people and to contribute to the development of agriculture, land and food security by promoting multilateral cooperation between countries and between organizations;

- That the Mediterranean diet is one of the common cultural cements for the countries in the region, and could contribute to a balanced and healthy nutrition for the peoples of this region while promoting rural development, and that this diet has been mentioned in several Mediterranean conferences, including the 9th CIHEAM ministerial meeting, held in Malta in September 2012;

EMPHASISING

- That the year 2015 will be crucial for the Mediterranean international and regional agenda marked, in particular, by the implementation of the post-2015 sustainable development goals, by the Universal Exposition of Milan on “Feeding the planet, energy for life” that will be held from May to October 2015, the 21st Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the 11th session of the meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto protocol due to be held in Paris in December 2015 (COP21); the new programming of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) and its financial instrument (European Neighbourhood Instrument) and, what is more, the 20th anniversary of Barcelona Declaration that brought about the Euro-Mediterranean partnership started in 1995 which is now embodied by the Union for the Mediterranean;

CONVINCED

- That a greater number of young Mediterranean people must view agriculture and rural regions as dynamics of the future and that, for this to happen, multisectoral tailored policies, both national and regional, are needed and should be adequately funded;
- That the involvement and active mobilisation of young generations in agriculture, food security, fisheries and development of rural areas are priority challenges in the promotion of a more inclusive societal and spatial growth with a view to (i) reversing the prevailing trend to ageing of farming population in the region and creating new and promising job opportunities based on know-how and skills essential for the life of populations and development of nations;
- That the young generations must be the main players of agriculture and fisheries and that the development of economically, ecologically and socially sound agriculture is a mobilizing project for the Mediterranean region which can pool traditional human knowledge, technical innovation and local specificities whose diversity is an important source of wealth for the Mediterranean;
- That natural ecosystems and other Mediterranean woodlands are an important component of our regions, and they contribute significantly to rural development, poverty reduction and also to the food safety and security of Mediterranean populations;
- That research and innovation are identified as resources for supporting growth and creating jobs in the agricultural field;
- Of the importance of the Mediterranean Sea in the economies of the region and all activities related to the promotion of the growth of a "blue economy";
- That increasing the resilience of livelihoods to threats and crises is of paramount importance;

HAVING FOCUSED

- Their debate on the : « *Role of the youth and of new generations for the development of agriculture; importance of research and exchange of experience for a sustainable agriculture*»;

REQUEST

(i) To the Countries

- To put agriculture, sustainable rural development, agricultural innovation, food security and fisheries as the main pillars of their growth strategies;
- To implement tangible national measures to recognize and encourage the role of youth, particularly those from the rural and agricultural world, to promote the creation of jobs in agriculture and the setting-up of agricultural holdings, their access to property for agricultural uses by implementing voluntary guidelines on land governance, to subsidized loans, to modern communication technology and to simplify business transfer for generation renewal, to ensure a better income to farmers, to enable the renewal of generations thereby meeting the demand of the society for food products;
- To implement concrete measures to facilitate access to land, ensuring legal recognition of legitimate land rights, which, in some countries, are not currently protected by the law in a non-discriminatory manner, and taking into account the issue of gender equality;
- To put in place initiatives to reinforce job creation, to spread technical innovation in the agri-food sector, by promoting the active participation of farmers in the search for appropriate solutions and to assign a privileged role to the regional agricultural cooperation in the relations between the countries of the region;
- To develop a solid agricultural education system at secondary, vocational and higher education levels that would deliver the required training and other capacity building activities needed to develop vibrant agriculture and food systems. Vocational training is critical for farmers and agricultural technicians systematic access to knowledge;
- To back up the implementation of innovative training and mobility programmes and methods for young people working in agriculture, the sharing of knowledge, mobility of researchers for the development of an agriculture which respects the diversity of farming systems in Europe and in the Mediterranean area;
- To ensure maximum synergy between research and development activities by co-ordinating their programming as foreseen in particular by the PRIMA initiative, and the implementation of such initiatives;
- To encourage the creation of networks for sharing knowledge, linking, in an efficient and simplified way, the actors of the agro-food sector on both sides of the Mediterranean;

- To motivate young generations to get professionally involved in rural areas thereby ensuring the transition towards a sustainable rural development model that promotes agroecological approaches focused on participatory and gender equality practices;
- To design and organize the general assembly of agriculture including all social partners to establish long-term goals for agricultural and rural policies in an integrated vision of the human, economic and regional development;
- To create, with the support of international and regional organizations, a network of Mediterranean young farmers which shall be a platform for experience exchange and an incubator of innovative initiatives that can stimulate advances in agriculture and food security, to restore the visibility of projects for to the development of rural areas;
- To implement public policies aiming to support family farming and family fisheries since these initiatives strongly contribute to the creation of jobs in rural areas, to food security of rural and urban populations, to the sustainable management of natural resources and to the promotion of human development and gender equality;
- To promote a regional policy coordination, in the context of the initiatives launched by FAO-GFCM and its partners organisation (CIHEAM, MEDPAN, IUCN, UNEP-MAP, ACCOBAMS, WWF, EUROFISH) to strengthen the role of artisanal fisheries community and to join a regional programme for the development of sustainable artisanal coastal fisheries;
- To ensure risk is mainstreamed in national sectorial development policies and related investment promoted and monitored;
- To ensure early warning systems are established and/or further strengthened so as to monitor threat and trigger timely action;
- To promote disaster mitigation, prevention, mitigation and preparedness measures;
- To pay more attention to peoples suffering from wars, occupations, terrorism, civil disturbances and natural disasters, in order to create an enabling environment for sustainable development;
- To support the recognition of a professional status for all farmers and the creation, and promotion of their representative organizations;
- To promote new investments and public/private and private/private, national and foreign partnerships in order to secure sustainable agricultural and agrifood production;
- To reduce food losses and waste by improving post-harvest management, logistics and transportation systems, cold chain but also by helping producers to better organize their stock management and by disseminating best practices intended for consumers;
- To develop risk management tools to protect the income of farmers and of animal breeders and support, especially, insurance systems;

- To encourage the development of quality products, such as terroir products, or organic products which help develop areas, as well as of protection systems to preserve traditional activities that add value to rural areas;
- To stimulate and consolidate MOAN (Mediterranean Organic Agriculture Network), a platform for the promotion of a variegated Mediterranean agrifood quality and tool of exchange and sharing of knowledge and best practices for the Ministries of Agriculture and institutions of 23 countries in the field of quality products (organic farming and terroir products);
- To commit themselves towards a stronger sustainability of agrifood systems for the benefit of all citizens and of the youth, in particular by highlighting the benefits of the Mediterranean diet for the local and regional development;
- To develop initiatives for the setting up of enterprises in agriculture and agrifood business based on promoting (i) new investments and public-private / private-private partnerships, both national and foreign, (ii) innovative tools of education or on new forms of stewardship, in particular supporting young people and fostering corporate social responsibility (CSR);
- To support ENPARD launched in 2012 by the European Union in the framework of its neighborhood policy and its implementation at bilateral and regional scale convinced that it is a useful tool for the development of agriculture and for the promotion of opportunities in rural areas for the young generations looking for new jobs;
- To create, with the support of international and regional organizations and of the Ministries of Agriculture, a Mediterranean network for developing an innovative pest surveillance system, precise and smart, aimed at protecting and safeguarding the agricultural and landscape plant species from invasive quarantine pests;
- To foster harmonisation, cooperation, sharing of information and exchange of skills on different matters such as health and plant health quality standards, labelling and certification, prevention and control of plant and animal diseases, pest control (pre and post-harvest), contaminant control in food products (mycotoxins) through coordinated actions at regional level and on the basis of tangible regional approaches such as the Mediterranean Animal Health Network (REMESA);
- To share concerns, information and experience in the field of food security with a view to setting out regional and sustainable projects with the support of Mediterranean research and cooperation networks to work out concerted initiatives and disseminate knowledge at regional level;
- To support the development of national agricultural information systems and the progress of MED-Amin « MEDiterranean Agricultural Markets Information Network » initiated in January 2014, aimed at fostering cooperation and exchange of experience between the national information systems of cereal markets in a food security perspective;
- To support a multiannual work programme on agroecology to be launched by FAO from 2015 and aimed to promote an open dialogue on existing agroecology experiences and policies;

- To support beyond 2015 “Feeding Knowledge”, a pivotal initiative in the legacy of Expo Milan 2015, which encourages the sharing of knowledge about food safety, food security and nutrition, the spread of innovative and sustainable technologies and practices tailored to the local needs, provides tangible solutions through local and international research, puts in place an open knowledge system for young citizens from developing countries and a community of dialogue among researchers;

(ii) To the International and regional organizations

- To create synergies between education, research and development projects for young people and to reinforce national education and research institutions;
- To put up common research projects and technology transfer; these programmes might pool human and financial resources, encourage regional dialogue, especially among young people, and maintain the will to cope with the tensions of food markets ;
- To reinforce the Euro-Mediterranean policy dialogue and cooperation on agriculture, fisheries and aquaculture, food and rural development, with special attention to younger generations;
- To CIHEAM, to carry on its mission of developing cooperation activities in the field of higher education, research and cooperation at all levels (local, national, regional) with the involvement of all the actors concerned (international organisations, governments, regional authorities and local stakeholders);
- To welcome the positive effect of the FAO transformational changes, put in place during the last biennium, and underline the need for continuity in the strategic direction and leadership of the Organization, in order to realize its full impact, also in the Mediterranean area;
- To encourage FAO and its partners to upscale regional initiatives on water scarcity, small-scale agriculture for inclusive development and building resilience for food security and nutrition;
- To encourage the elaboration and implementation of shared institutional strategies whenever possible, and the linkage with economic and agricultural development agencies and banks might be strengthened in order to scale up the initiatives in the Mediterranean region in favour of agriculture, food security and rural areas;
- To GFCM to enhance dialogue, knowledge sharing and cooperation among countries to ensure the sustainability of coastal aquaculture and fisheries in its economic, social and environmental dimensions, with particular attention to the coastal communities;

(iii) To the European Union

- To promote and support measures to recognize the role of youth, encourage their activities in agriculture, the development of their organizations and contribute to reducing the negative impact of illegal migration for the communities of origin and the whole region;
- To take part in and support through the use of Article 185 TFEU the new "Partnership for Research and Innovation in the Mediterranean Area" (PRIMA) coordinating national research

funding programmes with the aim to develop and adopt innovative and integrated solutions for improving the efficiency, safety, security and sustainability of food production and water provision;

- To reiterate its commitment in favour of the development of rural areas, of agriculture and family farming, of climate smart agriculture and food security in the Mediterranean region and to attach special importance to established and sustainable cooperation, by supporting research and cooperation activities (i), through the development of a Euro-Mediterranean platform for dialogue on research and cooperation on issues relating to agriculture and agrifood business (ii), by the use of joint programming activities as envisaged by Horizon 2020 Framework Programme for Research which provides for a more stable cooperation on research and innovation (iii), by supporting ENPARD, the Programme for Agriculture and Rural Development, especially for Southern Neighbourhood (iv), by ensuring the coherence and convergence between H2020 and the initiatives taken in the frame of the Neighbourhood Policy (iv), in order to contribute to a stable and sustainable dialogue for the benefit of Euro-Mediterranean agriculture;
- To reinforce the mission of CIHEAM and of other international organizations active in the Mediterranean, through the use of delegated cooperation envisaged for international organizations;

CONCLUSIONS

At the end of their work, the ministers and heads of delegation

- recognize that actions relating to the role of young women and men in promoting growth in rural areas, to innovation, research and exchange of experience for the development of agriculture, to the fight against waste, adaptation and mitigation measures to climate change, to the promotion of the Mediterranean diet, deserve unremitting attention and require coordinated responses at political level, which the multilateral Euro-Mediterranean framework should facilitate;
- agree to bring these recommendations to the attention of their countries' Ministers of Foreign affairs and Ministers of Research so that they might be taken into account in the international negotiations and policy initiatives they may be involved in;
- commend H.E. Maurizio Martina, the Italian Minister of Agriculture, Food and Forestry Policies and his collaborators for the efforts made for the success of this meeting and thank Regione Siciliana for its excellent hospitality in this Mediterranean setting;
- thank CIHEAM for its contribution to the success of the meeting, emphasize the role of this intergovernmental organization and recognize the importance of its activity in the support of training, research and cooperation in agriculture, food and rural development in the Mediterranean region.