



CIHEAM

International Centre for Advanced Mediterranean Agronomic Studies

**2nd meeting of the CIHEAM
member countries' Minister of Agriculture**

Rabat, 23 May 2000



FINAL DECLARATION

1. At the invitation of the Minister of Agriculture, Rural Development and Maritime Fisheries of the Kingdom of Morocco, the Ministers of Agriculture of the member States of the International Center for Advanced Mediterranean Agronomic Studies, or their representatives, convened in Rabat on Tuesday, 23 May 2000. The Ministers of Agriculture were received by Prime Minister Abderrahman YOUSOUFI, who informed them of the Moroccan Government's attachment to the full realization of a flourishing Euro-Mediterranean partnership turned toward the future.
2. The Ministers and Chiefs of Delegation declare their attachment to the development and reinforcement of cooperation among the countries of the Euro-Mediterranean region in the agrofood and agriculture areas, and they solemnly adopt the present declaration. They are firmly convinced that it will contribute to the establishment of a dynamic and well-balanced partnership framework, the ultimate objective of which is to turn the Mediterranean region into a space of peace and prosperity shared by all.
3. The Ministers and the Chiefs of Delegation have considered the report prepared by their representatives in connection with their meeting at Rome on 9 March 2000; they regard the last CIHEAM report published in 1999 as a reference document. On this basis, the Ministers have given full credit to the part played by CIHEAM in turning this Center into a genuine observatory of agricultural and agrifood policies in the Euro-Mediterranean region.
4. The Ministers and the Chiefs of Delegation have reiterated that the aim of their meetings consists in laying the foundations for true solidarity in the perspective of a harmonious development of their respective agricultures. The export sector should contribute to this trend, which includes the framework for developing exchanges between the southern and eastern Mediterranean countries.
5. In this connection, the Ministers and the Delegation Chiefs have agreed that the problem complex of agricultural exchange and of aspects relating to food security deserves to be handled in greater depth within the framework of Euro-Mediterranean cooperation agreements as well as in the optic of a concerted approach in response to stronger complementarity beneficial to both shores of the Mediterranean.
6. Given the prospect of future multilateral negotiations, the Ministers have recommended that a search be made for a « Mediterranean platform » aimed at preserving regional choices in agriculture in the Euro-Mediterranean region. This platform should likewise take into account such elements of common interest as restoring a balance between Mediterranean and continental products, protection of



the environment and of natural resources, upgrading health aspects of food security as well as improving the quality of agricultural and agrifood products. The Ministers are of the opinion, moreover, that the reflections engaged in this regard by the working group should be pursued further.

7. In order to create objective conditions for a common Euro-Mediterranean approach in the matter of agricultural exchange, and in recognition of the essential role played by trade in agricultural products when it comes to achieving agricultural development in the south-shore countries, the Ministers agree to set up an evaluation group supervised by CIHEAM and consisting of experts belonging to both shores of the Mediterranean. This group, which shall be called together under the auspices of the Moroccan authorities, will be in charge of identifying concrete partnership projects.

The partnership projects must take into account the following aspects:

- the fragility of southern Mediterranean agriculture in the light of climatic uncertainties (fluctuations in production);
- preservation of natural resources and promotion of a sustainable rural development respectful of the environment and of product quality in all its aspects;
- encouragement of implementation of free trade zones as a means of reinforcing cooperation within the Euro-Mediterranean region; and
- attention devoted to the specific character of each type of agriculture as well as to the efforts at adaptation required for bringing regional and international levels into balance.

The conclusions of the evaluation group will be made known at the next meeting of the Ministers of Agriculture.

8. The Ministers and Delegation Chiefs have agreed that, concomitantly with reinforcement of the regional integration process, concertation shall be pursued with a view to managing « the globalization of exchange », specifically, as concerns the following:
 - confirmation of availability of the major exporting countries for subsequent negotiation of prospective reductions in all forms of support for the exporting of agricultural products, in conformity with decisions by the WTO;
 - establishment of a special regime for developing countries, especially the less advanced ones, so as to enable them progressively to integrate into the international commercial system; and
 - continuation of concertation in line with the concept of « sustainable rural development », taking into account the growth differential between the two shores.
9. The Ministers have noted, with great interest, the final declaration of the international seminar organized by CIHEAM at Marrakech on 10, 11 and 12 April 2000: this declaration advocates a new type of cooperation between North and South, of such a nature as to favor social cohesion within the countries on the one hand, and, on the other, in the entire Mediterranean region.



- 10.** The Ministers have declared that they are in favor of paying greater attention to the “structural aspects of agricultural policies and sustainable rural development” in the Mediterranean countries which are partners of the European Union. They recognize that sustainable rural development constitutes a privileged domain for the advancement of cooperation between the countries of both shores. In this context, a framework program of cooperation could be proposed with respect to financing under the MEDA program concomitantly with a search for other available means of financing (reconversion of the eligible debt, incitation to transfers of private capital).
- 11.** The Ministers have encouraged CIHEAM -- the Organization which, by virtue of its composition, offers the appropriate framework for promoting and developing dialogue and concertation within the Mediterranean region – to do the following:

 - reinforce its role as trainer of higher cadres for agriculture, especially those who, within the national administrations, are involved in multilateral negotiations;
 - pursue its function as observatory of agricultural and agrifood policies as well as of sustainable rural development in the region; and
 - prepare itself for participation in mounting cooperation projects dealing with agricultural structures and sustainable rural development – projects suitable for being financed by the European Union via the MEDA program.
- 12.** The Ministers agree to continue their meetings in the future.

They expressed the wish that, the circumstance of holding the European presidency would lead, during the next semester, to an opening of new prospects for development of relations with the Mediterranean partner countries.

They congratulated the Minister of Agriculture, Rural Development and Maritime Fisheries of the Kingdom of Morocco and all his collaborators on the efforts expended to make the meeting a success. They also expressed their gratitude to Prime Minister Abderrahman YOUSOUFI, who met with them and provided valuable orientations for their deliberations.

They insisted to pay their respects, at the conclusion of the proceedings, to His Majesty Mohamed VI, King of Morocco, in recognition of his determination to strengthen cooperation in the region.