



## ***Visit of Commissioner Phil Hogan at CIHEAM*** **Enhancing international cooperation in the field of Mediterranean agriculture**

### **Press Release**

**Bari, Italy, 20 February 2017**



***On the 20<sup>th</sup> February 2017 the Euro-Mediterranean meeting "Enhancing international cooperation in the field of Mediterranean agriculture" was held in Bari (Italy) with the participation of Phil Hogan, EU Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development, the Ministers of Agriculture Roderick Galdes (Malta), current President of the European Agriculture Ministers' Council, Edmond Panariti (Albania); and the delegations of Italy, Algeria, Egypt, Lebanon. As the European Commission is developing new programmes and partnerships in the areas of food and nutrition security, rural development, youth employment and migration issues, the meeting focused on the necessary enhancement of international cooperation in agriculture in the Mediterranean region.***

Aimed at strengthening the current driving forces in terms of Euro-Mediterranean dialogue in the field of agricultural and rural development, the meeting started with a bilateral meeting between the Commissioner Phil Hogan and Cosimo Lacirignola, Secretary General of the CIHEAM during which the latter presented the CIHEAM Action Plan for the Mediterranean (CAPMED2025) endorsed during the Ministerial Conference in Tirana in 2016 and focusing on the prevention of root causes of rural and distress migration.

EU Commissioner Hogan underlined the similarities between the ambitions of the CAPMED2025 and the EU Agriculture Agenda 2020 and stressed the importance of work together to meet Euro Mediterranean challenges on agriculture and rural development. Issues such as food security, poverty alleviation, capacity building at institutional level, more efficient use of natural resources, improvement of agricultural production and productivity, promotion of organic farming, development of sustainable food systems, resilience to climate change and gender empowerment are priorities shared by both European Commission and CIHEAM, paving the way for new opportunities for collaboration in the Mediterranean.



Commissioner Hogan underscored that the Mediterranean region is a priority region for the EU because of an important interdependence in political, economic or social areas and he specified that policymakers on both sides of the Mediterranean are facing significant political and socio-economic challenges today, notably in the area of migration. Migration is one of the most challenging issues for the EU and its Mediterranean neighbours and the main topic of the recent European Council held in Malta.

*"It needs to be more broadly understood that working closely with our third country partners on agriculture policy has a vital role to play in this huge task"* said the Commissioner, highlighting that agriculture and rural development can provide long term solutions to this crucial human issue that concerns mainly young people and is linked to global food security.

During the meeting, attention has also been drawn on the important role of water for sustainable agriculture in the Mediterranean, emphasising the untapped potential of innovative water management in the creation of new job opportunities for young and future generations, in the struggle against climate change and drought impact on agro-food that are particularly strategic to prevent root causes of distress migration. The SG Lacirignola presented innovative water management as a pivotal issue for the strengthening of international cooperation: *"We need to establish a Mediterranean water innovation initiative and network that can tackle sustainability challenges and respond to territorial needs by linking knowledge and cooperation, increasing the capacity of governments and communities to enhance agricultural water innovation, competitiveness and ensure sustainable growth in line with the European Neighbourhood Policy."* Concerning the water issue, a strong initiative is in preparation in the European Commission involving the Directorate General of Agriculture, Environment and Research and will be launched during the Maltese Presidency. In this regard, the Commissioner invited the CIHEAM to make proposals.



*The meeting in Bari, highlighted the important convergences of priorities and projects between the European Commission and the CIHEAM and was an opportunity to recall the importance of an enhanced collaboration while the Mediterranean region has to face major social, economic and environmental challenges and for which central issues like agriculture and rural development are potentially problem-solving solutions.*

### **About the CIHEAM and the CAPMED 2025**

Founded in 1962, the CIHEAM is a Mediterranean intergovernmental organisation devoted to sustainable agriculture and fisheries, food and nutrition security and rural and coastal development. The CIHEAM Action Plan for the Mediterranean (CAPMED2025) is based on four main development goals (i) Protect the planet through combating triple waste (food, natural resources, knowledge) (ii) Food security and nutrition through boosting sustainable agriculture (iii) Inclusive development through investing in new generations and fragile territories (iv) Crises and resilience through preventing risk and managing tensions.

Five regional flagship initiatives have been identified to implement this action plan:

- 1) The establishment of a Mediterranean Platform for Policy Dialogue on drivers of rural migration
- 2) the elaboration of a Mediterranean pact for sustainable agriculture and food
- 3) The launch of empowerment actions for the young and women in rural areas
- 4) The elaboration of a training programme on "Zero Waste" in the Mediterranean
- 5) The creation of CIHEAM Affiliated Centres, presented as a tangible contribution to the European Neighbourhood Policy.

For more details on the CAPMED2025 [www.ciheam.org](http://www.ciheam.org)

For more details on Ministerial Conference in Tirana in 2016

[www.ministerial2016.ciheam.org](http://www.ministerial2016.ciheam.org)