



8th meeting of the CIHEAM Member Countries' Ministers of Agriculture

Istanbul (Türkiye) – 8 March, 2010

Press release

At the invitation of HE Mehmet Mehdi Eker, Minister of Agriculture and Rural Affairs of the Republic of Turkey, and in the presence of several high-level representatives of international institutions, the Ministers of Agriculture of the thirteen member countries of CIHEAM (International Centre for Advanced Mediterranean Agronomic Studies, intergovernmental organisation founded in 1962) will hold their eighth meeting in Istanbul on the 8th of March 2010. Discussions will focus on "***The effects of climate change on food security and food safety in the Mediterranean Region and actions to be taken***".

With food security issue back in the world headlines, agriculture has once again become a crucial concern on both global and regional scenes. Convinced that sustainable management of natural resources under climate change conditions will be a decisive in maintaining Mediterranean farming systems productivity and contributing to rural areas viability, CIHEAM member countries have decided to focus this ministerial meeting on these major challenges for the future of the region.

Since all regional climate models agree in considering the Mediterranean region as one of the potentially most severely affected by climate change in the world, attempts to assess the future of Mediterranean food production must consider the complex interaction of factors determining the use of land and water resources, the choice of most suited crops and their interactions with social dynamics.

Land and water quality and scarcity have always been constitutive features of Mediterranean agricultural systems and drivers for setting up ingenious production systems able to cope with and adapt to these basic features.

Today, these systems' resilience are being put to test, since the effects of climate change on basic agricultural production factors will most probably lead to more unstable and unpredictable food production conditions throughout the whole region, and have significant impacts on water availability and quality, environment (soil erosion, salinity and desertification), forest cover and biodiversity, crop and livestock production, agricultural pests and diseases and on the regional food security status as a whole and threatening first already vulnerable rural communities.

Agricultural development is a key component of environmental, social and economic sustainability as food and water are fundamental human needs. Climate change has become the highest international policy issue, but measuring progress towards adaptation at a regional level is complex and can be subjective when national objectives and policies interact.

CIHEAM has no doubt that these challenges are at the core of political priorities in the Mediterranean Area. That's why the 8th Ministerial Meeting will be a great opportunity to exchange ideas and experiences about actions to be undertaken for adapting food systems to climate change induced production conditions in a collaborative framework.

It should be noted that the first of these meetings of CIHEAM member countries' Ministers of Agriculture, informal fora for discussion on matters relating to agriculture, food and the environment, was held in Rome in 1999. Since then successive meetings have been in Rabat (2000), Athens (2001), Beirut (2002), Paris (2004), Cairo (2006) and Zaragoza (2008).

CIHEAM

Founded in 1962, CIHEAM is an intergovernmental organisation comprising thirteen member countries from the Mediterranean Basin.

CIHEAM is constituted of a General Secretariat (Paris) and four Mediterranean Agronomic Institutes (Bari, Chania, Montpellier and Zaragoza).

In pursuing its three main complementary missions (post-graduate specialised education, cooperative research and facilitation of the regional debate), CIHEAM is a reference in its fields of activity: Mediterranean agriculture, food, fisheries and rural development.

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