

PREFACE



Leaving, staying, returning... Humanity has been confronted with this dilemma since its early stages. Today, nearly a billion people are “migrants”. Migratory practices are diverse: rural exodus, rural to rural migration, urban to urban migration; internal or international migration; but also circular, alternating, temporary or permanent mobility. In the Mediterranean region – a space in which people have always travelled, exchanged and shared –, food, trade and migratory routes have always overlapped, thus providing people with new life opportunities, and territories with the socio-economic dynamics that are crucial for their development.

If migration is part of the history of humanity (and its future), it is today at the heart of debates and a top priority of the political agenda, especially due to the increase in the number of migrants ready to cross borders at the risk of their lives. Since the 2000s, more than 50,000 people died in the Mediterranean Sea. The magnitude of this tragedy focuses attention on South-North migration, which is nonetheless, not the most significant. Nine refugees out of ten are hosted by developing countries and many are hosted in rural regions (in sub-Saharan Africa, more than 80% of refugees live in these areas). Let us not forget that inequalities are growing in countries and between countries. This trend will continue to fuel migration flows and feed hopes for better lives and more attractive life projects elsewhere.

Rural migration remains an important component of movements across the Mediterranean region, with consequences for areas of departure and arrival that need to be better comprehended and considered in agricultural and rural development programmes and policies. Emigration can have negative impacts on agricultural households and communities of origin, particularly when it is the most dynamic members that leave, namely young people and the most educated ones. Rural areas hosting displaced persons are likely to be seriously affected in terms of food security, natural resource management in a context of insufficient access to basic services.

However, migration is also a lever of rural development. Let us note the positive impact of migrant remittances sent to their families enabling them to face financial

difficulties during a crisis such as drought periods, but also to invest in technologies that improve household agricultural production levels or other economic activities thus creating new jobs. Let us also mention the benefits related to intangible transfers, all these skills and knowledge acquired by migrants in host countries and that are then shared within the community of origin. Networks developed thanks to mobility and activities led by diasporas are also very active.

There are therefore many migration factors and important impacts that are both positive and negative in origin, transit and destination countries. Today, it is more than ever necessary to identify and understand the push and pull factors of migration in order to allow rural regions to integrate them in a sustainable development model. In order to fulfil this mission, it is essential to bring together a multitude of diverse actors, to mobilise and use a wide variety of tools, programmes and policies in different fields of action at local, regional and global levels. Among these tools, sustainable agriculture and fisheries, inclusive and balanced territorial development have a role to play. They have the potential to provide solutions enabling to address inequalities within and between countries of the region, to contribute to improve attractiveness of abandoned territories and to strengthen the adaptation capabilities of host societies.

Through this new edition of the *Mediterra* Report, the CIHEAM and the *Agence française de développement* (AFD) wish to further reflections on the links between agricultural and rural development and migration and invite leading experts and partner institutions to express themselves on this complex issue. What have been and what are the migratory trends in the Mediterranean? How can internal and international mobility be integrated as a factor of territorial development? How can migration benefits be optimised and disadvantages be mitigated in local development strategies? How can the migration of youth and women be addressed? What are the links between migration and the environment? What roles do innovation and the private sector play? What answers can the actors of cooperation and development bring forward?

The authors of the 13 chapters and 6 focus notes of *Mediterra* are intended to provide some answers to these questions. We wanted to provide readers with different points of view, complementary approaches and contrasting proposals in order to better understand the challenges and opportunities, related to migration in the Mediterranean.

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