

Cosimo Lacirignola
Secretary General of the CIHEAM
International Centre for Advanced Mediterranean Agronomic Studies

Qualified as an agricultural engineer, Cosimo Lacirignola had the Mediterranean region and agriculture at heart. Since 2013, he was the Secretary General of the CIHEAM, a Euro-Mediterranean intergovernmental organisation established in 1962 and located in Paris (France). He had previously worked as an official with the European Commission and from 1987 to 2016 he was Director of the Mediterranean Agronomic Institute of Bari (Italy), one of the four Institutes of the CIHEAM.

Cosimo Lacirignola played the role of a peace-maker and was a staunch defender of the sharing of knowledge in the Mediterranean especially among the younger generations.

Throughout his career at the CIHEAM, Cosimo Lacirignola has been strongly committed to the development of several training, research and cooperation projects in the Mediterranean and in other regions of the world, especially in sub-Saharan Africa. Always bearing in mind the importance of strengthening inter-institutional synergies and the need to provide training adapted to local demands, he has always striven to foster multilateral cooperation, agricultural and scientific diplomacy and political dialogue at the service of the Mediterranean.

All these projects are now part of the framework of the **CIHEAM Action Plan for the Mediterranean** (CAPMED 2025) that he has initiated and successfully led. Based on building the capacity of small farmers and fishermen and on the development of rural areas, particularly by investing in youth, this Action Plan was considered as a priority for him at

a time when natural hazards and food crises, climate change, the loss of biodiversity, energy, land and water scarcity are more than ever threatening the Mediterranean region and the world.

Convinced of the need for partnerships built around a common vision, principles and objectives, Cosimo Lacirignola wished that the CAPMED would follow a collaborative approach. For its implementation, the CIHEAM works in close collaboration with the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO), the European Commission and the Union for the Mediterranean. In addition, the CIHEAM has recently been mentioned in the Final Declaration of the G7 of Agriculture 2017 for its cooperation activities and its strategic role in the prevention of the causes of distress migration in the Mediterranean was recognised.

Author, researcher and lecturer, Cosimo Lacirignola has been constantly raising public awareness on the strategic importance of agriculture, food and fisheries in the Mediterranean, and to encourage the participation of young people in these sectors. Convinced of the centrality of these issues to achieve stability and peace, he has been actively involved in improving the sharing of knowledge and best practices through the implementation of open knowledge platforms. He has been a tireless ambassador of the “Mediterranean Diet” and of the struggle against waste, particularly the waste traditional knowhow and human talent.

Born on the 31 of May 1957 a San Pietro Vernotico in the Apulia region (Italy), Cosimo Lacirignola was married and father of three children. He was Commander of Merit of the Italian Republic, Commander of the Cedar National Order of the Republic of Lebanon and Laurea Honoris Causa of the Agricultural University of Tirana.