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Centre International de Hautes Études
Agronomiques Méditerranéennes

Press Release

The CIHEAM announces the 2014 edition of Mediterra

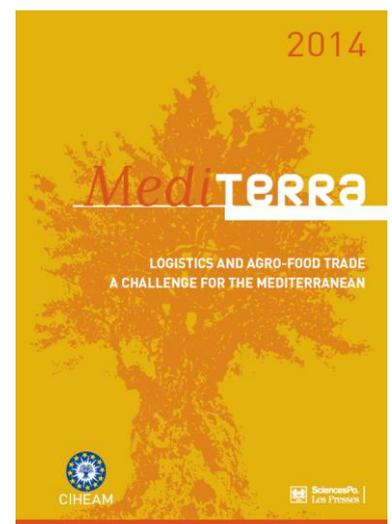
“Logistics and Agro-food Trade A Challenge for the Mediterranean”

Paris, January 27 2014

In a context of globalisation and socio-political upheavals in the Mediterranean, the development of Mediterranean agricultural trade is increasingly determined by the capacity of countries to develop modern infrastructure to facilitate exchanges and the movement of goods as well as to ensure better food security.

Organised around the economic developments of Mediterranean agricultural trade (flow with Europe, the United States, Brazil, Asia and sub-Saharan Africa), logistical challenges for the exchange of strategic products (grain, fruits and vegetables, meat, olive oil, seafood, etc.) and the infrastructure that condition trade (ports, corridors, multimodal platforms, cold chain, etc.), Mediterra 2014 also addresses issues related to sustainability, territorial balance and strategies of public policy actors (the increasing importance of the normative framework, the struggle against food waste or the role of local authorities).

Mediterra is a collection of shared expertise and a support tool for decisionmaking involving more than 70 international experts with the goal of providing policy-makers, professionals and researchers with the essential strategic indicators and keys to understanding the Mediterranean.



This report has been produced under the direction of the International Centre for Advanced Mediterranean Agronomic Studies (CIHEAM), which is an intergovernmental organisation for training, research and cooperation in the fields of agriculture, food and sustainable rural development in the Mediterranean region (ciheam.org).

Mediterra 2014 deals with agro-food trade and logistics. As a real barometer of the trends that contribute to putting food and agricultural problems at the heart of contemporary strategic issues, the Mediterranean cannot do without trade, that more than ever, and taking into account the demographic and economic dynamics, plays a crucial role highlighting the interdependence between Mediterranean countries and establishing new connections with the rest of the planet. Economy is not only limited to trade. Nevertheless, the dynamics of trade between these countries but also those that each of them maintain with third countries can partly condition the attenuation of the problems facing a Mediterranean in transitions, at least if trade remains fair. Agricultural and agro-food commodities are at the heart of the globalisation of these economic exchanges in the Mediterranean. It is important to mention that the countries bordering the Mediterranean constitute together a region with one of the greatest deficits in the world in terms of agricultural and agro-food products. Transport and infrastructure are hence essential to orchestrate these trade flows at domestic, regional and international levels, and boost the competitiveness of Mediterranean countries on the international geo-economic scene.

In this fast changing world, where one must be able to trade with as many partners as possible and therefore diversify external relations, logistics performance is increasingly strategic. The organisation of chains, the transport of goods and the contractualisation of trade are all essential steps to progress in economic development. The marketing of agricultural products should be improved both in terms of time but also in terms of safety. Increasing trade with higher quality products: the challenge is therefore huge for actors of the agro-food sector.

The advancements in the logistics industry of the recent years have led to the development of trade over increasingly longer distances, including the trade of fresh products such as fruit and vegetables, and have all contributed to the profound changes in trade across the region. Even if this progress is significant, there is still so much to be done in terms of logistics in order to obtain better performance in a Mediterranean Basin where the pressure on resources is one of the most worrying, and where all that can limit waste, and help to be in line with the energy revolution that global climate change requires to operate, should be promoted. In addition, if there are common issues and phenomena in the region, the disparities between Mediterranean countries and territories of the same state require discernment and adaptation. The differentiation of policies to elaborate and the modes of cooperation to promote become a strategic paradigm to support development in the Mediterranean. A development that can neither ignore international and regional growth, nor be built with answers that do not emerge at local level.

With a multidisciplinary and transnational scientific expertise, Mediterra 2014 features original papers with both geographical and sectoral analyses. The different contributions are intended to prepare the ground for a broader discussion that should continue in the coming years on the logistical challenges that Mediterranean countries have to meet in order to improve their food security and develop their economies. Matching supply and demand, logistics is at the heart of trade and human exchanges. It is also the cornerstone of a more inclusive territorial development.

Contacts and information

The Report can be downloaded in free access from
www.ciheam.org

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