

# PREFACE

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The 2014 Edition of *Mediterra* is published in a context of changing international and Mediterranean situations. The world is increasingly multipolar but this does not result in the strengthening of multilateral governance. Yet, in order to address social, economic or environmental challenges of the world, where complexity and uncertainty are intertwined, multilateralism was never as necessary as it is today. At the same time, the globalisation of trade continues (despite the financial crisis) and the geo-economic flows are redefined with the rise of emerging countries and the resulting inevitable reclassification of the hierarchy of trading powers.

The competitiveness of countries, territories and companies is increasingly related to their capacity to anticipate, innovate and lead integrated policies because it has now become crucial to have an intersectoral understanding of issues. 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.

It is to better apprehend these dynamics that the CIHEAM decided, at the request of its thirteen member states, to dedicate the 14<sup>th</sup> edition of the *Mediterra* Report to logistics and agro-food trade in the Mediterranean. With a multidisciplinary and transnational scientific expertise, this publication 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.

The CIHEAM produces knowledge and seeks to adapt this knowledge to the needs of Mediterranean countries thus facilitating its transformation into practical and innovative solutions for development. Logistics is certainly a major theme for the

CIHEAM's actions including training, research and cooperation. 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. This is undoubtedly the main message of this report. I would like to add two others.

A message that highlights the globalisation of agro-food trade in these Mediterranean countries. This reveals the fact that Euro-Mediterranean trade is only a flow among many others in the region. By saying this, we would also like to remind that the Mediterranean is still a great trade corridor through which pass large quantities of goods and where economic growth therefore circulates.

A message that confirms the usefulness of combining comprehensive approaches with local realities. 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.

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