



## An olive garden promotes peace and cooperation in the Aljafería Park in Zaragoza

- **CIHEAM Zaragoza, the Zaragoza City Council, and the association "The Garden of Peace" have inaugurated this Tuesday the new garden, made up of 22 olive trees from different corners of the world**
- **Through this initiative, the CIHEAM, an international actor in the field of agri-food cooperation, strengthens its link with the city of Zaragoza, where one of its institutes was established more than 50 years ago**

**Zaragoza, 21 February 2023** - The mayor of Zaragoza, **Jorge Azcón**, together with the Minister of Public Services and Mobility, **Natalia Chueca**, the Secretary-General of CIHEAM, **Plácido Plaza**, the Director of CIHEAM Zaragoza, **Raúl Compés**, and the President of the association 'The Garden of Peace', **Francesco Serafini**, inaugurated this Tuesday the "peace garden" in the Aljafería Park in Zaragoza. The new space, made up of 22 olive trees from different corners of the world, was born with the purpose of building bridges between cultures and promoting peace and cooperation.

The garden, circular in design, has olive trees from the World Olive Germplasm Bank (Córdoba, Spain), representing 21 large olive-growing countries (Albania, Algeria, Argentina, Cyprus, Croatia, Egypt, Slovenia, Spain, the United States, France, Greece, Iran, Israel, Italy, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine, Portugal, Syria, Tunisia, and Türkiye), and arranged in the form of a double ring around an olive tree of the *empeldre* variety, the main one in Aragon.

The **22 trees** now enjoy privileged views of the Aljafería Palace in the Aragonese capital, considered one masterpiece of Hispano-Muslim art and whose Mudejar was declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO. *"It is an ideal location for a project that promotes dialogue between cultures. In the shade of the olive tree, we will be able to meet and feed a renewed spirit of cooperation"*, has highlighted the chairman of 'The Garden of Peace' Francesco Serafini.

### **The olive tree: strategic crop and symbol of identity in the Mediterranean basin**

For an organization dedicated to cooperation in the Mediterranean such as the CIHEAM, the "Garden of Peace" is a project loaded with symbolism that allows it to strengthen further its link with the city of Zaragoza, where it was established more than 50 years ago. *"In addition to its strategic value for the region's economy, **the olive tree is a symbol of Mediterranean identity and fraternity**. It also represents us as an organization, since it is part of our institutional emblem"*, pointed out the Secretary-General of the CIHEAM, Plácido Plaza.

For his part, the Director of CIHEAM Zaragoza, Raúl Compés, highlighted the place that this Mediterranean crop occupies in the organization's activities. *"The olive tree is the protagonist of*

many of our training and research activities, such as the **International Master of Olive Culture and Elaiotechnics**, which has been training professionals and technical and managerial professionals in the sector for 30 years”, said Compés.

Located on the Aula Dei Campus, one of the most prestigious agricultural research complexes in Spain, CIHEAM Zaragoza is now closer to the citizens and visitors of the Aragonese capital thanks to the new "Garden of Peace". *"In this new space we hope to develop activities linked to our values and our **agri-food cooperation mission in the Mediterranean**", Compés has expressed.*

### **A project of CIHEAM Zaragoza, Zaragoza City Council, and “The Garden of Peace”**

The "Garden of Peace" is the result of the agreement signed a few months ago between the Zaragoza City Council, CIHEAM Zaragoza, and the Association "The Garden of Peace". For the mayor of Zaragoza, Jorge Azcón, *"this agreement is one more example of our willingness to collaborate with any initiative that goes along the lines of **environmental sustainability** that we have been developing during all these years. Even more so, when behind are the values of tolerance, harmony, and peace".*

Up to now, counting the one in Zaragoza, there are 6 gardens in the world attached to the initiative (1 in Italy, 2 in Greece, and 3 in Spain). This network hopes to expand soon to new countries such as Argentina, Brazil, and Jordan.

#### **For more information:**

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#### **Background**

Established in 1962, the **International Center for Advanced Mediterranean Agronomic Studies (CIHEAM)** is an intergovernmental organization composed of 13 Member States (Albania, Algeria, Egypt, France, Greece, Italy, Lebanon, Malta, Morocco, Portugal, Tunisia, Türkiye, and Spain). The Centre brings together 4 Mediterranean Agricultural Institutes: CIHEAM Bari (Italy), CIHEAM Chania (Greece), CIHEAM Montpellier (France), CIHEAM Zaragoza (Spain), and a General Secretariat based in Paris (France).

**CIHEAM Zaragoza** is one of the four Institutes of the CIHEAM: it began its journey in 1969, offering quality and excellent training and promoting research and international cooperation through the management of research projects around the five thematic axes: Environment and Natural Resources; Fisheries and Aquaculture; Animal Production and Welfare; Plant Production, Health, and Improvement; Marketing and Agri-Food Systems.