

SCENARIOS AND EVOLUTIONS OF FOOD SYSTEMS AND GREEN/BLUE TRANSITION IN THE MEDITERRANEAN AND AFRICA



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Partner,
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OPENING

Teodoro Miano has dedicated over 30 years to advancing sustainable agriculture and environmental protection in the Mediterranean region. A Full Professor of Agricultural Chemistry at the University Aldo Moro of Bari, Teodoro began his career in 1987 after graduating from the University of Basilicata. He has led various professional associations, including the Italian Society of Agricultural Chemistry and the International Humic Substances Society. Teodoro's collaboration with CIHEAM Bari started in 1996, where he contributed to education, research, and development projects. Appointed Italian Delegate to the CIHEAM Governing Board in 2018, he became its Secretary-General in March 2023. Teodoro has a strong record of international research, advisory roles, and publications, enhancing Mediterranean agricultural systems and food security. He has represented Italy on numerous global platforms for agricultural policy and innovation.




MODERATOR

Yasmine Seghirate is currently an administrator at the CIHEAM General Secretariat, where she oversees communications and publications, and serves as the Gender Policy and Women and Youth Empowerment focal point. A graduate of Sciences Po Aix-en-Provence with a specialization in the political sociology of the Arab and Muslim world, Yasmine previously led sustainable development and CSR projects in the Maghreb for ORSE (French Observatory of Corporate Social Responsibility). She has also served as a project officer in the office of the UN Under-Secretary-General for Innovative Financing for Development (UNITAID) and worked as a consultant for the French Development Agency (AFD). Her commitment to social causes includes her role as a founding member of ATLAS (Algerian Talents and Leaders Association), and head of the CSR and Territories Committee of the CACIF (Algerian Chamber of Commerce and Industry in France).

PANELISTS

Elisabetta Balzi is head of the Ocean, Seas and Waters Unit and serves as Deputy Director of the Healthy Planet at the European Commission's Research and Innovation Directorate General. She oversees EU research and innovation initiatives on marine and inland waters, including the EU Mission to "Restore our Ocean and Waters." Previously, she co-ordinated the development and implementation of the EU Bioeconomy Strategy and Action Plan, and the establishment of the EC Knowledge Centre for the Bioeconomy. With a research background in antimicrobial drug resistance from the Université Catholique de Louvain (Belgium), she also directed various EU Framework Programmes related to food, agriculture, marine, and biotechnology from FP6 to Horizon Europe. Dr. Balzi holds a PhD and a Master's in Applied Sciences and Biotechnologies, with further training from institutions in France, Germany, and the U.S.



PANELISTS

Sandra Castañer is a Policy Officer at the European Commission's Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries (DG MARE), where she focuses on promoting blue skills and ocean literacy. Originally from Costa Brava, Spain, she has a strong personal commitment to ocean conservation, inspired by her Mediterranean roots. She holds a bachelor's degree in international business economics and a master's degree in sustainable tourism management. After studying and living in the USA, Denmark, and Slovenia, Sandra moved to Brussels to build a career in European and international affairs, with a particular dedication to sustainable ocean management.

Angelo Riccaboni is an esteemed professor and leader in agrifood research and sustainability. He co-chairs the PRIMA Foundation, an initiative founded by 20 countries and the European Commission to fund agrifood research and innovation. At the University of Siena, where he served as Rector (2010-2016), he leads the Santa Chiara Lab, a center focused on innovation. Prof. Riccaboni holds significant roles with the UN's Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN), including Chair of the Regional Center for the Mediterranean and Co-Chair of SDSN Europe. His research centers on sustainable business practices and agrifood system innovation. He also represents the Italian Ministry for University and Research within Horizon Europe's Mission Soil Health and Food and coordinates efforts within the PNRR Agritech Project to advance food authenticity, safety, and sustainability in alignment with the SDGs.

Sébastien Abis is the Director General of Club DEMETER, a network of 90 companies focused on agricultural, food, and sustainable development issues. In this role, he coordinates a vast ecosystem that includes 20 academic institutions, numerous French and international experts, and collaborates with five national ministries. He also holds advisory positions in major agricultural firms such as Avril and InVivo, and serves on various strategic boards, including MEDEF International's agriculture division. Additionally, Abis is a researcher at IRIS and a lecturer at institutions like Université Catholique de Lille and Université Mohammed VI Polytechnique in Morocco. A prolific author, he has published over 20 books, including recent works on global food security and agricultural geopolitics. Known for his expertise in agricultural markets, international relations, and the Mediterranean, he frequently appears as a media commentator and collaborates with French public authorities on food security matters.

Nesrine Ziad is an influential entrepreneur in Algeria's innovation landscape, known for her commitment to fostering startup growth and innovation. She co-founded Soolvit, North Africa's pioneering platform for open innovation and crowdsourcing, and launched the widely celebrated "Algeria Startup Challenge" in 2018. Her work with Leancubator, an innovation hub and incubator in Algeria, has supported over 3,500 startups and innovative projects and organized more than 40 innovation challenges across sectors like the blue and green economies, foodtech, and fintech. Leancubator has received multiple accolades, including the WestMED 2021 award for its blue economy program and recognition from Algeria's Ministry of Knowledge Economy, Startups and SMEs. Nesrine also represents Algeria in high-profile programs, including the "African Women's Leadership Programme" and the "Programme for Innovative Women in the Arab Region", driving collaboration across Africa and the Arab world.

BUILDING UP THE INNOVATION ECOSYSTEM : MIP (MEDITERRANEAN INNOVATION PARTNERSHIP)



**Damiano
PETRUZZELLA**



**Annarita
ANTONELLI**



**Giordano
DICHTER**

CIHEAM Bari
MIP Network

BIOGRAPHIES

Damiano Petruzzella holds a degree in Agricultural Sciences and a PhD in Economics for Urban and Rural Sustainability. He serves as the Scientific Administrator at the CIHEAM Bari and leads the Youth Entrepreneurship and Innovation Ecosystem Unit, focusing on fostering entrepreneurial culture among young people and supporting the open innovation processes of business across the Mediterranean region. Damiano heads the Mediterranean Agrifood Innovation Hub and the MIP Network, a collaborative initiative with ten Mediterranean countries, as well as the MEDIL Living Lab for rural development, certified by ENOLL. He also chairs the ENOLL Working Group on agriculture and rural development. As the Scientific Coordinator of a Master's program on Open Innovation and Youth Entrepreneurship, Damiano directs projects on food systems transformation, innovation, startup empowerment, and local food policy across the Mediterranean and Africa, contributing to sustainable development in these regions.

Annarita Antonelli is a seasoned expert in rural development, organic farming, and sustainable agriculture, with a University Degree in Economics and a Master's in Agro-food Economics and Agricultural Policies from the CIHEAM Montpellier, France. Since 1997, she has contributed to CIHEAM Bari's initiatives, focusing on local development and organic agricultural practices in Mediterranean and African nations, including Lebanon, Syria, Tunisia, Morocco, Egypt, and Ethiopia. Currently part of the Youth Entrepreneurship & Innovation Ecosystems Unit, Annarita's work emphasizes social innovation, knowledge transfer, and capacity building in agriculture. Her research interests include inclusive governance, support measures for young entrepreneurs in the agro-food sector, and empowering marginalized rural communities. Annarita is also a published author on these topics, sharing insights on rural and territorial development.

Giordano Dichter is an expert in business incubation and acceleration, and co-founder of the consulting firm H&D Partners SRL based in Brussels. Giordano has over 25 years of experience in creating and managing entrepreneurial ecosystems and innovation support structures across Europe, the Middle East, Southeast Asia, and Africa. His work focuses on developing solutions tailored to the needs of startups and SMEs, with a specialization in entrepreneurship services, access to financing, and open innovation. He has led projects aimed at improving the business models of incubators and accelerators internationally. Between 2009 and 2018, he led the EU|BIC services team within the EBN network. Prior to that, he collaborated with the United Nations (UNOPS, ILO) and worked on economic development in the Balkans. Giordano collaborates with CIHEAM Bari as a trainer, entrepreneurship expert, and member of the coordination team for the Mediterranean Innovation Partnership.