



GRÈCE / GREECE

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Minister of Rural Development and Food
Speech read by the CIHEAM's Secretary General

*Excellences,
Dear Participants,*

Please accept my warmest greetings. I would like to extend my most sincere thanks and express my gratitude to the Moroccan authorities for the invitation to participate in this ministerial meeting of CIHEAM member states. We, as you may know, host one of the CIHEAM/Agronomic Institutes in Chania - on the island of Crete.

Although I was personally looking forward to this trip to Rabat and despite all preparations having already been made, quite unfortunately, a domestic emergency related to an outbreak of animal disease has brought about a last-minute change of schedule which prevented me from being there and from engaging in a fruitful dialogue with you all.

The topic that brings you together today, "Mediterranean Approach to Food Sovereignty: Concerns and Impacts on Sustainable Food Systems," is of utmost importance to Greece. My country has a rich agricultural heritage, and agriculture remains one of the cornerstones of our economy and society. Moreover, the agricultural sector plays a significant role in employment, providing job opportunities to a still substantial segment of our workforce.

Greece, just like other Mediterranean countries, faces numerous challenges in ensuring the sustainability of its food systems i.e. impacts of climate change, such as rising temperatures and water scarcity, limited resources for smallholder farmers, and the need for modernization to adapt to the digital era.

To address these issues, the Greek Ministry of Rural Development and Food is implementing a series of actions under its Annual Action Plan 2024. Specifically:

- The development of the agri-food sector is being pursued through innovative and environmentally friendly production processes, as well as the production and distribution of new agricultural products in the market.
- In order to Ensure Quality and Safety of Agricultural Products and Food, we have established national regulations for the implementation of official controls to protect human, animal, and plant health, as well as to safeguard consumer interests. These controls cover areas such as plant protection, veterinary drug residues, and products of animal origin. State supervision is exercised over agricultural collective organizations to ensure compliance and safety.
- With reference to Quality Systems for Agricultural Products and Food, support is provided to farmers and farmer groups to utilize quality systems and enhance the competitiveness of their products. This includes incentives for the conversion to or maintenance of organic farming practices, encouraging farmers to adopt environmentally friendly methods. Subsidies are granted annually per hectare of agricultural land to compensate for lost income and additional expenses incurred due to their commitments.

Greece has also undertaken various initiatives concerning food waste and its reduction. Particular emphasis has been placed on the redistribution of food surpluses.

I am confident that this meeting will further stimulate the debate and strengthen cooperation among CIHEAM member countries. Let us seize this opportunity to reaffirm our commitment to policies and practices that protect our environment and ensure access to healthy and nutritious food for all.

I wish you every success and I hope to get the opportunity to meet you in person sometime soon.

Thank you.