

CIHEAM's Commitment to Mediterranean Cooperation: Official Ambassadors' Luncheon

Hôtel de Galliffet – Paris | 9 April 2025 | 12:00 - 14:00

**Ambassadors in Dialogue - CIHEAM for
Mediterranean Cooperation.**
*Mediterranean Forum: Connecting voices, Fostering
Solutions*

Co-organized by



SUMMARY REPORT

In brief

Objectives of the Luncheon

This high-level diplomatic event was co-organized by the Permanent Delegation of Italy to the International Organizations in Paris and the CIHEAM General Secretariat to:

- ✓ **Strengthen Institutional Relations:** Reinforce dialogue and collaboration among ambassadors and CIHEAM representatives.
- ✓ **Strengthening the role of Ambassadors in representing the member countries:** we do have Delegates but they typically belong with some exception to the Ministries of Agriculture. It is a way of closing the institutional cycle, reinforcing when needed the connections between Agricultural and Foreign Affairs entities.
- ✓ **Promote CIHEAM’s Actions:** Present strategic projects, partnerships, and upcoming initiatives.
- ✓ **Encourage Collaboration:** Identify opportunities for diplomatic, scientific, and economic cooperation.
- ✓ **Highlight Member Engagement:** Emphasize the importance of multilateral dialogue and shared Mediterranean priorities.
- ✓ **Discuss CIHEAM’s Enlargement:** Open discussions on fostering a more inclusive cooperation framework in the region.

1. Opening of the meeting – H.E. Luca Sabbatucci, Ambassador

His Excellency Mr. Luca Sabbatucci, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Italy to the International Organizations in Paris, opened the meeting by thanking all the ambassadors in attendance, as well as CIHEAM, for organizing this diplomatic luncheon at the Hôtel de Galliffet, an emblematic venue of Italian diplomacy.

*“CIHEAM is a driver of strategic dialogue in a Mediterranean region
facing geopolitical and environmental tensions”
H.E. Luca Sabbatucci*

He recalled Italy’s longstanding commitment to Euro-Mediterranean cooperation and emphasized the importance of a dialogue platform such as the one offered by CIHEAM to address the region’s agricultural, climate, and geopolitical challenges. He underlined that partnership between Italy, the Italian Cooperation, and CIHEAM encompasses numerous initiatives and shared strategic objectives, reflecting their mutual dedication to advancing sustainable development, stability, and prosperity throughout the Mediterranean region.

2. Institutional Presentation – Teodoro Miano, Secretary General of CIHEAM

→ CIHEAM’s Growing Diplomatic Role and Strategic Focus

Mr. Teodoro Miano opened the session by thanking the participants for their presence and H.E. Sabbatucci for welcoming us to the Hôtel de Galliffet.

He then proceeded to introduce CIHEAM, an intergovernmental organization founded in 1962, which today comprises 13 member states and operates through four Mediterranean Agronomic Institutes.

CIHEAM

The International Centre for Advanced Mediterranean Agronomic Studies (CIHEAM) is an intergovernmental organization established in 1962 to promote sustainable agriculture, food security, and rural development in the Mediterranean region. With 13 member states, CIHEAM operates through its four Mediterranean agronomic institutes in Bari (Italy), Chania (Greece), Montpellier (France), and Zaragoza (Spain). Through research, education, cooperation, and capacity building, CIHEAM works closely with governments, international institutions, and civil society to address critical Mediterranean challenges, including: Climate change and environmental sustainability; Food security and agricultural resilience; Youth and Women employment and inclusion; Scientific and diplomatic cooperation.

Further Information:

CIHEAM Website: www.ciheam.org

CIHEAM Brochure: [Download Here](#)

CIHEAM Annual Activity Report: [Download Here](#)

SFS Med Platform initiative: [learn More](#)

CIHEAM’s strength lies in its flexible, human-centered approach, which tailors its activities to local contexts while encompassing a broad range of initiatives, including research and innovation, education, cooperation, and capacity building. This integrated approach is crucial in addressing the region's socio-economic challenges, such as climate change, food security, agricultural resilience, and the inclusion of youth and women.

Mr. Miano recalled that, at its inception, Yugoslavia was among the founding members of CIHEAM. However, following the dissolution of the country, CIHEAM faced difficulties in re-establishing institutional ties with its successor states.

Despite these challenges, these countries (such as Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Slovenia, and Croatia) continue to share a Mediterranean identity and face common agricultural challenges, highlighting the importance of renewing these connections for continued collaboration.

→ Key Pillars of CIHEAM’s Strategy

The Secretary General emphasized the main pillars of the CIHEAM 2030 Strategy¹, which include Food Sovereignty, Local Production, Youth Employment, Recognition of Academic Qualifications and Gender Equality.

He also mentioned flagship projects such as [BEANS](#), [MONA LISA](#), and the [Youth Innovation Award](#), underscoring the importance of better connecting these projects to human resources and the specific needs of the territories.

→ CIHEAM’s Role in Scientific Diplomacy

As a key player in scientific diplomacy, CIHEAM bridges the gap between scientific research, policy-making, and international collaboration.

By fostering strong partnerships among governments, universities, and research institutes, CIHEAM contributes to the development of innovative solutions that address the region's most pressing challenges, such as climate adaptation, sustainable agriculture, and food security.

“It is essential to maintain dialogue between diplomacy, research, and agricultural development, while accelerating action on the ground”

Mr. Teodoro Miano

¹ See Annex 2 (Summary of the CIHEAM Strategic Plan 2030)

Through its specialized research institutes and various collaborative initiatives, CIHEAM plays an instrumental role in shaping the Mediterranean’s scientific and diplomatic landscape, promoting dialogue and joint action to achieve common goals.

→ CIHEAM’s Human Patrimony

CIHEAM’s human patrimony, built over decades of collaboration, is a key asset that enables the Organization to work effectively with governments, international institutions, and civil society to tackle major challenges.

This patrimony has also been enriched by the alumni trained at the CIHEAM Mediterranean Agronomic Institutes, who today contribute (both in their countries and beyond) to promoting sustainable solutions in response to issues such as climate change, food security, agricultural resilience, youth and women’s inclusion, and the transition to sustainable food systems.

CIHEAM Human Heritage - Key data

Alumni Network - A true catalyst for influence

CIHEAM boasts a network of over 40,000 alumni, a powerful asset driving its influence.

Current Students - The Future Leaders

With a vibrant community of current students, CIHEAM continues to shape the future of Mediterranean cooperation and innovation.

Total Number of Students (Academic Year 2024-2025): 590

CIHEAM Scholarship Holders:

-  **Full CIHEAM Scholarship:** 350 students
-  **Partial CIHEAM Scholarship:** 37 students
-  **Erasmus+:** 17 students

3. Ambassadors Roundtable: Regional Priorities Discussed & Strategic Issues Addressed

→ Regional Cooperation and Institutional Engagement

The roundtable discussions highlighted the continued importance of strengthening regional cooperation and expanding the CIHEAM’s network of partnerships:

- Emphasis was placed on the need for increased intersectoral dialogue, particularly between Agriculture and Foreign Affairs, as a means to enhance cooperation across different policy areas.
- The CIHEAM’s openness to collaboration with non-member partners was underscored, with a focus on exploring opportunities for expanded regional integration.
- The process of formal accession to CIHEAM was discussed, with a commitment from some countries to submit official requests, with expected finalization within the next year.
- The potential for hosting joint ministerial meetings on agricultural and foreign affairs was raised as a way to foster deeper engagement.

→ Sustainable Development, Food Security, and Climate Action

A major focus of the discussions was on the critical challenges of sustainable development, food security, and climate change:

- The importance of reinforcing the CIHEAM’s Mediterranean identity through continued emphasis on sustainable development and food security was noted.
- The challenges posed by climate change and biodiversity loss were identified as urgent areas for action. A call for greater knowledge-sharing within the CIHEAM network was made, particularly to support smaller states in the region.
- Concerns were raised about the impact of recent conflicts on food security, with calls for support in addressing the humanitarian consequences of such crises. Ongoing CIHEAM-led projects aimed at improving food security through partnerships with local NGOs were highlighted.
- The [Nutrition4Growth initiative](#) was mentioned as a critical global initiative aimed at tackling malnutrition, with particular emphasis on its relevance for the Mediterranean region. The initiative, which focuses on aligning policy, action, and investment in nutrition, was noted as a key framework for furthering food security and nutritional goals in the region.

→ Concrete Projects and Operational Partnerships

Several ongoing initiatives were showcased as examples of CIHEAM’s effective partnerships and operations:

- Specific projects, such as the [TANIT project](#), were mentioned as key to strengthening CIHEAM’s operational role in regional cooperation and addressing local needs.
- The [MED-Amin Network](#), a unique platform for monitoring and forecasting cereal production, was highlighted as a valuable tool for addressing regional food security challenges.
- The [START UP 10 Project](#) was highlighted for its role in supporting entrepreneurial initiatives and fostering innovation in the agri-food sector, helping start-ups scale sustainable solutions for Mediterranean food systems.

→ CIHEAM Strategic Positioning and Institutional Partnerships

The roundtable reinforced CIHEAM’s strategic positioning as a key multilateral technical actor in the Mediterranean:

- CIHEAM’s capacity to mobilize a wide network of experts, engage its alumni community, and promote complementarity across its Institutes was recognized as a central strength of the organization.
- Ongoing and new institutional partnerships were discussed, including cooperation agreements with prominent international stakeholders such as the FAO, IFAD, European Union, UfM, and IOV.
- While there is no formalized relationship with the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean (PAM, Valletta), informal contacts continue through personal networks, suggesting potential avenues for future cooperation.

→ CIHEAM Enlargement Process

The discussion on the enlargement process emphasized its strategic importance for the future of the organization:

- The desire for expanded membership was affirmed, with countries expressing interest in joining CIHEAM to enhance regional collaboration and strengthen the organization’s influence.
- The enlargement process was recognized as a critical step towards broadening the reach of CIHEAM’s technical expertise and network in the Mediterranean.
- The governance of the enlargement process was also discussed, with a suggestion to address this in future institutional meetings to ensure a smooth and transparent procedure.

In addition, several recommendations were made to guide and structure future enlargement efforts:

- Clarify CIHEAM’s strategic vision and the eligibility criteria for candidate countries.
- Evaluate potential membership not only on technical grounds but also in light of the geopolitical opportunities it could offer.
- Ensure the systematic involvement of Member States’ Ministries of Foreign Affairs in the review and validation of applications.
- Enhance communication on the added value of CIHEAM membership, particularly regarding visibility, access to expertise, and integration into an influential international network.

**CIHEAM and the SWG RRD
Strengthening Mediterranean-Balkan Cooperation**

For several years now, the CIHEAM and the [Standing Working Group for Regional Rural Development \(SWG RRD\)](#) have developed a long-standing partnership to promote sustainable agriculture, rural development, and regional cooperation across the Balkans and the Mediterranean.

This collaboration has led to joint projects, training programmes, and policy exchanges aimed at enhancing the convergence of agricultural policies and supporting the European integration process of South Eastern European countries.

Recent milestones include the hosting of the SWG RRD General Assembly by CIHEAM Montpellier in April 2024, the signature of a Memorandum of Understanding between CIHEAM Chania and SWG RRD to foster academic and institutional cooperation, and active participation in each other’s ministerial meetings, including the participation of the SWG RRD Secretary General, Mr Boban Ilic, in the 12th CIHEAM Ministerial Meeting held in October 2024.

These initiatives reflect a shared commitment to strengthening ties between the Mediterranean and Balkan regions, in line with broader efforts to advance sustainable food systems and rural prosperity.

4. Perspectives – 2026 Ministerial Meeting

The Secretary General announced the intention to hold a CIHEAM Ministerial Meeting in 2026, ideally with the joint participation of the Ministers of Agriculture and Foreign Affairs. The venue is yet to be determined.

This meeting would represent a strategic step to strengthen CIHEAM's diplomatic weight, encourage the engagement of non-member countries, and enhance synergy between technical and diplomatic institutions.

CIHEAM Ministerial Meetings Advancing Sustainable Agriculture in the Mediterranean

The ministerial meeting of CIHEAM represents a significant gathering of member states and stakeholders, where key decisions are made to advance the organization's mission of promoting sustainable agriculture and rural development in the Mediterranean region. It serves as a platform for high-level exchanges, policy coordination, and the adoption of concrete measures to address the region's most pressing agricultural and environmental challenges.

Last edition: [12th Ministerial meeting in Rabat \(25 October 2024\)](#)

Previous editions: [CIHEAM Ministerial meetings](#)

5. Next steps – Secretary General, Teodoro Miano

- A summary of the discussions will be shared with the embassies.
- A new edition of this initiative is already foreseen, most likely in the run-up to the next Ministerial Meeting in 2026.

6. Closing Remarks – H.E Luca Sabbatucci, Ambassador

Ambassador Sabbatucci concluded the meeting by thanking the participants for the richness of the discussions and emphasizing the unique nature of CIHEAM, capable of addressing the major current challenges compromising food security in the Mediterranean region. He stressed the need for collective engagement.

*“Do not ask what CIHEAM can do for your country, but what your
country can do for CIHEAM”
H.E. Luca Sabbatucci*

Press release available: [here](#).

ANNEX 1 - List of participants

- Albania, **Mrs. Megi Bode** (First Secretary at the Embassy)
- Bosnia-Herzegovina, **Mrs. Bojana Kondić Panić** (Ambassador)
- France, **Mr. Brieuc Pont** (Special Envoy of the Minister for Nutrition)
- Greece, **Mr. Marios Mathioudakis** (Counselor for Economic and Commercial Affairs)
- Italy, **Mr. Luca Sabbatucci** (Ambassador)
- Lebanon, **Mr. Ziad Taan** (Chargé d’affaires a.i.)
- Malta, **Mrs. Giulia Saydon** (Second Secretary at the Embassy)
- Morocco, **Mr. Nacim Tourougui** (Deputy Head of mission)
- Montenegro, **Mr. Ivan ivanišević** (Ambassador)
- Slovenia, **Mrs. Jana Bajec** (Minister Plenipotentiary)
- Spain, **Mr. Victorio Redondo Baldrich** (Ambassador)
- Spain, **Mr. Miguel Angel RIESGO PABLO** (Delegate of Spain to CIHEAM GB)
- Tunisia, **Mr. Nizar Chakroun** (Advisor to the Embassy of Tunisia)
- Türkiye, **Mrs. Damla Fidan** (Counselor at the Embassy of Türkiye)

CIHEAM Representative

- **Mr. Teodoro MIANO**, Secretary General of CIHEAM
- **Mr. Thierry DUPEUBLE**, Director CIHEAM Montpellier

Excused

- Algeria, **Mr. Haninid Houssef Eddin** (Chargé d’affaires)
- Croatia, **Mrs. Senka Buric** (Chargée d’affaires)
- Egypt, **Mr. Alaaeldin Youssef** (Ambassador)
- France, **Mr. Karim Amellal** (Ambassador and Interministerial Delegate for the Mediterranean)
- North Macedonia, **Mrs. Jadranka Chaushevskva Dimov** (Ambassador)
- Portugal, **Mr. José Augusto Duarte** (Ambassador)

ANNEX 2 - Summary of the CIHEAM Strategic Plan 2030



CIHEAM Strategic Plan 2030

Summary of Key Priorities and actions

Overview

The CIHEAM Strategic Plan 2030 (CSP 2030) builds on CAPMED 2025 and aims to guide future actions in alignment with Mediterranean challenges, cooperation dynamics, and member country needs. Developed with the Institutes’ Directors, it provides a corporate path, emphasizing sustainability, regional cooperation, and innovative solutions for Mediterranean food systems.

Mediterranean Food Systems: Challenges, Frameworks and Solutions

A New theoretical Framework for CIHEAM’s Action

Food systems link two major entities: **Nature** (land, water, biodiversity, climate) and **Humans** (shaped by socio-economic and cultural factors). While food production and consumption may seem straightforward, they are deeply interconnected with complex systems across multiple domains.

A new model highlights the dynamic relationships within food systems, considering processes like transformation, storage, security, and nutrition. **Science and Technology** (S&T) play a crucial role, driving innovation and linking research with local needs through participatory approaches. Moving beyond traditional research-business connections, CIHEAM promotes inclusive frameworks where stakeholders co-plan solutions, integrating education, cooperation, and policy-making.

Addressing this complexity requires **multi-actor collaboration**, evolving from the triple helix model (universities, private sector, institutions) to the quintuple helix one, incorporating communities and ecosystems to tackle challenges like climate change.

From Global Challenges to Mediterranean Solutions

The Mediterranean faces interconnected crises - **climate change, land degradation, biodiversity loss, and socio-economic shifts** - that impact food security, sustainability, and livelihoods. Rapid **urbanization** and **globalization** further reshape food systems, consumption patterns, and natural resource exploitation, calling for a reassessment of current practices.

To address these challenges, Mediterranean food systems must integrate **climate adaptation, innovation, and sustainable resource management**, while fostering **high-quality production, youth engagement, and rural development**. A **multi-stakeholder, knowledge-driven approach** is essential for resilience and sustainability.

Aligned with international commitments including [G20 Matera Declaration](#), [G7 Apulia Leaders’ Communiqué](#), [United Nations Sustainable Development Goals](#), CIHEAM’s Strategic Plan 2030 strengthens regional cooperation to accelerate the transition toward sustainable food systems. It promotes environmentally responsible production and consumption while ensuring economic and social benefits for Mediterranean communities.

Strategic Priorities

Sustainable Food Systems Transformation

Promoting resilient, inclusive and sustainable agrifood systems by integrating environmental, social, and economic dimensions.

→ **Multi-Stakeholder Engagement:** Strengthen partnerships for sustainable food systems and resilience

→ **SDG Contribution:** Support key Sustainable Development Goals including



Zero Hunger - SDG 2



Climate Action - SDG 13



Responsible Consumption and Production - SDG 12

→ **Knowledge & Policy Innovation:** Enhance food governance, natural resource management, and sustainable production.



CIHEAM Actions / Flagship initiatives

- [SFS-MED Platform](#): Expand stakeholder participation and financial resources to boost SDG impact in Mediterranean countries.
- Strategic Projects: Develop initiatives like [BEANS](#) Network and [Mona Lisa](#) project, securing new funding and partnerships.

Youth Education & Professional Empowerment

Strengthening CIHEAM’s impact in higher education and vocational training through data-driven strategies and innovative learning models.

→ **Innovative Learning:** Promote a multi-stakeholder approach, integrating public and private actors, digitalization, and AI to enhance skills.

→ **Professional Development:** Design new job profiles and boost youth employment and entrepreneurship in agrifood and sustainability.

→ **Degree Recognition:** Advocate for national and international accreditation of CIHEAM diplomas to increase their value and accessibility.

→ **Competitiveness:** Align programs with Mediterranean priorities, ensuring relevance while securing fellowships to attract students.



CIHEAM Actions / Flagship initiatives

- Data & Digitalization: Develop a centralized platform for tracking educational impact and strengthening institutional coordination.

Gender Equality & Women Empowerment 

Advancing gender equality and strengthening women's roles in Mediterranean food systems through strategic policies and capacity-building initiatives.

- **CIHEAM Gender Policy:** Development and implementation of a CIHEAM gender equality and women empowerment policy.
- **Capacity Building:** Promote training and empowerment programs, particularly for women in rural and agricultural sectors.
- **Inclusive Participation:** Support women’s leadership and recognize their essential yet often underestimated role in agrifood systems.



CIHEAM Actions / Flagship initiatives

- Training & Awareness: Provide mandatory gender training for staff and students while fostering collaborations with institutional and financial partners.

Regional & International Cooperation

Strengthening CIHEAM’s role as a bridge for collaboration and policy innovation.

- **SFS-MED Platform:** Strengthen its role as a hub for dialogue and policy development.
- **Partnership Development:** Foster collaboration with universities, research centers, and institutions worldwide.
- **Funding & Cooperation:** Engage with international organizations and donors to secure additional resources.



CIHEAM Actions / Flagship initiatives

- **Community Enlargement:** Expand CIHEAM’s influence beyond its member states, fostering inclusion and multilateral cooperation.
- **Cross-Regional Engagement:** Strengthen partnerships in Africa, the Middle East, Asia, and Europe to advance agrifood priorities.
- **Diplomatic Advocacy:** Mobilize support from Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Agriculture to reinforce CIHEAM’s role in the Mediterranean.

Innovation & Technology

Enhancing CIHEAM’s role in advancing agri-food innovation and digital transformation.

- **Technological Platforms:** Develop data-driven tools to support informed decision-making.
- **Research & Knowledge Transfer:** Strengthen collaboration between research institutions and agricultural stakeholders.

→ **Digital Transformation:** Promote smart agriculture and innovative solutions in Mediterranean food systems.



CIHEAM Actions / Flagship initiatives

- Agri-Tech Development: Facilitate the adoption of AI, IoT, and precision farming technologies.
- Innovation Hubs: Create spaces for knowledge-sharing and co-creation with public and private actors.
- Policy & Capacity Building: Support regulatory frameworks and training programs for tech-driven agriculture.

Institutional & Administrative Strengthening  

Reinforcing CIHEAM’s governance, transparency, and strategic communication.

- **Pillar Assessment:** Improve governance and financial accountability through structured evaluations.
- **Risk Management & Internal Control:** Strengthen oversight mechanisms to enhance institutional resilience.
- **Editorial & Communication Strategy:** Expand CIHEAM’s outreach and visibility through targeted publications.



CIHEAM Actions / Flagship initiatives

- NewMedit Journal (peer-reviewed WOS cited)
- Mediterra 2026 Publication

Implementation & Expected Impact

- **Short-term (1-3 years):** Initiation of training, project planning, and cooperation frameworks.
- **Medium-term (3-5 years):** Strengthened institutional networks, broader project reach, and increased funding.
- **Long-term (2030):** A Mediterranean region with sustainable, resilient, and inclusive food systems.

Conclusion

The CIHEAM Strategic Plan 2030 reaffirms the organization's commitment to sustainable food systems, education and regional cooperation. By mobilizing resources, fostering innovation, and strengthening partnerships, CIHEAM aims to create a prosperous, resilient, and food-secure Mediterranean region.