



WORKGROUP ON AGRICULTURE

FINAL DOCUMENT

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Introduction

This year's edition of the workshop was characterised by the prestigious contribution of the European Commission - DG Enlargement and by the presence of representatives from various institutions and associations that operate towards the promotion and development of agricultural and food sectors. Participants included the Italian Farmers Confederation, Assam, Olea, Aioma, Legambiente, the Mediterranean Institute of Certifications, Ente Fiera di Pesaro, Terre dell'Adriatico, Terre di Frattula, University of Teramo, University of Macerata, Promadria, the cooperative Terra e Cielo, associations of this sector such as Confindustria Marche and institutions of funding such as the Adriatic Bank of San Paolo.

Other participants also included people from the other side of the Adriatic sea, amongst which there were the FbIH Chamber of Economy, the Chamber of Economy of Zara (Croatia), the Chamber of Economy of Serbia, the Chamber of Economy of Montenegro and representatives of various Albanian Government bodies. Many of these people have collaborated with the Chamber of Commerce of Ancona and with the Ancona Province (both present at the workshop) in past years on the realisation of some project activities, which have strengthened the relationship amongst the parties and produced positive results.

The President of this Workshop, Mr Jago Lasic, opened the discussion by reminding everyone that FbIH has just finalised an agreement to create an area of free exchange: overall, it is in fact a protocol with CEFTA. This agreement, which includes Croatia, Romania and Bulgaria as current members of CEFTA, together with Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania, is aimed at obtaining the following:

- The creation of a broad free market area;
- The possibility of increasing the volume of exchange of food products from and to the country members.

The main issues which resulted from the signing of such an agreement are:

- a) On one hand, there is the need to synchronise the national legislations of the countries that are signatories of the agreement. Above all, it is very important the systematic application of phytobiological and phytosanitary tests, tracking food safety, certifications and labels are compulsory;
- b) On the other hand, it is important to remember that the rules which regulate this free exchange area are different from the ones set by the EU, effectively



creating a double standard. The two areas represent two market systems with mutual limitations for the import-export of food products.

Strategic guidelines

The topic of the discussion was triggered by the interesting contribution given by Doretta Ghinzelli, representing DG Enlargement, and was mainly focused on the difficulty encountered by the Balkan countries in complying with EU regulations, especially in terms of commerce of food. Regulations and directives of the agricultural and food sectors are based on standards of food safety, animal welfare and food hygiene. The standard required by the European Commission to allow the access of food products in to its member countries is very high, making importing from non-EU countries very difficult and expensive. On the other hand, exporting from EU countries to non-EU countries is much easier. Such a scenario is highly imbalanced and creates a set trend in the European market.

The process in terms of legislation and economic rules that a country must comply with in order to become a member of the European Union is complex. Countries of the Balkan area are not always capable of sustaining such a process which is based mainly on three important rules:

- a) commercial preferences;
- b) financial assistance;
- c) bilateral agreements.

These rules need to be supported by economic and political stability that make the costs of complying with the EU requirements sustainable. The process is not only economic but also social and cultural. The benefits of this transition can be seen only in the long term. The crucial issue observed in countries on the other side of the Adriatic sea is the lack of trust in institutions, which consequently results in a lack of trust in the process of economic growth itself. From the EU point of view, the primary sector needs to be competitive and compliant with high production standards. This process will carry costs which are mainly social in nature.

Conclusions (agreed actions)

On the basis of the long discussions which took place during the workshop, the participants agreed on general guidelines and some actions that could be taken. Such actions have the common objectives of allowing territorial cooperation between the two sides of the Adriatic sea. They are also aimed at favouring agriculture of high quality and production in a "common" area: the Adriatic Euroregion. The high production standards, together with the food safety, appear to be the fundamental foundation on which to base the growth of the food sector and make it more competitive within the global market.



There are two actions to be taken:

Item of discussion:	Objectives:
<p><u>1) Education and training in relation to the consumption of olive oil:</u> The project idea that was discussed represented a starting point, an opportunity and an exchange of information. It also provided a chance to build a common strategy concerning the sector's needs and requirements with regard to achieving the quality necessary to beat competition from the Eastern European market within European Union agriculture. The main goal is to educate the consumers in the use of olive oil which should encourage growth in this sector in those countries that have a strong tradition of olive oil production, also fostering their economic growth.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highlight the international value of cultural, institutional and business relations between the Italian reality and the one of other country producers in the Balkans; • Strengthen and develop the importance of both olive production and producers on either side of the sea in order to find a valid model of action; • Professional training for olive oil tasters; • Knowledge sharing of good business practices amongst entrepreneurs, institutions and interested parties from both sides of the Adriatic sea; • Food education in country producers of olive oil in the Adriatic area.
<p><u>2) Training course on zootechnics:</u> The project action is to foster economic development aimed at privileging the inner and more disadvantaged areas and, at the same time, encouraging a new concept of zootechnics in broader terms (food, environment, society, culture, tourism). This new concept of zootechnics should be able to face up to new challenges in terms of new environmental, social and economic scenarios that should occur in the medium to long term. It should also allow new innovative techniques of breeding live stock, the search for a new kind of animal feed which better responds to climate change and the development of new products to introduce in the market.</p>	<p>The aim is to create a network of technicians and entrepreneurs across the whole production territory with the following objectives:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Training and formation aimed at promoting a valid zootechnical activity which should be aware of environmental needs and limitations (for instance, the use of zootechnics to prevent fires and allow wood maintenance) and its related values (the preservation of cultural and gastronomic traditions); b. The possibility of constant interaction with scientific, technical and business scenarios of Le Marche in order to always keep up to date with new changes. In this way it should be easier to face up to new challenges and find new funding.



With regards to the two project actions, it is recommended to create a territorial partnership and find a way to get funding. The workshop participants expressed interest in such actions and gave their availability in terms of setting defined guidelines to achieve these goals.