



FORUM OF THE CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE OF THE ADRIATIC OF THE IONIAN

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REPORT

TRAINING COURSE FOR OLIVE OIL TASTERS

CROATIA – ZADAR

Period: 2nd - 5th APRIL 2008

Chamber of the Economy of Zadar

On 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 5th April 2008 a course under the title “Physiological eligibility for the tasting of virgin olive oils” was held. The course was organized for 22 participants, including experts in the field, olive oil lovers, producers, olive oil millers, restaurant owners and consumers. The specific actions and programme of this training project were agreed upon by the Workgroup for Agriculture, which met in Portonovo, Ancona, Italy, on the occasion of the 7th Forum of the Chambers of Commerce of the Adriatic and Ionian Area that took place from 28th to 30th May 2007. The training project is part of the multiannual activity programme of the Workgroup for Agriculture. Participants in the above meeting expressed their interest in the possibility of training expert sommeliers and tasters of olive oil and consolidating the cultural and economic relations between Italian and Western Balkan producers, thereby enhancing the exchange of know-how and good practices between entrepreneurs on both shores.

Among the criticalities emerged from the workgroup discussion, one of them referred to the fact that the new Balkan countries are now facing new and complex issues: the market in which they work has rapidly evolved and is increasingly global. The challenge posed by competition is increasingly represented by a search for product quality, whereby quality has shifted from being an objective to the real added value of one's productions. Within the framework of an international market, the European Union supports a type of rural development, for which quality is one of the fundamental traits and respect for the environment is both the strictest constraint and the most interesting opportunity. Compliance with European regulations is costly, yet it is absolutely necessary to be able to work on the European market, which represents an important consumption area for food and agricultural products: food safety, animal wellbeing and respect for the environment are unavoidable constraints.





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The same European "neighbourhood policy" goes in this direction and tries to favour crossborder and territorial cooperation between neighbouring areas. The objective of an Adriatic Euroregion is a general one in the new programming phase of European structural funds and cooperation is considered a pivotal element in the new social and economic cohesion policy for the 2007-2013 programming period. The new programming period is a unique opportunity to refocus the support provided by the new Rural Development Fund on growth, employment and sustainability.

The programme of the new phase of the 2007-2013 structural funds includes rural development as one of its main objectives and identifies the agricultural firm as the driving engine of such development, whereby such agricultural firm must be competitive and able to play on global markets. Against this background diversifying merely agricultural activities, i.e. agricultural production and animal breeding, with ones pertaining to other sectors, such as activities related to accommodation, restaurants, entertainment and sports, must be seen within a broader entrepreneurial viewpoint aimed at offering the agricultural firm more income opportunities.

The reform of the common agricultural policy has led to an increased importance of the role played by rural development in meeting the economic and socio-environmental challenges of the 21st century. Rural areas namely make up for 90% of the territory of the enlarged EU and the new legal framework offers more possibility of accessing rural development funds both to EU members states and to EU neighbouring areas (Slovenia is already a member of the EU and Croatia is a candidate country, which will probably join the Union in 2010). This will help promote growth and create new jobs in rural areas, thereby in line with the Lisbon strategy, as well as improve sustainability in line with the sustainability objectives set in Göteborg.

Based on the above considerations, the Chamber of Commerce of Ancona, together with Promadria, the Chamber of the Economy of Zadar and the Province of Ancona, which ever since the launch of the Workgroup for Agriculture in 2004 has followed and co-financed the workgroup activities, and the association Promadria, has organized thanks to the valuable contribution and support by AIOMA, CIA and OLEA, a **training course on the physiological eligibility for the tasting of virgin olive oils** (professional course for olive oil tasters), which took place in compliance with community norms under





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Regulations EC 2568/91 and 796/2002 and with the Italian Circular no. 5/99 of the Italian Ministry for Agriculture.

The course was patronised by the Marche Regional Council according to the decision registered in the minutes of the Marche Regional Council Office in its meeting of 18th March 2008.

The initiative has been the occasion for reflection and for an exchange of opinions and experiences, as well as the opportunity to build a common strategy to meet the needs of the sector and set the important priority of quality as a fundamental value to safeguard olive growing and, together with the sector, the economy and culture of producing countries working in the common Adriatic area. The project **main aim** has been to provide the sector with the professional profile of a player, who has the necessary skills to work on international markets after a targeted and direct training pathway in the olive oil sector and who is skilled in correct food education for the consumption of olive oil, thereby enhancing the growth of the relevant sector in those countries that, like Balkan countries, can boast a strong tradition in the production of olive oil as well as good economic development prospects in this sector. The course pursued the following **specific objectives**:

- Strengthen the international dimension of the cultural, entrepreneurial and institutional relations between olive oil producers in Italy and in the Balkan countries;
- Involve and enhance the olive assets and all those working in the field on both shores of the Adriatic, thereby providing better and more widespread knowledge on the olive and olive oil supply chain and contributing to improve its quality;
- Vocational training pathways, targeted to the acquisition of the proper olive oil tasting methodology;
- Food education in Adriatic olive oil producing countries;
- Exchange of know-how and good practices between entrepreneurs, institutions and stakeholders on both shores of the Adriatic;



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- Contribute to support the supply chain and the marketing of quality olive oils in the Adriatic area.

The organization of the course was entrusted to **OLEA** (Laboratory Organization of Experts and Tasters), which is a nationally and regionally accredited training organism on olive growing issues and can issue legally valid professional certificates to work in this field. The Association has committed itself to identify the course teachers and Italian and Croatian experts with a long-lasting experience in the field. The practical tasting tests and examinations have been coordinated by a jury and a chair of the panel, composed as follows:

- Course director: OLEA Secretary-General Mr. Giorgio Sorcinelli;
- OLEA President Mr. Ettore Franca;
- Chair of the I.O.C. panel (Ms. Barbara Alfei).

The course has been very successful with regard to the number of participants: 22 people took part in the course, i.e. above the foreseen number of 20 participants, and over 40 applications to participate in the event have been sent to the organizing secretariat.

The organizing secretariat had its office at the Chamber of the Economy of Zadar and was entrusted to Mr. Petar Pedisic, who did his best during the week of the course to guarantee the success of both course organization and logistics. In this respect, we would like to express him our warmest personal thanks for the kind welcome and the attention devoted to many details, ranging from the restaurants chosen to the care and attention devoted to the specific needs of each single participant.

Specifically, the following topics were dealt with during the course:

Wednesday, 2nd April 8.30 am – 1.00 pm / 2.30 pm – 7.00 pm

8.30 am – 9.00 am

Registration of participants and greetings by Organizers and Authorities.

Presentation of the course and its aims.

9.00 am – 9.15 am (Prof. **Ettore Franca**, President of OLEA)

Presentation of O.L.E.A. (roles, activities)

Course introduction.

9.15 am – 11.00 am (Prof. **Ettore Franca**, President of OLEA)





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The Olive tree and olive oil - Origin, history and diffusion

The fruit and oil from olives: chemical constituents and their influence on quality and organoleptic characteristics.

11.00 am – 1.00 pm (Prof. **Mirko Gugic'** – **University of Split**)

Olive growing in the world scenario and in Croatia.

Main cultivars, organoleptic and quality characteristics of Croatian and Dalmatian olive oils.

Lunch break

2.30 pm – 4.00 pm (Prof. **Ettore Franca**, President of OLEA)

Classification of virgin olive oils.

Specific vocabulary for olive oil – IOC /T. 20. Doc. no. 15

Practical memorization of the harvest fruity attribute and its main flaws.

4.00 pm – 5.00 pm (**Ms. Barbara Alfei** – **Chair of the IOC Panel**)

Olive oil sensory analysis.

Professional profile of the olive oil taster.

Tasting methodology and technique according to EC Reg. no. 2568/91 and following modifications.

5.00 pm – 6.00 pm (**Ms. Barbara Alfei** – **Chair of the IOC Panel**)

Description of profile sheets for the sensory analysis of virgin olive oils (annex XII EC Reg. no. 2568/91 and EC Reg. no. 796/2002) and of extra-virgin olive oils with designation of origin (IOC/T. 20 / Doc. no. 22).

Statistical assessments of the tests.

Practical tasting tests with correct filling in of the profile sheets.

6.00 pm – 7.00 pm (**Ms. Barbara Alfei** – **Chair of the IOC Panel**)

Procedures and working methods for the setting up of a tasting panel and training of tasters.

Thursday 3rd April 8.30 am – 1.00 pm / 2.30 pm – 7.00 pm (9.00 am)

8.30 am – 10.30 am (**Ms. Barbara Alfei** – **Chair of the IOC Panel**)

An outline of olive growing: growing and harvesting methods and their influence on quality.

10.30 am – 12.00 am





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Practical organoleptic assessment tests on some olive oils with correct filling in of the profile sheets with the two methods.

12.00 am – 1.00 pm

Olive oil and health.

Lunch break

2.30 pm – 5.00 pm (**Ms. Barbara Alfei – Chair of the IOC Panel**)

Olive varieties, features of cultivars and peculiarities of monovarietal olive oils.

Tasting of some monovarietal olive oils.

5.00 pm – 7.00 pm (**Mr. Giorgio Sorcinelli and collaborators - OLEA**)

Information about the procedure of implementation of the selection tests for the classification of the rancid, winey, fusty and bitter attributes for physiological assessment.

Normalization of physical conditions.

1st sensory test for the selection of panel members

series of 4 selection tests for the classification of the **Rancid** attribute

Friday 4th April 8.30 am – 1.00 pm / 2.30 pm – 7.00 pm (9.00 am)

8.30 am – 10.00 am (**Mr. Fausto Malvolti – Interregional Coordinator for the olive sector -AIOMA**)

Community norms on PDO (Protected Designation of Origin) and PGI (Protected Geographical Indication) quality certifications; situations of PDO products in Europe.

Norms on the commercialization and labelling of olive oil.

10.30 am – 12.00 am

Practical organoleptic assessment tests of some olive oils.

11.00 am – 1.00 pm (**Mr. Giorgio Sorcinelli and collaborators - OLEA**)

2nd sensory test for the selection of panel members

series of 4 selection tests for the classification of the **Winey** attribute

Lunch break

2.30 pm – 4.00 pm (**Prof. Lorenzo Cerretani – University of Parma**)

Extraction techniques and their influence on olive oil quality.

New analytical approaches for quick quality assessment. The various analytical parameters used.





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4.00 pm – 5.00 pm

Practical organoleptic assessment tests of some olive oils.

5.00 pm – 7.00 pm (Mr. **Giorgio Sorcinelli and collaborators - OLEA**)

3rd sensory test for the selection of panel members

series of 4 selection tests for the classification of the **Fusty** attribute

Saturday 5th April 8.30 am – 1.00 pm / 2.30 pm – 7.00 pm (9.00 am)

8.30 am – 10.30 am

Practical organoleptic assessment tests on some olive oils with correct filling in of the profile sheets with the two methods.

10.30 am – 1.00 pm (Mr. **Giorgio Sorcinelli and collaborators - OLEA**)

4th sensory test for the selection of panel members

series of 4 selection tests for the classification of the **Bitter** attribute

Lunch break

2.30 pm – 3.30 pm (Prof. **Lorenzo Cerretani – University of Parma**)

Olive oil conservation

3.30 pm – 4.30 pm

Practical organoleptic assessment tests on some olive oils with correct filling in of the profile sheets with the two methods.

4.30 pm – 6.30 pm

Exams

The 1st and 2nd tests aim at checking sensitivity thresholds for designation specific attributes.

6.30 pm – 7.00 pm

End of the course and delivery of certificates.

During the course a number of **customer satisfaction forms** were distributed both concerning each single teacher and the course in general. Participants gave excellent feedback: as a matter of fact all participants indicated their name on the customer satisfaction forms and the analysis of results highlighted that the course has been particularly appreciated both because of its contents and because of the organization. The issue of a valid certificate has been considered evidence of seriousness and the



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exams have been deemed adequate in comparison to the numerous practical tasting tests of olive oil samples. These moments have been considered to be a good occasion for an exchange of opinions with teachers on the most interesting aspects of the course, i.e. the most important characteristics to identify a quality olive oil. Teachers have been particularly appreciated, specifically the chair of the panel Ms. Barbara Alfei, who has been considered by all participants clear in her explanations and easy to follow in spite of the technical-scientific nature of the contents dealt with in her lessons. Appreciation was also expressed for the simultaneous translation service, which allowed translating the material and contents of the course and enabled participants to follow in a clear and precise way.

The overall course organization has been considered to be excellent and the decision to prepare a DVD with the entire teaching contents in Italian and Croatian has also been largely appreciated.

The Croatian press and TV followed the initiative with strong interest with high coverage on the event and specific articles published on the most important local newspapers and editorials.

Given the success of the initiative, this edition of the Forum of the Chambers of Commerce of the Adriatic and Ionian Area, which will be held in Makarska, Croatia, from 22nd to 24th April 2008, the Workgroup for Agriculture will analyse the possibility of further developing the training project.

DAVIDE BERLONI
CCIAA ANCONA

