

# THE 2005 ROME CALL

## FOR A COMMON ACTION IN THE YEAR OF THE MEDITERRANEAN

TO ACKNOWLEDGE THE PIVOTAL ROLE OF "FOOD" IN THE SUSTAINABLE  
FUTURE OF THE EURO-MEDITERRANEAN PARTNERSHIP

3<sup>o</sup> Euro-Mediterranean Forum

DIALOGUES BETWEEN CIVILIZATIONS AND PEOPLE: THE FOOD CULTURES

30 September – 1 October 2005

Rector Hall, University of Rome La Sapienza

ON THE OCCASION OF THE DECENNIAL  
OF THE BARCELONA DECLARATION



EUROMED

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On the Decennial of the Barcelona Declaration, in the 2005 Year of the Mediterranean, within the celebrations of the World Food Day, at the Rector Hall of the University of Rome "La Sapienza", We met from September 30 to October 1, 2005, as participants of the 3rd Euro-Mediterranean Forum "Dialogues between Civilizations and People: The Food Cultures". In attendance were representatives of national and regional agencies, of universities, of cultural institutions and individual experts in various food, nutrition and cultural fields, coming from all over the Mediterranean region.

The Forum was presented under the High Patronage of the President of the Republic of Italy and with the auspices of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, of the Italian Ministry of Agriculture and of the Representation in Italy of European Commission. It was organized by the Institute of Food Science of the University of Rome La Sapienza, the Fondazione Universitas Italica, the EuroMediterranean Network on Food Cultures, with the technical scientific collaboration of the Mediterranean Agronomic Institute of Bari-CIHEAM, the Italian Section of ICAF-International Commission on the Anthropology of Food and the contribution of the Region of Calabria, the Region of Sicily and the Ministry of Agriculture.

Following the reflections raised from the International Conference "The Food Tradition in the Mediterranean Monotheistic Religions", held at the Rector Hall of the University of Rome "La Sapienza", on 29/30 September 2005, the program of the 3rd Euro Mediterranean Forum on Food Cultures, fitted squarely within the framework of the objectives of the Barcelona Declaration towards the creation of a Euro-Mediterranean area of shared prosperity.

Whereas the 1995 Barcelona Declaration acknowledges a greater emphasis on the three social, cultural and human dimensions of the Euro--Mediterranean partnership; and

Whereas the 1995 Barcelona Declaration recognizes that the traditions of culture and civilization throughout the Mediterranean region, the dialogue between these cultures and exchanges at human, scientific and technological levels, are an essential factor in bringing their peoples closer, promoting understanding between them and improving their perception of each other; and

Whereas the 1995 Barcelona Declaration provides the basis for a dialogue process, which is still open and should further develop; and



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convinced that it is necessary to continue and to reinforce this process of dialogue through a series of specific actions; and

recalling that in the 1995 Barcelona Declaration, it was stated to facilitate the progressive establishment of the free-trade by to mitigating the negative social consequences, which might result from it by promoting programmes for the benefit of the neediest populations; and

recalling that in the 2003 Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial Conference on Agriculture in Venice, it was stressed the stronger agricultural ties between the countries around the Mediterranean, and it was also envisaged the launching of a Euro-Mediterranean dialogue platform on rural sustainable development; and

recalling that in the 2005 Euro-Mediterranean Conference of Ministers of Foreign Affairs in Luxembourg, it was recommended the elaboration of a road-map for the creation of a Free Trade Area by 2010, as well as it was also recommended a commitment to the launching of a regional cooperation program on rural development, in light of the Ministerial statement made in Venice in 2003; and

stressing that in the 2005 Sustainable Impact Assessment of the Euro-Mediterranean Free Trade Area (EMFTA) and in the 2005 Mediterranean Strategy on Sustainable Development, it was already anticipated a decline in the Mediterranean's healthy diet patterns as a result of the EMFTA; and

recalling that in the 1992 Declaration of Barcelona, drawn up from the Conference Nutritional Rights of the Man, under the Presidency of S.M. Don Juan Carlos I, King of Spain, it was firmly stated the right of all humans to their fair share of food; and

recalling that in the 1996 FAO Declaration of Rome, drawn up from the World Food Summit, it was strongly reaffirmed the right of everyone to have access to safe and nutritious food, consistent with the right to adequate food and the fundamental right of everyone to be free from hunger; and

recalling that in the 2002 Call for Action from the WHO/FAO Expert Consultation Report on Diet, Nutrition and Prevention of Chronic Diseases it was stressed the need for data on current and changing trends in food consumption in developing countries, including research on what influences people's eating behaviour and physical activity and what can be done to address this; and



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taking into account that in the 2005 European Commission Platform of Diet, Physical Activity and Health it was alerted that overweight and obesity are increasing at an alarming rate in Europe, in particular the increase of childhood obesity is particularly worrying in European Mediterranean Countries; and

taking in high consideration the recent 2005 European Commission PLAN D (Democracy, Dialogue, Debate) laying the foundations for the profound debate about Europe's future, with the objective to build a new political consensus to equip Europe to meet the challenges of the 21st Century;

Therefore,

by being aware that in the Mediterranean there is a spread awareness of the social, cultural, health and economic interdependent dimensions of 'food', shared by all Mediterranean people,

We strongly recommend the Extraordinary Meeting of Head of States or Government, that will be held on 27-28 November 2005 in Barcelona, to take into consideration our following recommendations:

- 1) To fully acknowledge "food" as a pivotal element in the development of the future actions of the EuroMed Partnership, for its central and strategic cross-cutting dimension through the Declaration of Barcelona, with particular regard on the three social, cultural and human dimensions of the Euro--Mediterranean partnership;
- 2) To fully acknowledge "food" as a common ground in the Mediterranean to increase the intercultural and inter-religious dialogue between civilizations and people towards mutual understanding and social cohesion;
- 3) To fully acknowledge "food" as a vehicle for learning about diversity and transmitting knowledge of the other;
- 4) To fully acknowledge the right for everybody to eat according to their own beliefs;
- 5) To consider "food" as a "total social fact" as well as an important element to be account for the dialogue and social communication in the Mediterranean area and abroad;



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- 6) To act together to revitalize local capacities to reduce the increasing erosion of the diversity of Mediterranean food cultures heritage as well as to reinforce the sustainability of the agro-food systems of all Mediterranean countries and the food security in the entire region;
- 7) To make operative the commitment of the launching of the Euro-Mediterranean dialogue platform on rural sustainable development as well as the experience of the LEADER program in the Mediterranean towards resources conservation and valorisation;
- 8) To sustain research in the field of cultural processes and transformations;
- 9) To give more attention to the cultural and historical aspects of " food culture" and to their articulation in different geographical, environmental, historical, ecological, cultural, religious contexts, within a dynamic prospective of long term, and also from an actual perspective, including industrial promotion, biotechnology processes, etc.; to give more attention to the evolution of production, consumption and marketing of Mediterranean Diet products; to give more attention to cultural tourism and farm-holiday in each country and through twinning agreements;
- 10) To reinforce the joint creation of common Mediterranean cultural products (books, expositions, festivals, movies, events, etc.) to be used in Mediterranean territories and abroad as well as to support common scientific initiatives in the field of food cultures and Mediterranean Diet and the dissemination of their result;
- 11) To rediscover the " pleasure" of food and conviviality as a way to " be together" in a Mediterranean way;
- 12) To launch a food culture " re-education" project for an effective action in the schools of all Euro-Mediterranean Partnership countries with particular regards to gastronomic and convivial levels, and oriented not only to nutrition education;
- 13) To reinforce training activities specially for the trainers; to reinforce the exchange of experiences between students from different Mediterranean schools and universities; to reinforce the attention to young generations and to the evolution of their Mediterranean style of life, through media, schools, universities, and sport;



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- 14) To sustain in the future of the EuroMed dialogue the creative process of the interaction of science, art and technology;
- 15) To have not a “mythical” consideration of the Mediterranean past, in which to transfer artificially the actual interests, building a kind of “Arcadia” and forgetting all difficulties about food achievement and transformation in the Mediterranean area;
- 16) To sustain the Mediterranean Diet as a resource and a possibility of renaissance in “acculturated” or economically agricultural depressed areas, taking part of the processes, and avoiding to become a simple “receptor” of globalized food manufactures;
- 17) To remember that the ancient Greek word “*diata*” means equilibrium, lifestyle. Therefore, the traditional Mediterranean diet is more than just a diet; it is a whole lifestyle pattern with physical activity playing an important role;
- 18) To take into account the intense scientific activity of the last decades that has significantly contributed to the understanding of the relationship between nutrition and health. The health benefits of the dietary traditions of the Mediterranean populations have contributed to the acceptance of the Mediterranean Diet as a healthy dietary model, also for the prevention of non-communicable diseases and obesity;
- 19) To establish a common definition of the traditional Mediterranean Diet (equivalent to Mediterranean Food or Food Culture) as a priority, in order for all Mediterranean countries to present a common perspective and strategy. The definition should refer to the traditional Mediterranean Diet preserving cultural inheritance. Main foods included in the common basket are: in high amounts olive oil and olives, fruits, vegetables, cereals (mostly unrefined), legumes, nuts and fish, moderate amounts in dairy products (preferably cheese and yogurt), and low quantities of meat and meat products. Wine in moderation is acceptable when is not contradictory by religious and social norms. But the idiosyncrasy of the pattern is not only a list of foods (some traditional) but also its sustainability (mostly fresh and seasonally and locally grown) and preparation according to traditional recipes and the way and context of eating them, that are also key components of the Mediterranean Diet. It is emphasized that Mediterranean Diet is complete and does not need any kind of supplement or enrichment unless recommended for health reasons;



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- 20) To take into account that traditional Mediterranean Diet besides its health implications also has cultural and economic implications, therefore all Mediterranean countries need to agree and contribute to the process of preservation and promotion. To start the process of the recognition of the Mediterranean Diet Food Cultural Heritage behind the UNESCO, as an initial and shared common position to be coordinated from the Barcelona counterpart as an extension of the 1995 Barcelona Declaration, in collaboration with all the Mediterranean country representatives;
- 21) To consider that the global scenery in which is placed the complex reality of the Mediterranean, with its interdependent issues, requires trans-sectorial rethinking able to express new Mediterranean paradigms of development;
- 22) To strengthen the initiative of the Euro-Mediterranean Forum on Food Cultures to continue to foster its trans-sectorial networking dialogue towards the envisaged road-map for the creation of the Free Trade Area by 2010. To support its effort to develop a thematic interdisciplinary network on "Agriculture, Food and Culture", with a joint "portal" website, to share experiences, researches and data;
- 23) To launch also a EuroMed PLAN D (Dialogue, Debate, Democracy) to strengthen, as done for the EU's future, the current debate about the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership and its future, in which "food", with its pivotal cross cutting role, through the three dimensions of the Plan D, could be fully acknowledged within the objective to build a new EuroMed political consensus towards the challenges of the 21st Century;
- 24) To take into high consideration that young people are becoming in Southern and Eastern Mediterranean countries the highest majority of the population.



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Upon these recommendations,

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## **WE INVITE YOU TO JOIN WITH US IN THIS CALL FOR A COMMON ACTION**

TO ACKNOWLEDGE THE PIVOTAL ROLE OF "FOOD"  
IN THE ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL SUSTAINABLE  
DEVELOPMENT OF THE FUTURE ACTIONS  
OF THE EURO-MEDITERRANEAN PARTNERSHIP

Rome, October 1, 2005

