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The Annual Report of 2005 of the International Center for Advanced Mediterranean Agronomic Studies

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Résumé : Le rapport annuel 2005 sur l'agriculture méditerranéenne (Agri.Med) produit par le CIHEAM présente une série d'analyses approfondies sur la situation agricole et rurale de ses Etats membres, qui regroupent près de 380 millions d'habitants. Il est accessible pour la première fois en arabe, en plus des éditions en français et en anglais jusqu'alors disponibles.

La première partie de ce rapport est entièrement dédiée au développement rural des régions méditerranéennes du Nord et du Sud. Sont notamment abordés la dynamique des populations et l'exode rural, l'économie rurale et la pauvreté, les institutions et organisations de développement, la gestion des ressources naturelles, de l'environnement et du développement durable.

Par sa présentation exhaustive et les données actualisées qu'il contient, ce rapport constitue une source documentaire d'importance pour de nombreux utilisateurs.

Abstract : *The annual report 2005 of the Mediterranean Agriculture (Agri.Med) prepared by CIHEAM is characterized by its recent coverage and in-depth analyses of the situation of agriculture and rural sector in the member states, which include almost 380 million inhabitants. It was published in the Arabic language-for the first time - in addition to the English and French editions.*

The first part was fully devoted to rural development in the countries of the region, north and south. It included population dynamics and rural-urban migration, poverty and rural economies, institutions and development organizations and the management of natural resources, environment and sustainable development.

The comprehensive feature of the report and the recent data it was based on provide an important source for a wide range of users.

Introduction

The end of World War 2 marked the beginning of a new era of rural development for the Mediterranean countries. In the north, reconstruction and the modernisation of economies and the emergence of a European Union were dominant. In the agricultural sector, measures aimed at strengthening supplies of agrifood products for Europe as a whole served as rural development policies. The improvement of the productivity of factors of production and especially labour, whatever the costs, was the main result from the 1950s to the 1970s. More specifically, structural and domestic price support policies were implemented within the framework of the future EU and an emerging common agricultural policy (CAP). The quest for farm competitiveness facilitated exports to outside Europe of dangerous accumulations of surpluses from the 1980s onwards. This rendering of areas more 'agricultural' than 'rural' was accompanied in some regions by economic and social marginalisation that were synonymous with decline. However, the urban and industrial development of the 30 post-war years (1955-1985) handled the rural exodus resulting from these changes fairly well. The situation was completely different from the 1990s onwards as globalisation makes it necessary for regions to become part of this new dynamics and construct new comparative advantages that do not all concern the agricultural sector. Economic and institutional under-development in the southern countries is such that it is necessary first of all to strengthen the newly independent nation-states. Industrialisation is not possible until the basic infrastructure has been established. The question of agricultural and rural development was raised very quickly as the main problem is that of ensuring sufficient food self-sufficiency for a strongly growing population while the launching of industrialisation was often difficult and could not employ the surplus labour. Later, structural adjustment policies made induced agricultural growth even more fragile while the necessary decentralisation implied greater participation of stakeholders and a more efficient institutional framework.

As a result, in the north, areas can be seen that are used solely for agricultural production or are abandoned. In the south, the rural zones—some of which are in arid or semi-arid regions—are subjected to over-exploitation processes that seriously compromise their future. From the 1990s onwards, this question of the sustainability of development was faced by the various civil societies in the Mediterranean world, introducing the need for the new constraints to be taken into account, even if this was gradual. Finally, consumer interest in the typical features of Mediterranean products and the rehabilitation of the Mediterranean diet are new features today that must be taken into account in particular in used of the comparative advantages of rural areas. It will be understood that public policies are fairly varied and that their implementation displays certain time lags between countries, thus going beyond the question of agricultural development alone. These policies tend more to encourage the 're-ruralisation' of rural areas but in a context of fiercer competition at the world level as a result of the opening up of national economies to greater competition. The work carried out by the CIHEAM teams should be seen in this context on the occasion of the 2005 annual report. The latter is a synthetic approach to the various agricultural and rural development policies on the northern and southern shores of the Mediterranean. These policies also correspond to the changes in social expectations with regard to consumption and the management of renewable natural resources.

The annual report of the Mediterranean Agriculture (Agri.Med) prepared by CIHEAM is characterized by its recent coverage and in-depth analyses of the situation of agriculture and rural sector in the member states, which include almost 380 million inhabitants from which more than third speak Arabic.

The sixth issue of the last year of Agri.Med was published in the Arabic language—for the first time - in addition to the English and French editions. It was important to expand the circle of beneficiaries to include speakers in the three languages which are spoken by more than two-thirds of the population of the CIHEAM member states.

The report of 2005 is characterized also with addressing a number of vital issues related to contemporary phenomena and problems that concern a large sector of rural population, especially in the south. A full separate part was fully devoted to rural development in the countries of the region, north and south. It included population dynamics and rural-urban migration, poverty and rural economies, institutions and development organizations and the management of natural resources, environment and sustainable development. This was in addition to the traditional topics of agricultural production and food quality, and fisheries and its developments as well as comprehensive statistics pertaining to many other aspects important for comparison between the North and South.

That is why this report, in particular, was an important source to determine the main directions of activities of the International Seminar we are involved in now.

I - Sustainable rural development in the Mediterranean region

The first part of the report included, after a general introduction and preliminary remarks, four chapters covered the following aspects:

- ❑ Population trends, economy and social proportions: the major changes,
- ❑ Agricultural and rural policies - the new paradigms,
- ❑ Rural development and sustainable development: how should natural resources be managed ?
- ❑ New modes of governance of rural development in the Mediterranean,
- ❑ General conclusions.

This part reviewed existing disparities between rural areas in the north and south of the Mediterranean, and the slow change in the South compared with the North, as well as the rural-urban gap existing in the South, which will continue to widen unless specific strategies, plans and programs are adopted to overcome that gap.

It reviewed also, thoroughly, the experience of the European Union with the Common Agricultural Policy - in the area of rural development, focusing on the major trends in the last decade and the future. It highlighted also the most important milestones and the socio-economic determinants of the natural and rural development in the countries of the South, the aspects of change required to face contemporary challenges which clearly illustrate the potential frameworks of cooperation between the north and south of the Mediterranean region.

II - Sector and country analyses

The second part of the report included four chapters that covered the following aspects:

- ❑ The economies of the Mediterranean countries in 2003,
- ❑ Trends in agro-food production, consumption, trade and market policies,
- ❑ Agricultural and agro-food policies,
- ❑ Fisheries.

This part included detailed analyses of the conditions of the agricultural sector, food and fisheries in the countries of the region in a comparative framework at the regional and international levels. It highlighted the production and marketing policies and challenges met by these countries which also drew attention to the potential and possible aspects of cooperation between the countries of the region within the framework of the European Union Neighborhood Policies initiative and the Euro-Mediterranean cooperation.

III - Consumption and food security in the Mediterranean region

Part III included a brief introduction followed by four chapters that covered the following subjects:

- ❑ The differential characteristics and developments in the Mediterranean sub-regions,
- ❑ The Overall food security in terms of quantity, and food insecurity in terms of quality,
- ❑ The differences in food preferences between the North and the South as related to food insecurity,
- ❑ A forecast of the Mediterranean diet in the future.

This part of the report dealt with the current non-traditional issues of food and food security. It analyzed the gaps between the North and South, the trends of ongoing changes, the forecasts and scenarios for consumption until 2025 at the country and regional levels focusing on the indigenous feature of Mediterranean food at the global level. It emphasized on the importance of investing the experience and heritage in that area regionally and globally in the context of globalization. This would support the cultural specificity of food of the countries of the region, and bring development in rural and urban areas in innovative and competitive manners and opens unlimited areas for cooperation between countries of the region in the context of global competition.

IV - Indicators of agricultural and food Development in the Mediterranean countries

This fourth part addressed main data related to useful and meaningful comparisons among the CIHEAM member states according to specific indicators that measure various aspects concerning:

- ❑ Population, employment and available resources,
- ❑ Agricultural and food production,
- ❑ Food consumption and its evolution,
- ❑ International trade in the fields of agricultural production at inter-country, regional and global levels.

Conclusion

The comprehensive feature of the report and the recent data it was based on provide an important source for a wide range of users. This does not include only the policy and decision-makers and scholars, but also the entrepreneurs (whether from the private or joint sectors at national or international levels) who are interested in directing their investments in the proper direction based on verified and credible data and information. This would serve, therefore, a significant sector of beneficiaries who are in real need to inject more investment in activities not familiar in the countryside before.

It is an assured aspiration of CIHEAM to support the expertise required to develop the rural South, which is still in need of comprehensive development under the unlimited changes and challenges expand globally, from the past experiences of rural development in the north of the Mediterranean, that are documented in this report. For the second year this report, that comes in three languages, is a way to expand the knowledge and expertise and setting a knowledge and information bases that would support any cooperation and joint effort in the Mediterranean region in future especially in the context of the proposed initiative of the European Union to strengthen this cooperation under what is called the neighborhood policies which is the issue of this international seminar where we are taking part today.