

Preface

I. After the publication of the 1998 and 1999 reports, CIHEAM now presents its third annual report, which focuses on the year 2000, thus honouring its commitment to draw up a periodical document reflecting the general development of agricultural and agro-food systems in CIHEAM member countries and constituting an instrument of knowledge, analysis and reflection on the main aspects and events affecting the agricultural and food economy in the region: we are pleased to fulfil our ideal engagement with the addressees of the report - members of government, members of parliament, officials of international organisations and national administrations, representatives of scientific institutions and professional organisations, and economic operators – who in their various capacities have encouraged us to pursue this initiative, which is gradually drawing the attention of all of the Mediterranean countries.

In fact the Ministers of Agriculture of CIHEAM member countries, who held an initial meeting in Rome in May 1999 and met again in Rabat in May 2000, have again acknowledged that CIHEAM report is a valuable reference document for the countries of the region and an essential tool for making CIHEAM the most effective arena for observing agricultural, agri-food and rural development policies in the Euro-Mediterranean area.

II. The structure of the present report is similar to that of the previous editions. It is divided essentially into four parts:

- **Part I** is devoted to the general topic of the relationship between **natural resources and agriculture**, which is discussed both from the point of view of the challenges presented to Mediterranean agriculture by the requirements of environmental protection and the designing of sustainable agriculture in the context of the Euro-Mediterranean partnership and from the point of view of the constraints confronting the countries on the southern and eastern shores of the Mediterranean in the structural adjustment policies they are pursuing in parallel with the problems they are encountering in the management of natural resources in this delicate phase of economic transition. The development of the subjects dealt with in Part I leads quite naturally to the consideration of the concept of the multifunctionality of agriculture in the Mediterranean region and of the connection between this concept and rural development, which is a fundamental aspect of Mediterranean economies. The issues broached in the last chapter of Part I concern the scope of the concept of multifunctionality in the Mediterranean region, the compatibility of that concept with the

liberalisation of trade in agricultural commodities, and the extent to which the agricultural policies of the Mediterranean countries are consistent with the principle of multifunctionality.

Without wishing to anticipate the conclusions drawn in Part I of the report, which gives a very clear account of the issues at stake in agricultural development in the region and the relations between the countries responsible for the Euro-Mediterranean partnership, we feel that we must confirm what has constantly been argued in our annual report ever since the first edition: the benefits which can result from opening markets and the free trade zone to the partner countries in the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean could be cancelled if the current restrictions regarding the covering of the financial and social costs of transition in those countries persist.

- **Part II** presents **sector and country analyses**. After describing the development of the national economies and of the agricultural aggregates in those national economies, this section shows how agricultural and agri-food production, consumption and foreign agricultural and agri-food trade developed in the year under review, and it concludes with comments illustrating the main features of agricultural, agri-food and rural development policies in the various CIHEAM member countries.

As was already the case in the previous editions of the report, Part II is the synthesis of the contributions drawn up by the national correspondents, which are available in full on the Internet, as is the full edition of the report.

We are very much in favour of this working method – contributions from the national correspondents and summary report – which constitutes the original feature of our report and foreshadows the function of observatory of agricultural, agri-food and rural development policies with which the Ministries of Agriculture have entrusted CIHEAM. In the preparatory phase of the present edition, the Editing Committee and national correspondents held a joint meeting to mark the first experience of creating an interactive network which can be developed with a view to implementing the observatory. And our efforts will continue to that purpose with the support of CIHEAM Governing Board.

- **Part III**, in which a specific subject of particular importance for the region is developed each year, discusses **the water problem in Mediterranean countries**. This section of the report covers the broader and essential issue of the availability and rational utilisation of water resources in the Mediterranean countries, advocating a programme of priority measures for the attention of policy-makers in the region.

- And finally, **Part IV** focuses on **the main indicators of agricultural and agri-food development** in the countries of the Mediterranean, comprising a supplemented and improved update compared to the data contained in the previous editions.

III. Encouraged by the support received on the publication of the earlier editions and by the numerous expressions of approval, we are confirmed in our determination to continue our work. And more specifically, we appreciate the acknowledgement of our report which we have received from the Ministers of Agriculture of CIHEAM member countries and also from the responsible bodies of the cooperation programme, which is co-financed by the European Commission and CIHEAM. The policy and management committee of that programme - on which the officials of the scientific institutions of the partner Mediterranean countries are represented – regards our report as a decision-making aid and includes it in the activities of the programme. This confirms the validity of CIHEAM's initiative of publishing its report, whose purpose from the outset has been to serve the countries in the region.

Now that that initiative has been consolidated in the present edition, I wish to express my sincere thanks to the members of CIHEAM Governing Board, the national correspondents, the members of the Editing Committee and Mr. Mahmoud Allaya of the IAM-Montpellier, who accepted responsibility for the general coordination of the present edition of the report within the Editing Committee.

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