



## **SlowMed's Manifesto for the Acknowledgment of the Mediterranean Diet by the Institutions and stakeholders of the civil society**

The project **SlowMed - Food as a means of dialogue in Mediterranean Contexts** ([www.slowmed.eu](http://www.slowmed.eu)) - funded by the ENPI CBC MED programme ([www.enpicbmed.eu](http://www.enpicbmed.eu)) is aimed at validating the common culinary heritage as a tool to promote intercultural dialogue and strengthen the cultural identity in Mediterranean.

### **The Mediterranean Diet: a model to be shared and a platform for a creative dialogue**

The nutritional model of the Mediterranean Diet is based mainly on olive oil, cereals, fresh or dried fruit, vegetables, a moderate amount of fish, dairy and meat. A part of the nutritional pattern, it includes a range of values promoting social interaction, respect for the territory, biodiversity, ensuring the development of communities and their traditions across the Mediterranean.

The Mediterranean diet has been included in the UNESCO list of intangible cultural heritage at the end of 2013 and, in addition to that, the Council of Europe has recognized its key role in fostering tolerance and cultural diversity.

The project SlowMed represents a moment of reflection to reclaim memory and resume the ancient culinary techniques of our ancestors. Moreover, this project lays the foundation for rethinking agriculture, production cycles, and their connection to lifestyle, culture and human relations.

The objectives of the project are:

- To encourage the Mediterranean culinary heritage preservation and conservation;
- To promote the recognition of food as a form of cultural and artistic expression;
- To support artistic creativity and expression of Mediterranean culinary heritage: food is “A work of art”;
- To advance networking and therefore encouraging cross-fertilization;
- To promote nutritional education based on the Mediterranean culinary heritage.

These objectives are promoted by the Partners of SlowMed, who are the following:

- Centro per lo Sviluppo Creativo “Danilo Dolci” (Italy);
- Bibliotheca Alexandrina (Egypt);
- Arab Resource Center for Popular Arts – ARCPA (Lebanon);
- Mediterranean Diet Foundation – FDM (Spain);
- In Loco Association (Portugal);
- CCIAZ – Chamber of Commerce Industry & Agriculture of Zahle & Bekaa (Lebanon);
- Battir Landscaspe Ecomuseum (Palestine);
- Department of Health Care of Sicily Region (Italy).

Currently, the preservation of the Mediterranean Diet is an important factor in the maintenance of the variety, healthy character and biodiversity compared to the increase of the globalization process and this is the reason why we would like to ask to the institutions, organizations and multiple stakeholders

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of the civil society to recognizes the value of the Mediterranean Diet in educational and social policies, including also in their internal strategy and policies.

As assessed by UNESCO “The Mediterranean Diet constitutes a set of skills, knowledge, practices and traditions ranging from the landscape to the table, including the crops, harvesting, fishing, conservation, processing, preparation and, particularly, consumption of food. The Mediterranean Diet is characterized by a nutritional model that has remained constant over time and space, consisting mainly of olive oil, cereals, fresh or dried fruit and vegetables, a moderate amount of fish, dairy and meat, and many condiments and spices, all accompanied by wine or infusions, always respecting beliefs of each community. However, the Mediterranean diet (from the Greek *diaita*, or way of life) encompasses more than just food. It promotes social interaction, since communal meals are the cornerstone of social customs and festive events”(UNESCO, 2010).

The participation of the institutions and the recognition of the Mediterranean Diet at the educational level would allow a positive reversal of our behavior. Various studies carried out at an early stage during the project SlowMed show that the Mediterranean diet is closely linked to sustainable consumption and no waste, and more generally to equitable and respectful lifestyles.

To emphasize a vast and intangible heritage such as the set of best practices enclosed within the concept of the Mediterranean Diet, could ensure its preservation and in this sense it calls for the participation of local institutions involved.

“The governance of the Mediterranean food system is hindered by many problems and constraints, including the lack of a common and shared Mediterranean strategy, from food production to food consumption, towards the development of a sustainable agriculture as well as of sustainable food systems in the Mediterranean region(FAO 2015)”.

Furthermore, we suggest Institutions to focus on their policies and actions to improve this situation. In specific, we support the Institutions in:

- Preparation of research activities useful as policies instruments based on the themes of food and nutrition safety, with a particular regards on food utilization;
- Promote governance strategies based on multidisciplinary approach that underlines the interaction that exists between the Mediterranean Diet and nutrition, health, society etc.;
- Development of sustainable policies that ensure the safeguarding of the diversity of the Mediterranean food culture heritage;
- Improve the multilateral cooperation among Mediterranean countries to preserve the Mediterranean Diet and use it in a strategic way in local policies;
- Strengthen education initiatives, awareness-raising and capacity-building projects and training in the management of the intangible cultural heritage and their benefits;
- Promote favorable food prices in favor of such local and regional products;
- Support local enterprises for the production of Mediterranean food chain supplies;
- Emphasize the connection among the production of these products with the issue of food losses and waste.

As Institutions/organizations/policy-makers, we agree on what is stated above and share the above objectives:



<b>Name &amp; Surname</b>	<b>Organization/Institution</b>	<b>Mail</b>	<b>Signature (stamp, if available)</b>