



## DECLARATION

### Safeguard and Promotion of the Mediterranean Diet

#### **Preamble**

*Over the course of millennia, the peoples of the Mediterranean have developed alimentary patterns intimately linked with the lands they inhabit. While variations and idiosyncrasies exist in the diverse regions of the sea basin, there is a shared tendency towards a healthy, prudent dietary pattern based on local produce native to the Mediterranean shores.*

*Much more than simply nutritional values however, the Mediterranean Diet is composed of a set of skills, knowledge, practices and traditions extending from the landscape to the table. This rich, cultural capital has been passed down from generation to generation since antiquity and comprises assets of intangible value to the entire region.*

*In recent times, these values and traditions have come under tremendous pressure from increasingly globalised value chains and access to inexpensive, lesser quality food sources.*

*The traditional Mediterranean Diet can, however, be a motor for sustainable and inclusive economic development in the region. Improved knowledge among consumers of the entire value chain of traditional Mediterranean dietary patterns – from farm to fork – will help promote the interests of local producers, retailers and restaurateurs, while impacting on the health of end-users, as well as assuring the legacy of this valuable cultural capital, resulting in a win-win-win scenario for the regions of the Mediterranean.*

#### **Whereas**

- (1) On November 17, 2010, UNESCO recognized the Mediterranean Diet as an Intangible Cultural Heritage and defined the Mediterranean Diet as “a set of skills, knowledge, rituals, symbols and traditions, ranging from the landscape to the table, which in the Mediterranean basin concerns the crops, harvesting, picking, fishing, animal husbandry, conservation, processing, cooking, and particularly sharing and consuming the cuisine. (...) As a unique lifestyle determined by the Mediterranean climate and

region, the Mediterranean Diet also appears in the cultural spaces, festivals and celebrations associated with it. These spaces and events become the receptacle of gestures of mutual recognition and respect, of hospitality, neighborliness, conviviality, intergenerational transmission and intercultural dialogue. They are opportunities to both share the present and establish the future. These communities thus rebuild their sense of identity, belonging and continuity, enabling them to recognise this element as an essential component of their common and shared intangible cultural heritage”.

- (2) There is a strong need to promote and safeguard the Mediterranean Diet, as defined by UNESCO, by involving new generations and economic operators in order to ensure that traditional food production and consumption patterns are not eroded through globalization.
- (3) The Mediterranean Diet represents not only a cultural model but also an ecologically sustainable model with a significantly reduced environmental footprint, adherence to which can have a significant contribution to increasing the sustainability of food production and consumption systems in addition to the well-known benefits on public health (see FAO 2012; Sáez-Almendros et al. 2013).
- (4) The recognition of the Euro-Mediterranean initiative « Olive Tree Routes » by the UNESCO in 2003 and the Council of Europe in 2006, for its contribution to valorizing the Mediterranean civilization as a whole, with a view to promoting sustainable development in olive oil producing regions of the Mediterranean.
- (5) Aside from the proven health and environmental benefits, the Mediterranean Diet represents an under-exploited business opportunity, which would contribute positively to sustainable and inclusive socio-economic development, trade and investment, and job creation throughout the Mediterranean.
- (6) The MedDiet – Mediterranean Diet and enhancement of traditional foodstuff initiative, funded by the European Union in the framework of the ENPI CBC MED program, is the main cross border action involving countries from the two shores of the Mediterranean sea focused on transferring the shared Mediterranean Diet cultural

heritage to the young generations and on encouraging the private sector in promoting and safe-guarding the authentic Mediterranean Diet as a core element of its corporate social responsibility, as well as the business opportunity it represents.

***The Undersigned agree to the following:***

- I. Acknowledge and accept the values of the Mediterranean Diet according to UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage recognition; as a means of development, stability and solidarity for the peoples of the Mediterranean area.
- II. Commit to promoting and safeguarding the Mediterranean Diet amongst young generations as a key stakeholder group for raising awareness and ensuring the transfer of the Mediterranean Diet shared cultural heritage.
- III. Advocate for the promotion and safeguarding of the Mediterranean Diet amongst private sector operators, particularly producers, retailers, hoteliers and restaurateurs in order to assure the quality of the produce on offer.
- IV. Support private, public or civil society actors aiming to endorse the importance of Mediterranean gastronomy as an integral part of the regional identity, both around the Mediterranean and internationally, and as a model for establishing gastronomic destinations in the international of food tourism market.
- V. Contribute to reinforcing and promoting the Mediterranean Diet Shared Knowledge System ([www.med-diet.eu](http://www.med-diet.eu)) as an open shared platform of products, principles, scientific publications, didactic tools and promotional materials of the Mediterranean Diet aimed at defining, sharing and spreading the cultural heritage of the Mediterranean Diet across the whole basin of the Mediterranean Sea and across the world.
- VI. Encourage and/or support the organization of activities and initiatives of alimentary education targeting final consumers, aimed at the recognition of quality and healthiness of territorial products strictly linked to Mediterranean Diet.

- VII. Strive to promote the introduction of nutrition education into the schools' programs at all level in order to improve the intergenerational dialogue and the transfer from the youngest age the cultural heritage and manufacturing expertise of the Mediterranean Diet.
- VIII. Save no effort to enhance the role of local authorities and of regional traditional products belonging to the Mediterranean Diet, by supporting the spread of geographical indications in order to safeguard the reputation of regional foods, promote rural and agricultural activity, help producers to obtain a premium price for their authentic products, and eliminate unfair competition and misleading of consumers by non-genuine products across the whole of the Mediterranean sea basin.
- IX. Promote the Mediterranean Diet on international level as one the safest and more sustainable dietary patterns, and as a vehicle to reinforce Mediterranean culture and products all over the world.

*Location, date:* \_\_\_\_\_

*Name of the organisation:* \_\_\_\_\_

*Name and role in the organisation:* \_\_\_\_\_

*Signature:* \_\_\_\_\_