



Valencia, 2016/06/22

# The alarm has rang for a transition in food and agricultural, wake up!

## CURRENT SITUATION

All around the Mediterranean, the rich agricultural history and the diversity of the diet and food systems have given birth to some of the greatest civilisations in the history of mankind. The oases, the gardens, the pastoralism, the use of technology and water management and, the domestication and exploitation of special animals and plant biodiversity enabled the Mediterranean peoples to flourish in very diverse natural environments and weather conditions that were sometimes not conducive to the development of agriculture and human settlement.

Even today, nutritionists celebrate the Mediterranean gastronomy and diets while agronomists find the principles of post-modern agro-ecology in thousand-year-old oases.

However, as they are insufficiently recognised and valued, this heritage and the Mediterranean food and agricultural products are being partly abandoned and are hard hit by a standardised idea of food and agricultural production that is industrialised and financially orientated, as well as by competition in agriculture products from globalised, standardised food. In food systems among families and Mediterranean peoples, the "globalised" part prevails over the "regionalised" part. This victory for globalisation is actually a defeat for local and national economies: the current food system no longer creates, or doesn't create enough, jobs and local or national income; it weakens development instead of promoting it; and it impoverishes Mediterranean countries and gets them into debt instead of enriching them.

The food deficit, which is now considered structural, is linked to a demographic explosion, the absence of exploiting the true potential of Mediterranean agriculture and the discrediting of Mediterranean food products, and without doubt imposes unequal trade in food products. These exchanges can be mutually beneficial while also being destructive to our food systems. Moreover, in the Mediterranean, an agro-industrial model of production, which hasn't taken the precaution of adapting to the specific conditions of the natural environment, nor the eating habits of the Mediterranean peoples, now occupies a large part of its agricultural land and its best soil. The dominance of this agribusiness model in the Mediterranean, which results in the suffocation of local farmers, also has negative effects in terms of jobs, the environment and cultural heritage, that is to say, issues of general

interest.

Food production, and with it the entire agricultural and food system, must become a central driver for sustainable and inclusive development in our countries. Whether it's to respond to oft-criticised contemporary issues such as value creation, employment, income distribution, the environment, climate change, preservation of cultural heritage, in order to provide future generations with tangible and intangible heritage to allow them living decently, we urgently need to carry out a true "food transition".

To do this, we believe that two connected battles must be carried out: the battle to re-territorialise food consumption, synonymous with the shortening of agricultural distribution circuits and the circular economy, and the battle against negative social, environmental and cultural effects produced by the dominant process of agricultural and food production. The second battle is synonymous with changing the agricultural model, in this case an "agro-ecological revolution", and the need for smallholder farmers to be able to access seeds, land and natural resources, markets, credit, technology and agricultural services. Both developments will not take us back to the past; they propel us into the future and towards regional agricultural models and food systems that are productive and of high social, environmental and cultural value.

## **PROPOSAL**

The **Mediterranean Citizen's Assembly Foundation (MCAF)** encourages its members to work with this aim and to publicise their commitments at national and international events. It wants to express its positions, demands and proposals relating to food transition, especially during the 22nd Conference of Parties of the Convention on Climate Change (COP22), to be held in November 2016 in Marrakech and before that, at the Tangier MEDCOP, where the Mediterranean regions will meet in July to prepare for the COP22. The COP22, which after the Paris Agreement signed in December 2015 during the COP21, wishes to be and be seen as the "Conference of solutions."

By finding solutions through field research, we wish to present ourselves in partnership with those working in Mediterranean countries for food transition, as we have characterised it. Indeed, there exists in all our countries pioneers who have implemented and organised responsible and sustainable food initiatives (IARD) and are already on the path to transition.

### **We wish to:**

- Identify, analyse and promote these initiatives and, to do this, collaborate with associations and academic partners involved in the same struggle for food transition.
- Establish a sample of nationwide examples of IARD and a large sample of several hundred IARDs in the Mediterranean are likely to show both the creativity and diversity of local "solutions" that help identify "transition paths" to new agricultural and food systems.



- Rely on these local solutions to construct an appeal with a macro-geographical perspective.
- Establish collaboration to broaden the database of initiatives and solutions for the next COP meeting and other international events.

### **FIRST SIGNATORIES**

- Algerian Women Reclaiming their Rights (FARD) (Algeria)
- Association of Regions of France (ARF) (France)
- Eating City (Italy)
- Mensa Cívica (Spain)
- MCA Foundation (Mediterranean Citizens' Assembly) (Spain)
- International Agriculture and Food Confederation (Uluslararası Tarım ve Gıda Konfederasyonu) (Turkey)
- International Center of Rural and Agriculture Studies (CERAI) (Spain)
- Laboratory of Rural Space of the University of Thessaly (Greece)
- Research and Evaluation of Innovative and Social Solutions (RESOLIS) (France)

*If your organisation wishes to sign the declaration, you can contact us writing to [secretariat.facm@gmail.com](mailto:secretariat.facm@gmail.com), with the subject "Food and Agricultural Transition".*