

Mediterranean Study Days upon Quality and Food Safety



Identity, Quality and Food Safety of Mediterranean agrofood productions

Tirana October 06, 2008

Seminar Report

Introduction

1. Background - Preface

Facing the global market of food products and looking at the free trade area in the Mediterranean basin within 2010 as provided by the Euro-Mediterranean Charter of Barcelona, the correlated needs and opportunities became necessarily subject matter of discussion.

Because of the innovative development of preparation methods and distribution systems food safety requires controls among the whole chain according to standards of integrated approach. In a market framework where words exchange between seller and consumer is even more reduced or lacking, the communication related to the food origin is committed to the signs on products labels as for the geographical marks, the denominations of origin and the geographical indications. These signs remind a certain linkage to the territory, to its culture and traditional production and preparation methods of typical and peculiar food and recipes of the Mediterranean diet. This link represents a "value added" due to natural and human factors and it is an indicator of the identity of the territory in relation with the local communities.

The "Mediterranean Study Days upon Quality and Food Safety" (MSD) are an itinerant initiative which moves through the Euro-Mediterranean countries, facing the most current issues related to quality, identity and food safety of Mediterranean food productions through a multi-disciplinary and multi-level approach, involving institutions, enterprises of agricultural and agro industry sector and citizens as consumers.

2. Study Day Setting

The Study Day took place in Tirana at the Mondial Hotel, as well as the typical Albanian Dinner with traditional music alive.

A conference translation service Italian/Albanian /French was available.

The Seminar was attended by around 100 participants, including the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Consumer Protection of Albania and representatives authorities of the Ministry, representatives authorities of Mediterranean Institutions, representatives authorities of the Albanian Ministry of Tourism, Youth and Sport, of the Italian Embassy in Tirana, academies, companies, producers, associations, expert in agrofood and tourism sector, travel agencies and tourism associations.

The panel of speakers came also from different backgrounds conferring to the Seminar as wished a multidisciplinary character.

The feedback of the participants confirmed that the Study Day was appreciated, particularly for the proposed linkage between agriculture and tourism.

3. Organization of the SD

Organiser: RIFOSAL Consortium

Co-organisers: International Centre for Advanced Mediterranean Agronomic Studies (CIHEAM), Mediterranean Institute of Bari (IAMB), International Federation of Agricultural Producers (IFAP), Italian Permanent Mission to UN and WTO

Patronages: Italian Ministry of agriculture food and forestry policies; Mediterranean Observatory (MAE), Lazio Region - Agriculture Councillor, Albanian Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Consumers Protection, Albanian Ministry of Tourism, Youth and Sport

With the cooperation of: Chamber of Commerce of Ancona - PromAdria, CTS Ancona, Green Med Journal.

Donors: Gruppo Novelli Italy

4. Aims and Structure

4.1 The SD in Tirana was the second of the five MSD.

Scope of the seminar was to promote the meeting/facing of different actors of the Mediterranean quality and production chain such as Albanian and international institutions, companies, experts, universities, distribution chain involving agrofood and agriculture sector and tourism sector.

Within the framework of identity, food safety and quality, because of the increasing of interest for typical and quality products in Albania and the developing of tourism, both Albanian Ministries of Agriculture and tourism were invited in order to evaluate possible between the two sectors.

EU food safety standards particularly referring to typical products and their quality, identity and guarantee; to facilitate the extension of EU food safety standards to Mediterranean basin countries food productions; to animate the debate in order to encourage partnership and cooperation opportunities between companies in the Euro Med area.

4.2 The Seminar was structured in two sections which were closed by a traditional dinner with typical products and food preparations. After greeting and welcoming (5.1) in the **first section** (5.2) it was reported on typical quality productions in Albania and food standards, issues related to the hygienic and safety profiles of typical productions, feasibility of quality products valorization and marketing projects; in the **second session** (5.3) it was reported about procedures and possibilities of registration of geographical indications and geographical marks in the EU, meaning of certification and guarantee of Mediterranean food productions. A case history was presented at the end by an Albanian Traditional products association, that told about their experience and opportunity to access to the market for producers.

Finally during the **third session** (5.4) were tasted traditional Albanian food preparation.

A traditional Albanian band accompanied the dinner.

The SD was moderated by **Antonio Felice**, Editor of Green Med Journal

5. Study Day

5.1. Introduction and greetings

The Session was opened by **Maria Pia Ragionieri** – Member of RIFOSAL Scientific Committee who introduced the Consortium for research and training in food safety RIFOSAL and the initiative of the MSD 2008-2010, giving the greeting from Rifosal president, the Rector Marco Mancini; and explaining the meaning of the MSD and RIFOSAL Consortium activities in the field of quality, and food safety in Mediterranean countries; *Deputy Head of Embassy of Italy in Tirana*, **Francesco Saverio De Luigi**, who gave the welcoming and greetings from the Ambassador H.E. Saba D'Elia and underlined the importance of the valorization of typical productions in a framework of food safety and quality; *Secretary General of the International Center of High Agronomic Mediterranean Studies – CIHEAM*, who stressed the importance of three main guidelines identity, food safety and quality for the development policy of Mediterranean agrofood and agricultural productions and the preservation of the Mediterranean Diet, as a cultural heritage of Mediterranean populations, **Hiba El Dahr**, regional coordinator of the International Federation of Agricultural Producers – IFAP, who introduced IFAP's activities at international level and its scopes, particularly enforcing agricultural producers position in the food chain and in the markets, developing a common identity of products of specific identified areas, valorizing the specific quality for a long term development and enhancing market access.

Finally **Jemln Gjana** Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Consumer Protection, thanking RIFOSAL for having chosen Albania as second place for the MSD, highlighted the importance of typical productions for the development of the agro food sector and at the same time of the food safety measures. He and the commitment of Albanian institutions in order to implement national standards which are compliant with the EU norms.

The Minister also underlined the consolidated cooperation between Italy and Albania.

5.2. First Session

Brunilda Stamo Director of Production and Market Policies *Ministry of Food , Agriculture and Consumer Protection*- reported that Albania is in the process of EU accession focusing in the Food and Agriculture Sector as regarding quality improvement in accordance to EU requirements for food quality and safety, and strengthening the position of producers in the national and international market. Several training programs have been organized with the support of different donors to provide simple knowledge in the frame of SAA agreement – undersigned in order to comply with EU law - CE Regulation (509/2006 and 510/2006) on Agricultural & Food Traditional Specific Products, obligation of Albania Government to protect the domestic traditional products, main tools and simple methods for evidence and registration of Agricultural & Food Traditional Specific Products, preparation of pre list on Regional Agricultural & Food Traditional Specific Products. In the Recent Albanian Law on Food (No 9863 of 28.1.2008) two chapters were destined to define of food origin and geographical indexes (Chapter VIII) and to create a “Traditional food product” index (Chapter IX)

She stressed that Albania has a grate potential to offer a grate range of typical products, most of which derive from the ancient traditions but still are made with the same care and love as in the past. Under the typical Albanian products there are olive oils of different cultivars (like Kalinjot, Mixan, KMB) and from several traditional areas like Elbasan district; wines (Albania claims one of Europe's longest histories of viticulture) of of native cultivars like Sheshi i Zi, Sheshi i Bardhë, Vlosh, Kallmet, Debinë e Zezë, Debinë e Bardhë, Serini i Bardhë dhe Pulës. There is also fish production, like carp fish from Shkodra lake, the Dukati Black Goat (a biotype which over the centuries has become well adapted to the particular natural conditions of the extensive pastureland of the Karaburuni peninsula), the Hasi Goat (a typical goat breed in the Northeastern part of Albania). Moreover Mrs Stamo highlighted that there are also some particular area of food productions like Puka in the North, Lepushe at 1,250 meters, the highest village in the Albanian Alps, Permet Producers. in the southern part of Albania which are traditionally known for specific kind of processed products like raki (plum spirit) or kackavall (pressed sheep's cheese made with natural rennet).

Cosimo Lacrignola Director of the Mediterranean Agronomic Institute of Bari (IAMB) speaking about the role of IAMB in the valorization of Mediterranean quality products, underlined the bind of the three key words: food safety, quality and identity, which are to be considered together.

He restated the consolidated cooperation between Albania and Italy, with also some specific projects with Apulia region, illustrated some of the IAMB projects in Mediterranean basin in the field of natural resources management and conservation, development of the territory, food quality & food security, proposing them also as replicable for Albania.

He illustrated the role of IAMB in the valorization of Mediterranean quality products through its activities: training and education, research, cooperation and carried out through specific lines of actions such as formulating production

protocols, elaborating and developing traceability tools, optimizing processing management, supporting development of quality productions, developing initiatives to enhance food healthiness, promoting the Mediterranean diet as a Mediterranean heritage for the competitiveness and sustainability of local products”

Agostino Macrì – Director of the Food and Animal Safety Department of the Istituto Superiore di Sanità (Italy) introduced the origin of typical productions ad the result of a need of preserving the seasonality of productions and they constitute an important cultural and economical heritage. In a global framework the risk for typical productions to be crushed is very high.

The main issues related to preservation of typical productions can be individuated in the reduction of agro-breeding activities and the lack of raw materials , the lack of infrastructures, the scarce or absent innovation, the importance to guarantee the safety the products and the limited volumes of production.

From here the contribution of the scientific research should take into consideration the whole food production chain, proposing innovations which consent to increase productions in terms of quality and quantity, developing also new eventual traditional products, conferring to products an organoleptic and /or nutritional value added, verifying the possibility of introducing innovative techniques that do not alterate the characteristics of the food ingredients.

Finally after making a analysis of the risks related to food safety during preparation and conservation of typical products, he assumed a kind of “*industrialization* “of typical productions processes in order to guarantee their salubrity.

5.3. Second Session

Paolo Borghi – European Professor Jean Monnet in food law explained that European food market rules have several juridical techniques to communicate the quality of the product. The first one is for sure the mark, the creative sign, the “brand” invented by the enterpriser to be identified and associated to quality guarantee by consumers. An other characteristic of products is the geographical area of production, which is generally not linked by consumers to the quality of the product, except for some cases like for example “made in Italy” which is considered as a synonym of quality. There is than the geographical indications which consist sometimes in a simple name of a place (Chianti), sometimes it is a geographical name accompanied by a name of a product. The distinction of the geographical indications as distinctive signs, different from the mark and from the provenience, is recognized by the theory of the intellectual properties rights and it finds acknowledgment in the international conventions, such as the Trade Related aspects of Intellectual Property rights - TRIPS- agreement. EU decided to rule the different criteria used by European countries for protecting geographical indications in order to guarantee same standards, enhancing consumer confidence in geographical indication market. Firstly through EEC Regulation 2081/92 and today with EC Regulation 510/2006 , EU created a unified system of protection: Protected Denomination of Origin (PDO) and Protected Geographical Indication (PGI) products. Legal protection of the geographical origin require that the typical products comply with the European regulations and are recognize by the European Commission. Together with EU regulations, there is a complex system of mark protection, which can be also geographical and that is firstly protected by national laws of EU countries. Finally it is possible to register a collective geographical mark, which has to be related to a “Regulation of the use of the mark”, specifying also who and how the mark can be used and conditions in order to join the association that owns the mark. If a PDO or PGI are already registered, the request for registration of a collective or individual mark is rejected when the mark has similarities to PDO or PGI and thus can create confusion, otherwise if a PDO/PGI are already registered, the registration of a mark can be accepted and they both are valid. This means the possibility of a coexistence of similar geographical mark and geographical indication and a parallel use on the market.

On this basis the question is which mark should producers choose? Considering that PDO and marks has the same status in law, both are protected by intellectual property right, the difference between them is first of the way of regulation of reciprocal prevalence (in which DOP have the prevalence). It has to be considered the possibility for a producer association to register a collective geographical mark and include in the “Regulation of the use of the mark” the same contents of a standard. In this case it would not be so different from a PDO, but a producer/enterpriser in order to use the mark should enter in the Association and a PDO could be after registered in the same area. Choosing to register a PDO would give to producer less “exclusivity” because of the use of the protected name can be used by everyone who use the standard and is certified, on the other side it would mean to opt for a tool which is guaranteed by Communitarian norms, enhancing consumer trust and increasing market opportunities.

Remo Cluclomel, President of the Mediterranean Institute of Certification (IMC) president of the Mediterranean Institute of Certification (IMC) of Senigallia (AN) reported about guarantee and certification of Mediterranean food productions. He took into consideration three main items such as the legal framework of certification activities, the peculiarities of certification systems and certification and advantages for Mediterranean food production systems.

The new legal framework for certification systems in Europe starting from January 01, 2010 will provide the acknowledgment of the public function carried out by only one national accreditation body for each country, the separate but complementary management of the surveillance activities on the market, defining specific competences and different but complementary roles and responsibilities: public authorities – one national accreditation body and the certification bodies. Thus, a new scenario for the value and the responsibilities of certification bodies is going to be outlined in which conformity assessed by certification bodies will have a higher value. He then analyzed the meaning of certification in the international context, underlining that certification has not to be considered just as a control action followed by a “stamp” of conformity or approval, but certification systems relevancy consists of a plurality of aspects which make the certification value added. The “certificate” is a final result of different processes defines within a system which is represented by its organization structure and its activities. Certification bodies are to be considered an instrument of preventive analysis of enterprises processes and of the company organization.

Certification bodies are also information upon national and international law requirements and updates vehicles for enterprises This aspect in a global market framework, in which commitment of enterprises is a synthesis of effectiveness and legality, assumes an extraordinary meaning in terms of prevention and thus of quality and food safety of products and processes. He then stressed that certification can provide specific advantages for agro-food Mediterranean enterprises, such as facilitate the enterprises to be compliant with local and international standards, to support enterprises communicating to the market the quality of the product and the quality of the process, to improve the enterprise’s quality management system with particular reference to efficiency, transparency, legal compliance, capability of communication

Thus the meaning of certification has to be individualized in law requirements information system, preventive valuation system, public communication system and last but not least stakeholders representative system. In fact the international norms upon certification (ISO 65 and the new ISO IEC 17021), provide that accredited certification bodies must include in their organization a Stakeholders Committee, composed by representatives members of Institutions, universities, production sector, consumers. This aspect gives to the meaning of "control" a new connotation: the opening of the enterprises system to consumers concerns.

Finally he mentioned some approaches that can delay the Mediterranean enterprises development, such as public authorities approaches that do not valorize the multifunctionality of certification systems, enterprises approaches that apply certification only to get a certification "stamp", certification bodies approaches that undervalue the role of certification towards different stakeholders.

Ols Lafa - Director of the Cultural Heritage of the Ministry of Tourism, Youth and Sport - highlighted the importance of the enogastronomic heritage of a country and thus of typical products for tourism sector, he reminded the "culinary memory" beside the "cultural and naturalistic memory" which tourists take home with them after a holiday, holding up as several examples.

He stressed that Albania saw in the last years an increasing tourism attracted from nature and historical places, thus it will be extremely important to invest also in enogastronomic routes, including agritourisms and typical restaurants, wine cellars with wine testing, typical products and traditional food preparations.

Enver Isufi, director of the BIOADRIA association, introduced its speech with a question: "Why so many discussions, efforts and expectations for the typical products?". He suggested firstly that typical products or else mentioned "products with an identity" enriches taste, appetite, culture, tradition, transferred know-how through generations and everything good which took a "folk certification". Then they are a survivor element for the individuals, community and the state itself (especially for the agriculture field). Finally products' identity has a cost until this product' name is approved and consolidated. Such activities increase our awareness since this status is not gained as easy as we think here in Albania. He explained why Albania has many potentiality for typical productions: starting from the climatic, physical and geographical diversity of Albania and giving some data about the importance of agriculture for the country: more than 40% of the labour force is involved in agriculture, about 24% of GDP is obtained by agriculture (50% is conventional, about 9% is integrated, 1% organic and 40% agriculture with low inputs and "natural" agriculture). He added that today Albania is perceived as a typical place because is being enjoyed as an unexplored country from the world citizens and this fact increases the marketing possibilities of the typical Albanian products, listing some typical product' names with a "folk certification" as Gjirokastra cheese, Roshnik fig of Berati, Biza potato, Vlosh grape of Vlora, Tropoja plums, Drishti onion, Mirasi onion, Vishegrad onion, Devolli honey, Krypësi olive of Kruja, White olive of Tirana "Dimrak", the grape of Shesh village in Tirana, Radhima honey, Taraboshi tobacco, Raki from Skrapari, Durresi brandy, Korca brandy, Leskovik wine, Ox heart" tomato of Tirana. He underlined that today these names are disappearing or being forgot; meanwhile other names are being created but not yet characterized by a "folk certification" and "official certification".

He then proposed organic agriculture in Albania as a model for developing even "the Albanian products with an identity", telling their experience with Bioadria Association.

He finally pointed out the measures proposed to be taken in order to develop typical products market: starting from legislation by defining the designation of products with an identity and producing a standard, organizing certification process and training, identifying the priorities for products to be produced and certified as "product with identity", to marketing actions by setting up models from the production to the marketing of "products with identity", creating sustainable systems for products with a local and national identity as well as integration with local jurisdictions, agritourism and national tourism also looking at successful models.

5.4. Third Session

At the end of the SD a Dinner-Bufferet with typical Albanian products and preparations was offered to the participants, while a folk group played traditional Albanian songs.



MENU

Taratore e sallate - entrées and salads

Sallate Fshati village salad

Tarator me kastraveca yogurt dip with cucumbers

Tarator me kunguj yogurt dip with fried zucchini

Byreqe - Puff pastry delights

Lakror Zagorie with lamb and mint

Qahije Gjirokastre with feta cheese and spinach

Qumeshtor Myzeqeje with milk and sugar

Petanik me Fasule with peas and onion

Gatime mishi dhe peshku - Meat and Fish main courses

Kernacka Korce Hacked veal and pork meat, black and red pepper hacked

Qofte Korce Hacked veal meat with onion, tomato sauce, oregano, bay

Gjel fushe me pershesh Turkey meat, bread, butter

Tave dheu Tirane – Veal meat and liver with corn flour, salty ricotta, hot peppers, tomato sauce, onion.

Tave Elbasani –Lamb, yogurt, eggs, rice, flour

Tave Shkodre (Krapu) Carp fish, bay, vinegar, tomato

Dollma Shkodre Cabbage, onion, hacked pork, marine fennel

Qingj ne hell - Pasture lamb skewer

Djathra - Cheese

Shellire Yogurt, green peppers

Djathe i bardhe lope Cow milk cheese

Djathe i bardhe dele Ovine milk cheese

Djathe kackavall lope dhe dele Cow and ovine milk cheese

Salce Kosi Made by concentrated yogurt

Embelsira - Sweets

Gliko shalqini, fiku dhe arre Candied watermelon, walnuts hulls and figs in syrup

Sheqerpare with nuts

Ballokume Elbasani with corn flour

Pijet Drinks

Uje nga burmie Shqiptare Water from Albania sources

Tirana and Korca Albanian beer

Vere e kuqe Kabernet i Sukthit Red Wine Cabernet from Sukth

Raki Rrushi Distillate from Shesh grapes

Raki Rrushi Moskat Distillate from Muscat grapes

Raki Mani Grappa di Gelso

Photo Gallery



Tirana 06 October, 2008 – Mondial Hotel



Seminar and Buffet



Jemin Gjana Albanian Minister of Food , Agriculture and Consumer Protection

Maria Pia Ragionieri, RIFOSAL, Francesco De Luigi, Italian Embassy in Tirana, Minister Jemin Gjana,



From left: Bertrand Hervieu, CIHEAM, Minister Jemin Gjana, Francesco De Luigi, Italian Embassy in Tirana





From right: Antonio Felice, GreenMed, Brunilda Stamo, Marina Miraglia and Agostino Macri, ISS



Hiba El Dahr, FIPA-IFAP



Brunilda Stamo, Albanian Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Consumer Protection

Agostino Macri, Istituto Superiore di Sanità



From Left: Enver Isufi, Bioadria, Ols Lafe, Albanian Ministry of Tourism, and Sport, Remo Ciucciomei, IMC, Paolo Borghi, University of Ferrara, Antonio Felice, GreenMed Journal



From left Cosimo La Cirignola, IAMB, Enver Isufi Bioadria, Ols Lafe, Albanian Ministry of Tourism, and Sport, Youth, Remo Ciucciomei IMC



Tirana Food Market



Organizations and Web sites

Adrion – Adriatic and Ionian lands

www.adrion.forumaic.org

Albanian Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Consumers Protection

www.mbumk.gov.al

Albanian Ministry of Tourism, Youth and Sport

www.mtkrs.gov.al

Bioadria

www.bioadria.org

CIHEAM - International Centre for Advanced Mediterranean Agronomic Studies

www.ciheam.org

CTS Ancona

ctsandue@tin.it

Green Med Journal

www.greenmed.eu

Gruppo Novelli

www.grupponovelli.it

IAMB - Mediterranean Agronomic Institute of Bari

www.iamb.it

Embassy of Italy in Albania

www.ambtirana.esteri.it

IFAP – FIPA - International Federation of Agricultural Producers

www.ifap.org

IMC - Istituto Mediterraneo di Certificazione

www.imcert.it

Istituto Superiore di Sanità

www.iss.it

Italian Ministry of agriculture food and forestry policies

www.politicheagricole.it

Italian Permanent Mission to UN and WTO

<http://missions.itu.int/~italy/>

Lazio Region - Agriculture Councillor

www.agricoltura.regione.lazio.it

Mediterranean Observatory (MAE)

www.odelm.org

PromAdria

www.promadria.it

Rifosal Consortium

www.rifosal.it

University of La Tuscia di Viterbo

www.unitus.it

University of Siena

www.unisi.it



Consorzio per la Ricerca e la Formazione sulla Sicurezza Alimentare



under the patronage of



**MINISTERO POLITICHE AGRICOLE
ALIMENTARI E FORESTALI**



Regione Lazio
Assessorato all'Agricoltura



Osservatorio del Mediterraneo



Ministero del Turismo, Cultura e Sport



**MINISTRIA E TURIZMIT, KULTURES,
RINISE DHE SPORTEVE**

in cooperation with



CE/HEAM-IAMB



**Italian Permanent
Mission to UN and WTO**



In cooperation with

