

**13<sup>th</sup> Intergovernmental Meeting**  
**of the Representatives of the seven UNESCO Emblematic**  
**Communities of the Mediterranean Diet**  
**Agros (Cyprus), Brač and Hvar (Croatia), Soria (Spain), Koroni (Greece),**  
**Pollica (Italy), Chefchaouen (Morocco), Tavira (Portugal).**

**National delegations:**

**Cyprus:** **Antonis Tsolakis** (Mayor of Agros), **Thekla Papantoniou** (Cyprus National Commission for UNESCO) and **Niki Kafkalia** (Representative of the Emblematic Community of Agros).

**Croatia:** **Ada Seferagić** (Bol Municipality, Croatia) and **Mirna Bojić** (Ministry of Culture and Media) and **Jelena Ivanišević** (Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Research).

**Greece:** **Jenny Kokromiti - Zacharaki** and **Dimitris Maniatakis** (Maniatakeion Foundation / Representative of the Emblematic Community of Koroni).

**Italy:** **Stefano Pisani** (Mayor of Pollica), **Sara Roversi** and **Camilla Carioli** (Future Food Institute / Center for Mediterranean Studies “Angelo Vassallo”).

**Morocco:** **Rahmouni Alami Saad** (Chefchaouen Municipality, Morocco) and **Abdelali El Bakali** (Environment and Cooperation Department of CHEFCHAOUEN).

**Portugal:** **Patricia Vidigal** (Secretary of State for Agriculture - XXIII Government - Portuguese Republic), **Ana Maria de Freitas e Amorim Ribes** DSTAR / DDAAFA (Direção-Geral de Agricultura e Desenvolvimento Rural), **Maria Custodia Correia** (Head of the division of Diversification of Agricultural Activity, Training and Associations).

**Spain:** **Marta Duarte Chacón** (Ministry of Culture and Sport (Spain), **Paloma Sanchez** (Ministry of Culture - Spain), **Carmen Cabrera** (Ministry of Culture - Spain).

**Introduction - President of Community Council of Agros**

The Mayor of Agros, Antonis Tsolakis, opened the meeting.

He welcomed everyone connected to the meeting. He extended a big thank to the community council, and to everyone who contributed to making the meeting possible. Furthermore, he stressed the importance of close cooperation among the members of the MD Network.

**Presentation of activities on the national and emblematic community level.**

**1 Presentation and proposals of Agros**

**Niki Kafkalia**, from the Emblematic Community, presented the activities:

**The Food Footprint Exhibition**, organized under the auspices of the Cyprus National Commission for UNESCO and presented by the Bank of Cyprus Cultural Foundation, showcased the rich food traditions of the region through a collection of photographs by five photographers. The exhibition, accompanied by various workshops and culinary events, traveled to Greece as part of a broader cross-border project funded by the Creative Europe Programme of the European Union.

**The Annual Little Wellness Hab Camp in Agros was organized in conjunction with World Food Day.** This two-day event emphasized the importance of good health, balanced nutrition, and environmental protection. It offered a range of activities including interactive workshops, lectures, cooking lessons, and nature tours, all aimed at highlighting the connections between diet, wellbeing, and the environment.

**A film produced by the National Commission for UNESCO** was dedicated to celebrating the elements inscribed on the UNESCO representative list of humanity, with a special focus on the Mediterranean diet as practiced in Agros. The film serves as a testament to the enduring legacy and evolving nature of this intangible cultural heritage. There was a proposal to showcase a part of this film during the meeting.

## 2 Presentation and proposals of Koroni

**Jenny Kokromiti - Zacharaki** introduced *The Icon Foundation*, founded in 1995 in Athens by Mr. and Mrs. Maniadakis. The Foundation emphasized its dedication to preserving the heritage of Koroni, aiming to raise public awareness of its cultural importance and bring the spirit of the Peloponnese to the global stage.

Central to the Foundation's initiatives is the **promotion of the Mediterranean Diet (MD)**, rooted in key products like olives and grapes. The "Ten Commandments" of the MD were outlined, advocating for a balanced diet and moderate consumption of wine and sweets.

Despite challenges, including relocating its headquarters to Koroni in 2023, the Foundation successfully organized several initiatives:

- the annual MD Festival in Koroni, collaborative efforts with other Mediterranean communities to promote the MD,
- and educational projects like hosting U.S. students for a course on the Anthropology of Food in Greece.

The Foundation was involved in the **Footprint Project** at the National Museum of Modern Art in Athens.

In conclusion, the presentation stressed the importance of the MD as a symbol of cultural heritage and a sustainable lifestyle. The Foundation's commitment to harmonizing nature and society and promoting sustainable agriculture was acknowledged, along with gratitude for the support and hospitality of the Agros community council.

## 3 Presentation and proposals of Pollica

The mayor Stefano Pisani began by expressing gratitude to **Antonis Tsolakis**, mayor of Agros, for the hospitality, and to all the present for their significant contributions to the network. The focus then shifted to discussing the work done in Pollica, a town in the Cilento area of southern Italy, emphasizing the importance of the UNESCO heritage, particularly in the context of non-material cultural heritage.

In Pollica, efforts were made to transfer knowledge from older to younger generations, with significant projects taking place at the Paideia Campus and transforming the cultural heritage of the Mediterranean diet into a model for territorial development. Pisani illustrated the historical timeline of the Mediterranean diet in the Cilento region, from its ancient Greek origins to modern recognition and studies.

The mayor addressed challenges such as urban migration leading to agricultural decline and the impact of tourism on preserving the authentic spirit of the Mediterranean diet. The importance of finding a common approach for product labeling and preserving the cultural heritage value of the Mediterranean diet was discussed.

The presentation ended with a **call to connect national initiatives to the international context**, underscoring the Mediterranean region's potential to offer new resource usage models. The mayor Pisani emphasized the role of small villages in guiding future sustainable practices and thanked everyone for their participation and attention.

**Sara Roversi** outlined various actions undertaken by Pollica Municipality together with Future Food Institute at different levels.

- the project of redesign the school meal plans, incorporating Mediterranean diet guidelines and local products, and highlighted efforts to scale this model nationally.
- Promotion of local markets in Cilento and support for local farmers' coalitions.
- training youth at the Paideia Campus
- projects with Italian schools about mediterranean diet
- efforts to influence national policy through collaboration with various ministries, particularly in health and agriculture.

At the international level, Pollica was active in promoting the Mediterranean diet. Notably, efforts were made to create a **World Day of Mediterranean Diet** at the United Nations, though this was delayed due to global events.

Sara Roversi shared Pollica's journey to become a **UNESCO Creative City of Gastronomy**, mapping out knowledge keepers in the region. The Living Museum of Mediterranean Diet's role in organizing the national festival and announcing yearly ambassadors of the Mediterranean Diet was highlighted.

Local traditional festivals like *La Sagra del Pesce* in Pioppi were mentioned, which originated from an initiative by Ancel Keys. Ongoing initiatives included various summits, celebrations, and workshops related to the Mediterranean diet.

Efforts in promoting the Mediterranean diet in U.S. high schools and meetings with the FDA were mentioned, along with participation in global events such as the climate summit in Dubai and the G20 focused on well-being and livable environments.

The concept of "*eat well and stay well*" was discussed, focusing on the longevity practices of centenarians in Pollica.

Roversi proposed organizing a **global summit in Naples and Pollica**, focusing on the science and cultural aspects of the Mediterranean diet.

The idea of **nominating global ambassadors** for the Mediterranean diet was introduced, along with initiatives involving schools in emblematic communities and joint research projects on biodiversity and climate change impacts on the Mediterranean diet.

Finally, it was presented the plans for a series of interviews titled '**Voices of the Mediterranean Diet**', a website update for repository creation, and sharing of best practices.

#### 4 Presentation and proposals of Brač and Hvar

**Ada Seferagić** discussed several initiatives and events undertaken by the emblematic communities of Brač and Hvar. These included:

- The Days of the Mediterranean Diet held in May in Hvar, organized in collaboration with the city of Hvar and its tourist board. This event was part of the Flower of Mediterranean Conversation program, inviting residents and guests to discuss the preservation and transmission of the Mediterranean diet heritage.
- In November, there was a presentation of the publication 'Mediterranean Diet of Brač and Hvar', authored by Zorka Bibich and Andrea Matokovich and published by the Ministry of Culture and Media of the Republic of Croatia. This book aimed to encourage knowledge transfer to new generations and preserve the Mediterranean diet as a vital aspect of life, education, and sustainable development along the Croatian Adriatic coast.
- It also marked the 10th anniversary of the Mediterranean Diet's inclusion in the UNESCO list of Intangible Heritage of Humanity.
- In June, the 2nd Cultural and Gastronomic Meeting Mediterranean took place, with Portugal's city of Tavira as the guest country last year and Morocco's city of Chefchaouen this year. Famous Portuguese chef Louis Brito, Moroccan chef Samah Tribech and Croatian chefs David Skoko and Ivan Pažanin represent the cuisines of Croatia, Portugal and Morocco to locals and tourists.
- A project by Bol High School called "**Wild Plate**", focusing on edible plants native to the island of Brač. This project aimed to educate about healthy Mediterranean foods and the importance of preserving the environment. The activities included picking wild plants and preparing traditional and modern dishes with them. A trilingual book documented these recipes and won an award at the Gourmand World Cookbook Awards.

- A highlight of the event was the preparation of traditional sugar candies called “Cukerančići” by Nikolina Rusac, curator of the Ethnographic Museum of Istria Davorka Šajina. These desserts are characteristic of the city of Pazin and signifying the living traditional diet of the Mediterranean.

**Ada Seferagić** concluded by emphasizing the community's pride in being part of the Mediterranean cultural tradition and its inclusion on the UNESCO list of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

## 5 Presentation and proposals of Tavira

**Patricia Vidigal** began by presenting the establishment of a national council in their country, composed of various government departments, councils, and civil society members. This council was tasked with developing a comprehensive vision in the areas of food and nutrition security. One of the main achievements of this council was the creation of a **National Food and Nutritional Security strategy**. This strategy was noted for its analytic approach, aiming to align multiple national and European policies and strategies. A significant goal was to increase awareness among consumers and the general population about the Mediterranean diet as a foundation for sustainable food systems.

Financial support for these initiatives was highlighted, with two primary instruments being the Portuguese Recovery and Resilience Plan and the Portuguese Rural Development Programme 2020. These instruments played a crucial role in advancing the holistic vision to promote the Mediterranean diet, including an ambitious goal to increase its adoption by 20% by 2030.

Patricia Vidigal then mentioned the allocation of €4 million to fund six national research and development projects. These projects focused on promoting a healthy diet and enhancing awareness of the Mediterranean diet.

Additionally, €5 million from the Portuguese Rural Development Program 2020 was used to finance 22 regional projects as part of the National Plan for Balanced and Sustainable Food. These projects, managed by local development agents, aimed to improve food literacy focusing on sustainable food practices, the Mediterranean diet, and waste reduction. These initiatives targeted various communities and educational ecosystems.

The following initiatives were presented:

- **“Prato Certo”**, as well as **several regional videos produced by various organizations from central Portugal, Lisbon, Alentejo, and Algarve.**
- A magazine titled **“Tasting Algarve”** was published, showcasing the best offerings of the Algarve region.
- The itinerant exhibition on the Mediterranean Diet, which attracted close to 11,000 visitors and was showcased in various locations, including the Portuguese Consulate in Seville and a high school in Tavira.

- The creation of videos about traditional fishing instruments and methods as part of a safeguard plan, along with projects like the Tuna Route and Octopus Route.
- Experiential workshops were conducted to pass on traditional knowledge, including workshops on cloth bag making, cane craft, palm craft, and wine tasting. They also mentioned gastronomy workshops and the ninth edition of the Mediterranean Diet Fair held in Tavira, which saw participation from 166 exhibitors and various activities, including crafts, music, dance, and food tastings.

A convivial square was set up at the fair, offering food from Portugal and other communities, with a challenge for restaurants to feature dishes from two different countries. There were also culinary workshops and demonstrations during the fair.

- The monthly brochure '**Elementary to Mesh Food of the Month**,' which provides information on food, traditions, health, sustainability, and zero waste. This brochure was planned to be available in English and French.
- Promotional activities for the Mediterranean Diet were conducted in Seville in partnership with regional entities.
- The logo for the 10th anniversary of the Mediterranean Diet and the Facebook campaign to celebrate the occasion.
- **The Urban Gardens and the Food Gardens project**, aimed at promoting food security and transforming public spaces for food production. Tavira's participation in the European Phoenix Project was also noted.

Patricia Vidigal concluded by announcing the presentation of a report on the activities for safeguarding the Mediterranean Diet from 2018 to 2021 and the new plan for 2023-2027. They extended an invitation to representatives of Spain, Morocco, Italy, Croatia, Greece, and Cyprus for a meeting in 2024 in Tavira.

## 6 Presentation and proposals of Soria

**Carmen Cabrera**, from the Ministry of Culture of Spain, presented activities carried out this year and plans for the coming year. The Ministry works under the framework of the 2003 UNESCO convention and has been involved in multinational nominations, such as transhumance and glass blowing, recommended for inscription in the representative list.

At the national level, the Ministry work on various projects to promote cultural heritage. These include annual meetings, webinars, and the launch of a special website compiling resources related to Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH).

Specific to the Mediterranean diet, the Ministry organized dissemination actions as part of the 20th anniversary of the 2003 convention. These included a photographic exhibition in Madrid and workshops at the National Archaeological Museum focusing on generational renewal and the Mediterranean diet. The workshops involved blindfolded tastings and guided tours related to the diet.

A special publication, "**ICH of UNESCO in Spain**," was launched, featuring information on elements inscribed on the UNESCO list, including the Mediterranean diet.

An exhibition is planned for 2024 at the National Archaeological Museum to explore the roots of the Mediterranean diet through archaeological heritage.

Regarding the Spanish emblematic community, the Ministry expressed regret over the absence of their usual community, Soria, due to changes and retirements. A proposal to rotate the role of emblematic community among different local communities in Spain is being considered, to be discussed in the next meeting of the Historical Heritage Council in spring 2024.

Carmen Cabrera concluded by acknowledging the challenges in maintaining connection with Soria and expressed a commitment to re-establishing active participation with the new emblematic community, ensuring continued involvement in joint activities.

## 7 **Presentation and proposals of Morocco**

**Morocco**, represented by Abdelali El Bakali, took the opportunity to bring greetings from Mayor Safiani, thanking Mayor **Antonis Tsolakis** and his team for their work in this 2023.

## **Next Coordinator of Common Actions**

**The Mayor of Cyprus ends the year of coordination that passes, with the approval of all participants, to Portugal.**

**Niki Kafkalia** concluded by thanking everyone who participated both in person and remotely. The meeting ended with best wishes for Portugal's leadership and an acknowledgment of the importance of continued efforts within the network.

## **Next Steps – Proposals**

Before ending the meeting it was made a short recap on opportunities and proposals for the next year:

1) Invitation of the Emblematic communities to the event: **Mediterranean Diet Global Summit** 14-15 November 2024, taking place at the University Federico II - Naples, 16-17 November 2024 in Pioppi - Pollica - Cilento.

2) Invitation to the **Mediterranean Diet Global Ambassadors** 2024, involving the EC to the Selection Process, and the Award + Gala in November 2024.



**3) School Initiative, involving for each emblematic community:**

1 elementary school and 1 high school, identify focal points for each local school and define a schedule of digital and in-person initiatives where to pilot an initial joint program.

**4) Joint Report & Research initiative:**

- Commitment to the protection of biodiversity and knowledge;
- Impact of Climate Change on Med Diet adoption and Agricultural production.

**5) Voices of the Mediterranean Diet Live:**

Live interviews with testimonials of the Mediterranean diet, knowledge keepers, chefs, scientists, producers from all emblematic communities on Instagram and Youtube.

6) Intergovernmental meeting 2024 will take place in Tavira.

Permanent Secretariat of seven Emblematic Communities of Mediterranean Diet

Pollica, 11 January 2024