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*Programme d'appui à l'initiative*

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## **Thematic regional seminar**

### **Youth, women and rural development: agricultural policies paving the way forward**

**6-7 October 2016, Brussels**

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## **Concept note**

### **1. Introduction**

Launched in 2011 by the European Union (EU) with the support of the International Centre for Advanced Mediterranean Studies in Agronomy – Mediterranean Agronomic Institute of Montpellier (CIHEAM – IAMM), the European Neighbourhood Programme for Agriculture and Rural Development South (ENPARD – South) wishes to reinforce the partnership between the European Union and the Southern Neighbourhood countries in the fields of agriculture and rural policies. The European Commission intends to accompany the partner countries in implementing public policies in response to these issues concerning food security and rural economic diversity while reinforcing global governance on rural and agricultural matters. Within this framework, the ENPARD initiative promotes strong principles in line with a participatory, inclusive and territorialised approach placing social actors at the heart of its action focusing on one key issue: Which policies to support farmers and rural populations?

The mission conducted between 2011 and 2014 allowed the ENPARD South initiative to demonstrate its relevance and benefits for the region while highlighting and defining the real interest for partner countries to intensify the exchange of experiences among themselves and with the EU as well as developing bilateral programmes funded by the EU and by other funding partners in accordance with the ENPARD principles.

In order to promote this initiative and strengthen the partnership concerning rural and agricultural matters, the ENPARD South support programme will endeavour to accompany

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national strategies over the period 2015-2017 in order to sustain and coordinate a regional Mediterranean framework for dialogue and the sharing of experiences concerning agricultural and rural development policies. In particular, these interventions involve numerous Mediterranean Neighbourhood countries that have joined the ENPARD South initiative (Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine and Israel) as well as, in a more ad hoc manner, the Balkans and Turkey.

Within this framework and taking into account of both the exchanges between the partner countries and CIHEAM-IAMM and the issues inherent to the agricultural and rural sector of the Mediterranean region, the seminar that will take place on 6 and 7 October 2016 in Brussels (Belgium) will provide an opportunity for a joint regional work focusing on the theme of "Youth, women and rural development: agriculture policies paving the way forward".

## **2. Expected results and methodology**

### **2.1. Objectives and general results**

The aim of the regional seminar is to promote dialogue and exchanges and the identification of operational policy responses on a theme that is strategic both for agricultural and rural public policies and for the future of the region. In doing so, the seminar is designed to consolidate exchanges between the Mediterranean countries committed to the ENPARD South initiative on existing or potential links between the challenges relating to youth and women and the main challenges to be faced by agriculture and the development of rural areas.

Through this reinforced dialogue and in light of the contributions of the different experts, a common reflection is expected to be undertaken from a regional perspective concerning the different key issues identified. At the same time, shared recommendations on public policies for agricultural and rural development paying more attention to women and youths will also be formulated.

The regional seminar will thus contribute to the development of a framework for regional Mediterranean discussion and a Euro-Mediterranean vision based on the common issues and main orientations to be tackled.

### **2.2. General organisation and methodology**

The regional seminar will unfold over two consecutive days and four discussion panels which will act as a forum for discussion focussing on questions concerning women and youths in rural areas as well as their incorporation in public policies, each from a specific standpoint.

Each discussion panel will be introduced by presentations and testimonies by experts on the main themes, delegates of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development and local stakeholders present during the seminar. The aim of the presentations will be to outline the

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framework of exchanges concerning the issues to be tackled, clarifying fundamental concepts, establishing a common language and providing essential elements to foster the discussions and debates that will take place during the two days. Following these presentations, a debate animated by the CIHEAM-IAMM will be organised with all the participants.

A summary session will be organised towards the end of the seminar with the aim of formalising and documenting the recommendations and shared experiences of the different discussion panels.

### **2.3. Strategic avenues for reflection and direction of debates**

#### **Discussion panel 1 – Attractiveness of agriculture for the younger generations**

Young people in the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean (SEMED) countries, and in particular those living in rural areas, have new expectations with regard to improving their living conditions, notably in economic (improving their purchasing power, saving capacity, etc.) and social terms (social security, job security, recognition of their occupation, etc.). Despite being the main economic activities in rural areas, agriculture as well as the quality of life offered in rural areas is struggling to satisfy these expectations.

Thus, jobs related to agriculture tend to be neglected by youth that prefer to work in other economic sectors (industries, services...) which appear to offer them better recognition (salary, job security, retirement...).

The objective of this first discussion panel will be to identify the causes underlying the lack of attractiveness of the agriculture sector for young rural dwellers and to propose possible actions designed to promote the agricultural professions through innovative public policies.

The question of attractiveness of agriculture to young people – a common issue all over the world – will initially be placed in a broader context than that of the SEMED and the policies implemented, in particular in Europe, will be examined. These elements, along with an analysis of the situation in the partner countries of the ENPARD South initiative, will foster the discussions between the participants and the formulation of common recommendations, in particular focussing on three main questions:

- Why does working in the agriculture sector seem to be less attractive for youth?
- What policies and initiatives have been implemented in Mediterranean countries to reassert the value of jobs in agriculture to young people (success stories and failures)?
- What policies, measures and initiatives could be implemented to make rural areas and jobs in agriculture more appealing to young people? How to encourage the establishment of young farmers, the take-over of farms and the

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development of new production activities? How to improve the image of agriculture to young people and to the population in general?

### Discussion panel 2 – Rural women, a driving force in the field of agriculture

The work of women is essential to agricultural production in the SEMED countries and women make a strong contribution to the income of rural households, through their agricultural and para-agricultural activities. As the rural exodus and migratory phenomena firstly concern men, the participation of women in the rural labour force is constantly increasing and their contribution is becoming essential to national food production and rural economic development. The work done by women nevertheless remains largely unrecognised and under-valued.

This discussion panel will examine the role of women working in the agricultural sector and in rural areas, in light of their activity, their specific contributions and the constraints they face, with a view to fostering considerations relating to the measures to be implemented to ensure enhanced recognition and appreciation of this specific economic and social stakeholder.

The presentations will firstly aim to describe the particularities of women's labour in the SEMED countries agriculture, to define their contributions but also their working conditions. The expositions will also seek to study the socio-economic impact of the specific status devoted to women in agriculture and in rural areas of the SEMED countries. Different potential actions will be considered to better appreciate female labour in rural areas through the testimonies of local stakeholders from countries participating in the ENPARD South initiative. In particular, these presentations will aim to identify the institutional elements to be strengthened with a view to better recognise female labour and reinforce the status of the women in rural areas.

These first elements will foster discussions with audiences focussing on the following themes:

- The role of women in farming (functions, contributions, evolution of their importance as an economic actor in the sector, impact...),
- Reasons for lack of recognition of this reality,
- The policies and measures implemented in the countries to enhance the status and the rural women situation, particularly the women farmers' one, and support women in their achievements (analysing successes as well as failures),
- The policies and measures which should be implemented to better reflect this reality and promote the economic and social role played by women (how to improve the status of women working in agriculture and female farm owners? How to improve recognition and enhancement of the labour of rural women? How to improve women's access to tools and factors of production (land,

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funding, training...) necessary for their emancipation and consolidation/professionalization of their role in the rural areas).

### Discussion panel 3 - Rural women and youth: drivers of innovation and vectors of change

The SEMED countries benefit from the influx of young men and women in the labour market who are actual or potential carriers of new abilities, skills and perspectives.

On the other hand, agriculture is faced with numerous issues which are followed by the evolution of the socio-economic environment (changing consumer expectations, demography, market instability, etc.) and natural environment (climate change, resource degradation, etc.). However, the change required in rural areas does not only apply to agriculture, but also to the capacities of these rural areas to develop a territorial economy based on the diversification of activities, the promotion of their particularities and the integration in their cultural and historical values.

In this respect, in view of the unemployment rate that affects youth, public policies have to be able to meet the expectations and aspirations of young people and the needs of agriculture and rural development, give guidance for new job opportunities and provide a framework that is both stimulating and conducive to rural youth investment.

The debates will firstly strive to share and to analyse the experiences, the initiatives and the dynamics created by rural young people and women and to discuss the supporting testimonies done by the local actors in the Mediterranean countries. The objective will be, through this exchange, to identify a collective knowledge, through the following questions:

- What are the initiatives for rural young people and women in the Mediterranean Countries?
- Who manage these initiatives ? How are they structured?
- What can the local actors (Government, professional organisations, civil society...) do to support these dynamics, to stimulate entrepreneurship initiatives and to put them at the service of the rural development? How can public policies contribute to the development of new professions (extension services specialized on agricultural economy and accounting, on agro-environment, on watershed flows...)

In the Mediterranean countries, local governance reinforcement is undertaken to better take into consideration, the local issues and specific rural contexts in the public policies. The second part of the dialogue will aim to analyse the following questions:

- Which local governance model and which policy strategies to support the initiatives and the changes introduced by rural youth and women?

- Which institutional structures will better identify, develop and support these initiatives and changes at a local scale?

#### Discussion panel 4 – For an analysis of migratory phenomena in light of the challenges of rural development.

The lack of professional opportunities for women and young people in the rural areas of SEMED countries and the search for better living conditions are the root causes of the major population movements, primarily among young people, from the countryside to cities. The economic dynamism of the cities is nevertheless insufficient in light of this massive rural exodus and is unable to absorb this surplus labour.

Against a backdrop of a gradual opening of borders, the trend towards the liberalization of the global economy and its factors (human and capital) and the increasing frustration of young people in SEMED countries in light of the lack of economic opportunities, some of them even hope to emigrate to more distant destinations and Europe would appear to be the most accessible destination.

This final discussion panel will debate the existing relationship between the insufficient attention paid to the young rural population in agricultural and rural development policies and migratory phenomena that result in the rural exodus or international migration. After an introduction of the main factors of internal and external migrations in the Mediterranean countries, a presentation of the links between the migratory phenomenon and the issues of agricultural and rural development will inspire the group reflection. The discussion panel will also place the issues of migration at the heart of discussions focusing on public policies and international cooperation aimed at ensuring the well-being and stabilization of the rural populations within their territories.

The discussions on this theme could in particular focus on the following questions:

- What are the economic and social determinants of the rural exodus?
- Which public policies to revitalize rural areas and to stabilize their local young populations? Which new relations to create between urban, industrial and rural areas to better regulate the migration flows from the countryside to the town?
- How can international cooperation support the SEMED countries efforts in terms of reducing the marginalisation of rural areas and of promoting a more balanced development at the national scale?

#### 2.4. Main outputs of the seminar

It is expected that a number of documents and papers will be produced within the framework of this regional seminar:

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- The present concept note which will be sent to the different member states of the ENPARD South initiative along with the program,
- An additional note intended to introduce the seminar and provide certain key elements, will be prepared before the seminar and sent to the countries concerned,
- A summary of the discussions aimed at capitalizing on the common experiences and reflections as well as formalizing a political argument and recommendations shared by the delegations of the countries present,
- A final note presenting a shared vision of the challenges and current situation facing women and young people in the rural areas of the Mediterranean countries represented,
- An update of this event on the social networks compiled before, during and after the seminar along with communication articles.