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UfM Secretariat and CIHEAM join forces to advance cooperation in Higher Education and Food Security in the Euro-Mediterranean region

Press Release

03 October 2014

- *The Secretary General of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM), Fathallah Sijilmassi, and the Secretary General of the International Centre for Advanced Mediterranean Agronomic Studies (CIHEAM), Cosimo Lacirignola, signed a cooperation agreement to undertake joint initiatives to effectively contribute towards higher education and food security in the Euro-Mediterranean region.*
- *The UfM-CIHEAM project “Higher Education on Food Security & Rural Development” was officially launched.*
- *Within the frame of this project, 20 scholarships have been allocated to Southern Mediterranean female students that are in the four Institutes of CIHEAM for the academic year 2014-2015.*

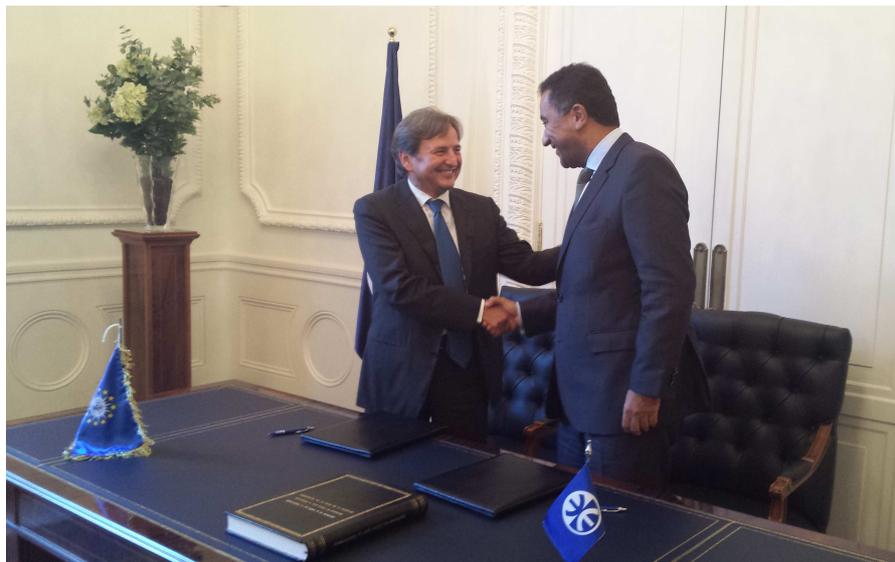
The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), signed today at the headquarters of the UfM Secretariat, provides a solid basis for strengthened collaboration and coordination of mutual efforts in the promotion of the UfM-CIHEAM project “*Higher Education on Food Security & Rural Development*”. The project seeks to enhance the current CIHEAM Master Programmes and advanced training courses for professionals by:

- Increasing the participation of Southern and Eastern Mediterranean students and granting scholarships;
- Developing e-learning initiatives;
- Establishing international mobility initiatives and joint degrees;
- Implementing a Mediterranean Doctoral Platform that provides training and financial support to PhD students;
- Establishing an observatory to promote graduates’ entrepreneurship and employability skills;
- Increasing women’s participation in all programmes.

This joint commitment will also help to accelerate efforts towards implementing common activities and initiatives aimed to advance regional cooperation in the fields of environment, water and research.

“I believe that Food Security, together with Higher Education and mobility related to this sector, are really at the heart of the development of the Euro-Mediterranean region and are crucial for the employability of the youth”, said UfM Secretary General Sijilmassi.

“Our mission is complementary and our action will be stronger if we are able to set up joint concrete projects for Mediterranean people, especially in the field of education, young mobility and scientific diplomacy. Food security issues are strategic in the region and totally linked to green growth and inclusive growth strategies” added CIHEAM Secretary General Lacirignola.



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Furthermore, the meeting provided an opportunity to discuss specific actions to be undertaken in view of the upcoming Euro-Mediterranean Conference on Agriculture, which will be held in Palermo, Italy, on 28 November, as well as the 11th CIHEAM Ministerial Meeting, which is set to take place in Lisbon, Portugal, in September 2015.