



Centre International de Hautes Etudes Agronomiques Méditerranéennes

CIHEAM BARI

press release

14 June 2023

## **PUGLIA'S BIODIVERSITY ON THE MEDITERRANEAN TABLES**

**CIHEAM Bari 16 June, 7 p.m.**

*Puglia's Biodiversity on the Mediterranean Tables* is the title of the event that will take place on 16 June at CIHEAM Bari's Cosimo Lacirignola Campus, starting at 7 p.m. Nearly one hundred students from across the world will cook traditional dishes of their home countries to showcase the great wealth of Puglia's plant genetic resources, originating from the centuries-long interactions of local peoples and territories with the rest of the Mediterranean.

The culinary performance is being organised as part of the activities of the *Fruizione della Biodiversità* (Biodiversity exploitation) Project, funded by the Italian Ministry of Universities and Research (MUR) and involving CIHEAM Bari, Centro di Ricerca Sperimentazione e Formazione in Agricoltura Basile Caramia (CRSFA), Politecnico di Bari and Fondazione Istituto Tecnico Superiore (ITS) Agroalimentare Puglia. The project seeks to strengthen the technical and scientific culture, disseminate knowledge of biodiversity and develop greater awareness of the need to preserve native products, drawing on scientific research.

By adopting an experiential approach intended for all, the aim is to ensure that the huge preserved genetic and cultural heritage is easily accessible to a wider public, increasing awareness not only among the younger generations, but also among the population at large of the social, economic and scientific value of restoring, preserving and enhancing plant genetic resources.

Protecting biodiversity is a priority that requires close involvement and commitment of institutions and policymakers, not only due to its nature and scientific value, but also for its demographic and anthropological impact. During the culinary performance, a jury composed of Maurizio Raeli, Director of CIHEAM's Italian Institute, Rosanna Cardone CRSFA Locorotondo, Vito Gallo, Politecnico di Bari, Luigi Ricciardi, Soil, Plant and Food Sciences Department, University of Bari, Maryrosa Spacciante, president of Slow Food Bari Convivium, Puglia Region's executives Luigi Trotta, Agrifood supply chain competitiveness division and Salvatore Infantino, Plant Health Observatory, Vito Nicola

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Savino and Giuseppe Maggi, Fondazione ITS Agroalimentare Puglia, Mimmo Losacco, chef at CIHEAM Bari, will evaluate the Mediterranean dishes prepared by the students.

Plant biodiversity is an invaluable asset for any country, but in recent times the number of cultivated varieties has been declining dramatically due to the growing planting specialisation and the spread of monocropping, leading to the extinction of three out of four fruit varieties over the last century, the loss of precious plant genetic resources developed over several thousand years of evolution and the risk of extinction of many fruit and vegetable varieties. Beyond raising awareness, the event is set to spotlight the great wealth of Puglia's plant genetic resources.

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