

World Olive Day 2025 – Córdoba, Spain

Excellencies, Ministers,
Mr. Jaime Lillo, Executive Director of the IOC,
Honourable Mayors and Authorities of Córdoba and Andalusia,
Distinguished Ambassadors, Delegates and Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a pleasure—and truly a privilege—to join you today in Córdoba to celebrate World Olive Day. Few places in the world embody the culture, depth, and history of the olive tree as profoundly as this region. I extend my sincere thanks to the Government of Spain and to the International Olive Council for bringing us together in this city where agriculture, heritage, and Mediterranean identity come together so beautifully.

As President of CIHEAM, I wish to reaffirm our unwavering commitment to the olive sector—one of the most meaningful expressions of who we are as Mediterranean peoples. The olive tree is not only our institutional symbol; it is also our shared story: a story of resilience, wisdom, peace, and continuity that has shaped our region for millennia. It defines our landscapes, enriches our cuisine, sustains rural livelihoods, and connects our cultures through a heritage that is both ancient and alive.

Olive oil and table olives are far more than agricultural products. They are the golden thread that binds together the Mediterranean basin. They reflect a way of life anchored in balance, simplicity, and authenticity. At the heart of the Mediterranean Diet—recognized by UNESCO as an Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity—olive oil continues to inspire the world for its contribution to human health, well-being, and longevity.

At CIHEAM, we place excellence and quality at the centre of our work—from the grove to the table. Our mission stands on three pillars, each essential to the future of the olive sector:

1. Education & Training – Building the Next Generation

We offer 22 postgraduate programmes across our Institutes, and we take particular pride in the long-standing specialized Master's programme developed with the University of Córdoba and CIHEAM Zaragoza. This programme has shaped generations of experts in olive growing, oil production, and quality assurance.

Across Bari, Chania, Montpellier, and Zaragoza, our Institutes continue to provide training and capacity building to ensure that the next generation of professionals is equipped for the challenges of climate change and evolving markets.

2. Research & Innovation – Science Supporting Sustainability

CIHEAM is deeply engaged in advanced research on sustainable practices, climate resilience, efficient water use, and the conservation of olive genetic resources. These efforts fully align with the principles outlined in the Córdoba Declaration.

Our work seeks solutions that safeguard biodiversity, improve water management, and ensure that olive production remains sustainable despite increasing environmental pressures.

3. Policy Dialogue & Cooperation – Transforming Knowledge into Action

We bring science into policy.

We support governments, facilitate data sharing, and promote cooperation across the Mediterranean.

Our objective is clear: to accelerate innovation and help countries harmonize quality standards, open markets, and strengthen consumer trust in the authenticity and excellence of our olive products.

Today, the olive sector stands at a crossroads. Climate change, market volatility, and the rising expectations of consumers require approaches that no country can address alone. This is the

moment to deepen multilateral cooperation—to strengthen alliances, share expertise, and invest in joint research.

CIHEAM stands ready to serve as a hub for this collaboration. By connecting our Institutes, governments, producers, researchers, and partners, we can reinforce standards, promote excellence, and ensure that olive oil continues to be recognized worldwide for its authenticity and value.

Allow me to conclude with a conviction that guides our work:
The olive tree is not only part of our past—it is a responsibility for our future.

Let us protect this shared heritage, safeguard the livelihoods of our farmers, reinforce sustainability in every part of the value chain, and ensure that the olive tree continues to stand as a symbol of peace, prosperity, and resilience for the generations to come.

Thank you for the honour of being part of this celebration.