

**"ELEA: PRODUCING AND CONSUMING OLIVE OIL"
A CONTRIBUTION TO EUROPEAN
CULINARY CULTURAL HERITAGE**

CONFERENCE REPORT – MAY 1999

ERICARTS

Dahlmannstr. 26, D - 53113 Bonn
Tel. (+49-228) 2420996/7 * Fax 241318
e-mail: info@ericarts.org

Table of Contents

I. Foreword - Back to the Senses	3
II. The ELEA Project.....	4
III. Food as an Element of Cultural Heritage and Identity - A few defining words.....	5
IV. Culinary culture.....	7
V. Beyond National Borders – The Culinary Cultural Environment of Olive Oil Production and Consumption in Europe	9
Beyond the eastern Mediterranean region.....	9
Evidence through cultural artefacts:	11
Consumption and uses of olive oil over the centuries	11
Back to the basics: the dawn of a new age of nutritional enlightenment for Europe?.....	13
VI. Tradition as a Basis for Future Standards of Production?	14
An overview of production processes.....	14
Merging issues of quality with productivity	15
VII. Authenticity, Terroir and Discerning Tastes – A Return to Regionalisation in the Face of Globalisation	16
IX. EU Agricultural Policies – Where is Culture?.....	18
Lack of consideration for cultural aspects in the development of key Community agriculture policies and strategies.....	19
Some cultural consequences of key Community agriculture policies	20
Laying down of special measures for olive oil production?	20
A contradiction of policy objectives?	23
X. Concluding Remarks: Olive Oil as a Legacy of the Mediterranean, European or World Cultural Heritage?	23
XI. Declaration/Conclusions	24
Appendix I - Further Reading	28

ELEA: Producing and Consuming Olive Oil: A Contribution to European Cultural Heritage

I. Foreword - Back to the Senses

The mission of a culinary culture as described by Alberto Capatti, (Italy) is to impart a new discipline that can put an end to both the standardisation and the chaos caused by commercialisation and which can initiate a "return to the senses". Food is a cultural resource which brings people together while at the same time reflecting their heritage, manners, and way of life. Yet, as the economics of food culture and trade make advances on political agendas, artisan production techniques, savoir-faire, authenticity, terroir and discerning palates – essential for maintaining or raising the quality of food stuffs in Europe– face relegation to the hall mark of our collective memory. The latter is especially true in the face of new techniques and standards set by multinational companies, as witnessed in, for example, Andalucia, Spain.

It is clear that our study of the relationship between food and culture or of culinary cultures is not the only one. In fact, material available on these subjects is wide-ranging and prolific: food as popular culture (eg. eating habits and disorders), food scares (eg. BSE or GMF), food as a global industry dictating lifestyle changes, nutritional and ecological aspects, as an indicator of social processes, as a tool for peace or about food as a means to understand collective identities or the cultural, social or symbolic meanings within different societal environments.

Our approach is about all of these and other issues together, and none of them specifically. It is about a process which begins with culture and ends in policy making; and all the steps in between. We recognise the increasing need to balance unsustainable consumerism, mass cultural consumption with freedom of expression, freedom of choice and the benefits of co-operation, appreciation of non-tangible aspects of every day life, community and conviviality. Our aims centre around the preservation and protection of our human treasures¹ comprising not only our cultural heritage, but our identities (cultural diversity). We oppose standardisation, crowding out of local producers from their own markets by multinational corporations or by state intervention. We support ecological production, healthy lifestyles, creativity and the possibility for diversity to coexist, in short: the integration of the cultural dimension into economic affairs, trade and agricultural policies.

¹ Dimitrije Vujadinovic, Director, The Blue Dragon and ERICArts Balkan regional co-ordinator, in his presentation, "Can principles of Identity, Diversity and Culinary Culture be Merged", Rethymnon, Crete. In his opinion, human treasures are cultural heritage, which belongs to mankind, comprising human values and demonstrating cultural diversity.

II. The ELEA Project

Under the Raphael programme for 1998-99 partners ERICArts, ICUSEM and Finn-EKVITT were awarded a contract by the European Commission to undertake the project: ELEA. Producing and Consuming Olive Oil – A contribution to European Culinary Cultural Heritage. The main objectives of this project were to:

- demonstrate food as an element of cultural heritage and identity;
- promote the idea of culinary culture as an important element of European identity and heritage and;
- examine ways for culinary culture to be integrated into agri-food and cultural policies.

The case of olive oil production and consumption as a significant element of Mediterranean/European cultural heritage and identity was used as a means to illustrate how these three main objectives could be accomplished.

The project was undertaken in three phases during 1998-99 consisting of a preparatory meeting, a multidisciplinary workshop and exhibition and a final project meeting to discuss the results of the workshop and finalise the recommendations. As a multidisciplinary endeavour, all together over 70 experts from all parts of Europe and in particular from the Mediterranean, specialising in cultural heritage, culinary culture, archaeology, ethnology, anthropology, economics, policy making, political science, social and cultural studies participated throughout the various stages of the project, in particular during the various field studies, lectures and debates held during the workshop in Rethymnon. Discussions were also held with consumers, producers and administrators.

More specifically, the project's ultimate goal was to address questions on the role food/cuisine plays in the culture of everyday life and how it contributes to social cohesion, cultural change, ecological progress and economic development in Europe. Production and consumption patterns were examined from a socio-cultural and historic point of view with particular reference to the differences between North and South Europe. The ultimate task was to make suggestions for political measures in view of European integration including, for example, bringing together agricultural and food initiatives to those related to cultural identity, heritage and development.

From the 29th October to 1 November 1998, experts from the Mediterranean, Western, Central and Northern regions of Europe were invited to reflect on these issues in Rethymnon, Crete. This workshop was organised² by ICUSEM (Athens) in co-operation with ERICArts (Bonn) and Finn-EKVITT (Helsinki) and according to the Mayor of Rethymnon, Mr. Archondakis, who supported our endeavour, it was "the first European olive oil debate to be hosted on the island of Crete".

The workshop programme consisted not only of presentations by experts from various olive oil producing countries in Europe, but of fact finding missions with local farmers, artisans, scientists and public authorities. Field studies, lectures and discussions were held at the

² The project partners would like to extend a special word of thanks to Dr. Effie Karpondini-Dimitriadi, Mrs. Louisa Karapidaki and Mrs. Maria Tsirou for organising the workshop in Crete. Special mention also goes to the Mayor of Rethymnon for hosting the workshop as well as to the Olive Institute in Chania, and to the local community, in particular, Mr. Toupoyiannis, Dr. Kambourakis, Mr. Psillakis and Christine Lacroix and George Dimitriadis, for imparting their knowledge and sharing their time and resources with the participants.

historical monastery of Arcadi, the site of an ex-monastery dependency (originally an oil press), the Venetian village turned Olive Museum in Kapsaliana, the village of Maroulas, the Olive Institute and the Mediterranean Agronomic Institute (MAICH).

The workshop was organised according to four main themes including:

- Food as an Element of Cultural Heritage and Identity (conceptual linkages)
- Beyond National Borders: consumption and production of olive oil in Europe (including its history and evolution, regional/local case studies from the North and South of Europe were presented. Taste testings of oils and traditional foods and an exhibition)
- Tradition as a Basis for Future Standards of Production
- EU Agricultural Policies – where is the cultural dimension?

One of the main "products" of the workshop is a "declaration" through which the participants made suggestions for political measures in view of European integration, including for example, bringing together agricultural and food initiatives to those related to cultural identity, heritage and development.

The main lines of discussion from the project in general, and the workshop in Rethymnon, in particular, are presented here in this report. The partners have attempted to capture the main observations and conclusions taken over the past months and have organised them through a thematic approach to this report. This means that full reproductions of texts are not included, yet, their ideas form the basis of the text. It is the organisers intention to use it as a tool to advance our mission to ensure systematic consideration of cultural issues and dimensions in diverse policy areas including economic affairs, trade and agricultural production.

Before we go any further, we must make clear what we mean by culture, cultural heritage, cultural identity and culinary culture? How can these concepts be linked to processes of development, economic or otherwise? What is the relevance of all of this to cultural development, policy making to local producers, to their communities?

III. Food as an Element of Cultural Heritage and Identity - Some Defining Words

In the latter half of the 20th century there has been a growing flirtation with broadening the concept of culture beyond the arts, beyond its use as a marker of high and low sociopolitical positioning, beyond grandiose paradigms or ideological movements which reinforce the latter. In recent decades there has been a "return to the senses", to the anthropological, sociological and archaeological roots of culture. Traditional concepts of culture, dealing with the arts in the narrow sense, addressing only the "arts" or "artists", are being expanded by notions that other dimensions of society including economics, politics, social organisation, law or education processes are indivisibly linked to culture and its development. In this case, in our broadening conceptual boundaries of culture, we can respect both the role of true avant-garde or "research" artists while at the same time, acknowledging that culture, defined as a "way of life", shapes many different societal activities from journalism to eco-farming and from multimedia production to pre-school cultural education. This is, of course, where "food" comes in as well as ways and means to produce, prepare and consume it.

Culture is also a multi-layered, interactive process which is not only effected by societal institutions or activities, but affects, undermines and reinforces them. If we view society as

an interdependent entity, any action by, (eg. cultural processes) or on any of its constituent parts (for example one or many of the societal institutions/activities) will affect other elements of the system (eg. societal environment). Many societies are, for example, faced with homogenising, integrating and fragmenting forces which effect the heart and entities of their environments. Monetary globalisation and a new localism, maintaining a liveable "eco-system", changing communication practices and applications and new patterns of the production, distribution and consumption of information, grassroots movements promoting concepts of a "civil or cultural society" are just some of the results of these forces which, in turn effect, undermine and reinforce them.

Lying at the heart of our societal environments are fundamental universal principles or human (cultural) rights such as equality, diversity, transparency, creativity, the freedom to decide what we have reason to value or to define our own basic needs and identity, our "way of life". According to Dimitrije Vujadinovic, ERICArts co-ordinator in the Balkan region, in his paper, "Can principles of Identity, Diversity and Culinary Culture be Merged", such principles are being shaken up as we strive to determine who we are, where we come from and where we are going. In our quest for identity, we are situated in a complex web of beliefs, norms, institutions and traditions of various systems of rules and values which face existential collision with complex economic, political and communication challenges. Eating and drinking habits are only one, but an extremely important factor in this research, as we will see later.

Cultural identity is a "fluid, volatile concept", which is embodied, is expressed or represented through a wealth of tangible and intangible cultural heritage resources and found at the base of the collective memory of communities. Cultural identities are formed on the basis of distinct coded, expressive modes of behaviour or communication, including language, dress, food manners, traditional kinship patterns, institutions, religion and/or the arts which are passed on over a number of generations. Beyond language and values, intangible heritage also includes culinary traditions, conviviality and creativity. Together, all of these resources can be shaped by a legacy of intellectual heritage, knowledge embodied in skills and shared within families, groups, communities, neighbourhoods, nations, regions and within ideologies. All of these elements forming cultural identity or identities find themselves caught in a dichotomy between permanent pressures for a) change caused by ecological, migrational, political, economic, technological, cognitive factors and b) protecting or preserving their "authenticity". Also in this respect, food can be considered a very sensitive indicator for such pressures and counteractions.

As put forward by Vujadinovic, sustainability of identities is, in fact, dependent on the constant striving of social groups to reaffirm their own identity and the will of "others" to allow them to flourish. At the end of the twentieth century, we have seen how cultural identities have been manipulated in order to fulfil "others" will for power, how they develop through new frames of social relations influenced by political and economic agendas or through the direct repression of a minority by a majority and how they are perceived and labelled by others.

IV. Culinary Culture

When I open the decanter in my cellar, the whole place fills up with a wonderful smell ...strong, pervading, spicy; and the colour: green, opaque. Do you know that fresh olive oil is the food of the gods!!

Yes, Evangelos, that's how it is. I'm not one of your new cooks who don't even know the difference between parsley and celery, or between the unwatered and the watered tomatoes! I wonder will any of my children take after me"

M. Lambraki, (Writer, Heraklion) taken from her paper, "The Olive Oil Cake Man: Olive Oil and its Use from the 14th-19th Century".

"Culinary culture" is not a trivial topic as pointed out by Professor Andreas Wiesand, Zentrum für Kulturforschung (Bonn) in his contribution about the aims and steps of the European Food Project³ which is being co-ordinated by ERICArts. Culinary culture is in fact, the product of several hundred years of cultural change, appropriation, expansion and domination. Our culinary needs are closely tied to early childhood experiences and identity formation, transferred in a complex way from generation to generation⁴. Not only tied to heritage, food has also played a prominent part in the development of cultural identities including - on the one hand - the formation of national or regional "we-images", used as symbols of collective pride and identity and - on the other - negative stereotyped "they-images" of other cultures (as can be seen in such labels as "Frogs", "Krauts", "Spaghettifresser", "Limeys", and so on).

More recently we can observe that food culture is no longer bound to a given geographical location. Rather it has become an important link among societies which have normally been divided by their manners, languages and/or religions. Numerous examples can be found in the export of some distinct food (and agricultural) traditions, reaching well beyond national borders - like in the Mediterranean or the Nordic countries and regions - which has aroused interest in "their" eating and drinking patterns.

This is not to say that food and culinary cultures would have remained immune to abrupt structural changes had there not been, for example, an increase in tourism. According to the paper presented by, Dr. Ritva Mitchell and Susan Heiskanen (ERICArts/FINN-EKVITT Helsinki), there have been three main sources of such changes historically: the world food markets, the birth of food and nutrition sciences and government interference - and their influences have become increasingly interactive. Others, of course, include population growth, the process of aculturalizations and climate changes. The introduction of new crops, cultivates, new cattle breeds for meat or milk production and new techniques of agricultural production have altered not only local food production but also world market prices, which, in turn, can have radical and long-lasting effects in the culinary cultures all over the world. Similar effects, precipitated by new technologies and management and marketing methods have been caused by changes in whole and retail sale distribution and catering. Although the

³ This project was originated by Professor Wiesand together with Professor Stephen Mennell ("All Manners of Food") in Budapest in 1989.

⁴ As described in the paper presented by Dr. Ritva Mitchell and Susan Heiskanen, "Finnish Culinary Culture Meets Olive Oil: An Intricate Circumstantial Rendez-Vous".

relationship between food and health has been known since the rise of culinary cultures, scientific research, proving or proposing new nutrition-related health problems and solutions, has altered world food and culinary cultures. Government - and increasingly also world organisations and regimes - have tried, and often also succeeded in, guiding trade and controlling food-related health and nutrition problems, many of which derive their source in the reckless use of new discoveries of science and new applications of technologies.

Fast and "Slow" Food

As we have seen there are many component parts which comprise the environment of culinary culture; from heritage to identity, to food traditions reaching well beyond its locality, health, world trade and government regulations. They all affect the larger scope of culinary culture, as well as the fundamental principles which we have adopted in our conference, namely, artisan production techniques, savoir-faire, authenticity, terroir and discerning palates. Such principles have also been at the heart of some of the substantial civil society and private sector efforts such as the Arcigola Slow Food global movement or efforts made by Gambero Rosso, indicating a growing public demand for cultural considerations to be integrated into agricultural, culinary, and social policies or other initiatives.

"Slow Food"⁵ is an initiative which originated in Italy in 1986 is directed by Carlo Petrini (Italy). Its guiding principles have remained "conviviality and the right to taste and pleasure". Key objectives of Slow Food are:

- to disseminate and stimulate knowledge of material culture (every product reflects the scents of its place of origin and its age-old production rites and techniques),
- to preserve the agroindustrial heritage (defending the biodiversity of crops, craft-based food production and traditions) and
- to protect the historical, artistic and environmental heritage of traditional places of gastronomic pleasure (cafés, cake shops, inns, craft workshops and so on).

Below we will illustrate the interaction between some of the main component parts of the culinary culture environment and our stated principles, using the case of olive oil to illustrate their interconnectedness. In addition we will examine the factors influencing their development including government regulation and in turn their effects on culinary culture such as changing lifestyles, ecological movements, return to the basics -tradition as a standard for quality, etc.

⁵ The movement is animated by famous writers, film directors and painters as well as gastronomic experts, wine-growers, journalists and politicians whose emphasis is on regaining a new, taste- and quality-based gastronomic culture, not only in Europe but around the world. Their *raison d'être* has inspired movements towards standards such as a "Denomination of Protected Origin for the European Community" or the universal adoption of ecological production methods. Today, more and more *farmers and food producers* have started to improve agricultural methods and ways of food-processing which have ultimately influenced marketing concepts in food-trade. The "success-stories" of some small- and medium-sized European winemakers, whose rigid quality standards and re-discovery of old grape varieties resulted have increased their economic returns, can demonstrate how these and similar changes may influence our habits and our environment.

V. Beyond National Borders – the Culinary Cultural Environment of Olive Oil Production and Consumption in Europe

Some basic production and consumption facts:

- According to the Olive Institute in Chania, 77% of the olive oil in the world is produced in Europe, 75% of world consumption is in Europe.
- Spain produces the majority of the world's olive oil
- In the last 40 years, Crete has increased its rate of production by 4 times
- Highest per capita olive oil consumption: Greece (23kg per capita) then Italy and Spain
- The steepest rise in consumption rates over the past five years has been in Austria with an increase of 15 times the amount consumed in 1994-5 and projected for 1998-9.
- Rises in consumption rates over the past ten years (1987-1997): in Ireland increase of 8 times, in Denmark 7.5 times, in the UK 5 times and in Germany 4 times
- Household consumption of olive oil in Finland in 1997 is 26.6% of all fats and other oils
- In 1994/5 Italy exported 20% of the oil it produced while importing oil from countries such as Greece (80,000 tonnes) and Spain in order to meet its own market demands.
- Spain has the most olive trees in Europe followed by Italy, Portugal, France and Greece
- Countries to which Spain exports the majority of its olive oil: Italy, USA, Canada

Olive oil is a cultural good which expresses the tradition and identity of the region or community both producing and consuming it. The mythology, religions, cultural and culinary identity of the Mediterranean have been strongly connected with the production and consumption of olive oil during the last 6,000 years and therefore it can be considered to be an influential component part of the cultural heritage of the Mediterranean. As stated by Mr. N. Michelakis, Director of the Olive Institute, Chania, Greece is at the cross roads where three continents meet – Europe, Asia and Africa – and therefore is undoubtedly at the epicentre of the history of olive oil production and consumption. Although the homeland of the olive tree has not been officially claimed, it has been accepted that the olive tree originates from eastern Mediterranean countries and later expanded to countries around the Mediterranean Sea.

*Beyond the eastern Mediterranean region*⁶

The olive tree, especially the *Olea Europea* variety, was first found in Asia Minor in the Neolithic period (6000 – 3000 BC). The first evidence of olive cultivation was in the 3rd millennium BC in Crete. Although it is unknown when olives were first domesticated, there is evidence to suggest that it was during the early Old Palace period - mainly in the period of Achaean sovereignty after 1450 BC, and during the Mycenaean period in mainland Greece, in the 14th and 13th century BC. The earliest records of olive oil as a cooking medium used outside of the eastern Mediterranean region were during the first millennium BC in Spain and Portugal.

There were several means developed over the centuries which enabled the cultivation or consumption of olive oil beyond Crete and throughout the Mediterranean region. The first large quantities of olive oil exports and trade routes were established during periods of foreign

⁶ Paragraphs i) – iii) in this section of the report are indebted to the text of Dr. Effie Karpondini-Dimitriadi (ICUSEM, Athens)

occupation in countries around the Mediterranean basin, eg. during the Venetian and then Turkish occupation of the island of Crete or during the Roman occupation in Spain, when oil was sent back home. Later on, olive trees, symbolising peace and the friendship of Greece were exchanged among countries in the Mediterranean, such as with France, when Greece brought the first olive trees to France as a present to Gaul.

In modern times, new opportunities arose for olive oil distribution to extend beyond its regional and cultural borders to "butter-belts" in the North of Europe. Such expeditions began when university students, civil servants, intellectuals and writers from the "North" began to not only travel abroad, but to live for periods of time in main European cities and arts centres, eg. Finnish artists. In other "butter" consuming regions such as the North of Spain, it was via State regulations imposed during the Franco regime that their eating habits and gastronomic culture changed.

Table 1: Olive Oil in the European Community, Consumption / 1000 metric tonnes (International Olive Oil Council, February 1999)

	87-88	88-89	89-90	90-91	91-92	92-93	93-94	94-95	95-96	96-97	97-98	98-99
"South"												
France	26.5	24.2	27.0	26.0	34.8	43.8	43.7	41.6	48.5	58.8	71.5	77.0
Italy	680.0	630.0	626.0	540.0	630.0	640.0	600.0	600.0	600.0	640.0	650.0	650.0
Greece	206.0	207.0	211.0	204.0	203.0	197.0	196.0	197.0	230.0	238.0	240.0	240.0
Spain	420.4	395.9	358.1	394.1	418.7	421.4	421.0	420.0	352.1	470.2	500.0	500.0
Portugal	35.0	35.0	34.5	27.0	45.0	49.9	59.0	56.0	58.4	62.0	62.0	58.5
"Central/ West"												
Germany	4.8	6.0	6.5	10.3	9.8	10.5	13.4	16.9	16.4	16.1	19.5	20.5
Nether-lands	0.9	0.9	1.1	1.0	1.5	2.0	3.2	3.9	2.3	3.5	2.9	3.2
Austria								0.2	1.0	2.6	3.0	3.0
Ireland	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.5	0.8	0.9	1.0	1.0	1.3	1.4	1.5	1.6
UK	5.0	4.9	6.5	6.8	9.4	12.0	16.8	17.3	15.0	25.1	27.5	27.5
"North"												
Finland								0.3	0.2	0.5	0.6	0.6
Sweden								1.0	1.2	2.2	2.3	2.5
Denmark	0.4	0.7	0.6	0.7	1.2	1.2	2.5	1.1	1.1	2.3	3.0	3.0
TOTAL	2380.7	1306.5	1305.7	1214.5	1356.8	1382.6	1361.5	1363.2	1334.0	1529.7	1591.3	1595.4

It is also important to take into account the representation of olive oil in today's cook books, food reports, and other documentary material, the establishment of olive museums, olive oil festivals (as the one co-ordinated by participant Rene Graz, Olive Museum Nyons) and cultural tourism activities (eg. olive routes in Provence), the increase of restaurants offering "ethnic or foreign cuisine" (which in fact are outnumbering those with indigenous menus), culinary movements such as "Slow Food" as means which have contributed to spreading the wings of the olive oil culture and its heritage beyond its original cultivators in Crete centuries ago.

Evidence through cultural artefacts

The production, consumption and other uses of olive oil have been well documented in poems, crafts and works of art. According to the research and presentation made by Dr. Effie Karpondini-Dimitriadi, ICUSEM, Athens, the most important sources in reconstructing the story of olive oil in prehistoric Aegean times is the texts of the linear B tablets (evidence of the writing system of Knossos). With these tablets, the olive tree and olive oil acquired a specific name in the Greek language and also an identity as an important element of the palace economy, in daily and in religious life. In addition, the relief wall painting of the "Sacred Grove and Dance" hanging from the north entrance of the palace of Knossos testifies to the fact that the Minoans exploited the olive -tree from the dawn of the Palace period. Coupled with the silver rhyton from Mycenae, we have evidence of at least two olive groves existing in the 16th c. BC.

Other representations of olives, the olive tree or olive oil are found in Minoan and Mycenaean art, iconography of the olive in Aegean art and inscriptions of olive leaves in the gold pendants found Mochlos' tomb. The first painting of an olive tree is thought to be the one produced by Minoan artists at the beginning of the New Palace period (1700 BC). While abstracted, the main features of the tree are recognisable. Other early paintings include a particular one of olives set in a rocky landscape which is apparently preserved by some fragmentary wall-paintings of the 13th c. BC from the palace at Pylos.

Olive oil has also woven its way through myths and legends, especially those of the Egyptian, Greek and Roman eras. Biblical mythology recounts that the olive tree was the first to emerge from the flood, a sign to Noah that human life could restart on Earth. Roman legend tells the story of Hercules who struck the ground with his mighty club, from which sprung the olive tree. Of course, one can not forget the well-known etiological Greek legend of the contest between the goddess Athena and Poseidon to establish which of the two should have control over the land of Attica. The judges of the contest were the gods of Olympus who demanded from each of the contestants a gift for humanity – the most useful would win the land. Athena's gift was the primitive olive-tree that sprang up on the Acropolis rock which, in the end, was the successor against the sea-water that gushed from Poseidon's trident. Hence, Athena was named the goddess of Athens. This legend is first attested to in Herodotus (8. 55) but undoubtedly reflected earlier beliefs.

Consumption and uses of olive oil over the centuries

Around 700-500 BC, Dioscorides and Diocles reported the therapeutic properties of olive oil while Anaxagoras, Empedocles investigated its historic route. As Aristotle elevated olive cultivation to a science, Solon (639-559 B.C) legislated the first olive tree protection law prohibiting the cutting of more than two trees a year in each olive grove and sentencing to

death those who cut a cultivated olive tree. Olive oil has always held a special place in the Orthodox religion as well as for the Christians (olive trees still stand today in the Garden of Gethsemane and in the slopes of the Mount of Olives where Christ ascended into heaven. For the Christians, the olive fruits symbolise Christ's tears). Throughout the ages the olive, its tree and oil have been a symbol for peace, love, knowledge, health, power and beauty. It has been an essential part of several rites of passage including baptism.

During the classical period, olive oil was used for:

- Daily consumption
- For export from Attica, both before and after Solon
- Personal cleanliness – the main consumers were men and boys rather than women as men tended to wash themselves more frequently (women's use is documented in vase paintings).
- Sports – custom of young athletes anointing their bodies with oil before daily exercise in the gymnasium, before training and contests (evidence comes from ancient writers and an abundance of depictions on black and red figure vases). The important association of olive oil with athletics was demonstrated in the Olympic games. The prize given to the victors and runner-ups of the great festival held in honour of the goddess Athena was olive oil, presented to them in large painted clay vases (Panathenaic amphoras). The amphoras were about .60 - .70 meters high and .35-.45 in diameter, holding about 35-40 kilos of olive oil.
- In the production of perfumes. Passages in Theophrastos (*Peri Osmon* IV) and later in Dioskourides (12, 41-135, 13, 1-25) recorded that olive oil was used in recipes to produce aromatic oil.
- For medicinal purposes. In the Hippocratic code, more than sixty medicinal uses of olive-oil can be found. Olive-oil appears to have been particularly recommended for skin problems and for contraceptive purposes. Aromatic oil was also important in the treatment of gynaecological complaints.
- As a beauty treatment. Evidence found in as early as Homer's *Iliad* (X 577) in which Odysseus and Diomedes first wash themselves with hot water and then anoint themselves with oil, and later in the *Odyssey* (iv, 49) Telemachos, on his first night in Sparta, first washes with water and then anoints himself with olive-oil. The use of olive-oil to [brighten] clothing is first mentioned in the *Odyssey* (xviii 595-596, xiv, 185).
- Olive-oil was also used in burial rituals. Women washed the body of the dead person and then anointed it with olive-oil or aromatic oil.

In the 19th century, olive oil became part of the everyday diet of farmers and country workers and olive oil consumption became regulated according to the season. The dietary chart of the Greek Royal Navy reveals the importance of olive-oil in the sailor's diet, with no substitutes allowed. Schools and orphanages of Athens also used only olive oil until around 1870 when butter began to make its appearance among the Greek urban middle classes. (coincidentally, it was around this time that olive oil was being imported to "butter-oriented cultures", specifically Finland, mainly through German and Russian routes and Greek Orthodox Monasteries located in Finland).

Today, the use of olive oil is as multidimensional. In some countries, such as Western or Northern Europe, it is viewed as a luxury product, mostly used for cooking. In other regions, such as in the south of France, local farmers have been able to resurrect the medicinal uses of the oil in products such as soap from Marseille (containing 72% oil), as well as in cosmetics

and pharmaceutical products. Herb teas made from olive leaves have also become marketable items.

Back to the basics: the dawn of a new age of nutritional enlightenment for Europe?

One of the main uses of olive oil today is for human consumption. According to Dr. Ritva Mitchell and Susan Heiskanen, (ERICArts/FINN-EKVITT, Helsinki) in the early 20th century, a new age dawned upon us – the "age of nutritional enlightenment". Conscious efforts were made to shift eating habits of the general population towards a more health-oriented and sound direction. On national levels, for example in Finland, the state involvement led to a campaign through the school system, agricultural societies, women's organisations, folk schools, guide books, and articles as well as the media towards more healthy eating patterns. People were taught to grow and eat vegetables, the dangers of obesity and the excessive use of fats. Coming from a "butter-culture", such campaigns had a startling impact not only on eating habits, but also on the local industries producing butter and eventually led to the "battle of fats", a battle which also affected the role and consumption of olive oil in Finland.

The facts about the nutritional properties of olive oil remain undisputed. It has been scientifically proven that extensive consumption of olive oil reduces incidences of coronary and cardiovascular disease. It is also widely believed that the antioxidant substances such as vitamins E and K and polyphenols found in olive oil provide a defence mechanism that delays ageing and prevents carcinogenesis, atherosclerosis, liver disorders and inflammations and is well tolerated by the stomach, has a beneficial effect on gastritis and ulcers. Used as a tea, the olive leaves have a relaxing effect. As a cholagogue, it activates the secretion of pancreatic hormones and bile much more naturally than prescribed drugs, which lowers the incidence of cholelithiasis. It has a positive effect on constipation, beneficial effect on the brain and nervous system and its easy digestion promotes the overall absorption of nutrients and mineral salts (taken from the literature provided by the Greek Association of Industries and Processors of Olive Oil).

To varying degrees, health education campaigns throughout Europe began to market nutritional qualities of olive oil and were especially important following a period of time when consumption and production levels of olive oil fell drastically, for example in Spain in the early 1970s. Confidence was required to build new olive oil markets and small producers did not have the resources to promote their own oil. Eurosciences Communication, was chosen by the European Commission to pass on the health message of the Mediterranean diet, and in particular about olive oil, to doctors throughout Europe, who would, in turn, recommend the use of olive oil to their patients. In Rome 1997, a group of 16 European experts in nutrition and heart disease signed a recommendation to the European commission on their support to encourage a Mediterranean diet as there was enough evidence to suggest that the diet contributes to the prevention of hypertension, diabetes, obesity and coronary heart disease. While opposition from Northern countries were presented, stating that oils such as rapeseed oil produced in Scandinavia countries were as "healthy", exports of olive oil to the North increased by 10% the following year. The campaign was criticised saying that "doctors were being used by the EU for commercial purposes to increase the consumption of olive oil when there exist cheaper or other alternatives". (The European, 3-9 July 1997, p.4)

VI. Tradition as a Basis for Future Standards of Production?

An overview of production processes

In ancient times olives were milled using *stones* which were turned by hand, and *lever presses* which used the weight of the stones to extract olive oil. Eventually the stone mill evolved into a circular stone vat, in which a huge vertical circular millstone, fixed at the centre by a wooden shaft, was drawn round the circumference by harnessed animals such as mules, through the fresh olives, turning them into a paste. This is sometimes called the "blood, sweat and tears" press. In some old mills, the repetitive path of these hooved tracks can still be seen. The press evolved from its ancient form to a screw press which pressed the olive fruit between two stone plates by the action of the screw, thus extracting the oil. The basic principles of milling are the same today as they were long ago, except that mechanised stone-mills and hydraulic presses are now employed, resulting in greater efficiency. Up to thirty years ago, the methods of producing olive oil had remained unchanged for centuries. One version or another of the stone mills and press had been the standard method of olive oil production since ancient times. (George Dimitriadis and Christine Lacroix, Biolea, Crete)

Today, however, very few of the traditional mills are still in use – one is most likely to see discarded millstones used decoratively as nothing more than a reminder of by-gone days. With the advent of the industrialised oil extracting plants, the "traditional" stone-mill was largely abandoned in favour of more modern cost efficient extraction methods. This not only affected the final quality of the product, but as can be imagined, it had far-reaching socio-cultural implications for olive oil producing countries where for centuries the production of olives and olive oil had remained essentially a community activity. (George Dimitriadis and Christine Lacroix, Biolea, Crete). The industrial movement in olive oil production began in North Africa and Yugoslavia and includes such techniques as vibrating harvesting rakes, "super presses" or centrifugal systems. (Dr. Raphael Frankel, Kibutz Beit Haemek, Israel)

The workshop was honoured by the contribution made by Dr. Raphael Frankel, archaeologist and professor which has spent a great proportion of his life dedicated to documenting the history of the olive oil press. He described in detail the ancient and contemporary processes of olive oil production as well as outlined the various methods used in crushing the olives (summarised above). According to his research, every olive oil producing country in the Mediterranean does exactly the same thing, just in different ways. Techniques of olive oil production have been passed down through generations and the cultural differences in the development of technologies are part of its heritage and tradition. The various techniques used, according to Dr. Frankel, belong to the regional traditions and identities of the people. Those who to continue to employ them, keep alive artisanal production techniques and the overall cultural heritage of the Mediterranean.

The workshop participants had the great opportunity not only to discuss in theoretical terms the culture environment for olive oil production but were fortunate to be taken through the production and extraction processes of pressing, centrifugation and percolation and to learn about the critical factors which need to be taken into consideration along the way. Discussions and visits were made to the Olive Institute in Chania whose aim is to study the techniques and the problems arising during the whole procedure of olive cultivation as well as to provide technical support to farmers. Its main goal is to modernise olive cultivation as well

as to conduct research on the genetic improvement of the olive tree and ways to reduce the costs of harvesting the olives while improving olive oil quality.

We also had the opportunity to visit the Venetian village of Kapsaliana (1560) in the region of Arcadi. The region was ruled by the monastery of Arcadi (also visited by workshop participants) which owned all the land in the area as well as the means to produce olive oil in Arcadi. Local farmers and peasants were dependent upon the monastery to process their olives in the mills belonging to the monastery located in the village Kapsaliana. As this was a long process, the farmers, mostly women (as harvesting the olives was considered women's work), were housed in the village during the periods of oil production. The original population of Kapsaliana was 12, and today is 3. Our visit was guided by M. Toupoyiannis, architect and leader of a project to restore the old mill of Kapsaliana into an Olive Museum. Great lengths have been taken by M. Toupoyiannis to portray the character and identity of the mill, including the preservation of a door which is inscribed with poems and notes from the women who were housed next to the mill during oil production periods.

Not far from Kapsaliana, the participants visited an early 20th century olive oil press in Maroulas. In operation until the second world war, this Venetian structure was used not only as an oil press but to house refugees from Asia Minor in 1922. This visit engaged dynamic debate, led by Dr. Frankel about the uses and evidence remaining of this particular press and of its own cultural development. Today, ships are housed in what could be regarded as a cultural heritage building.

Merging issues of quality with productivity

Before understanding how such principles as quality and productivity can live in harmony together, we must first examine those factors which are having great effects on the production of olive oil in Europe. While health campaigns as mentioned above have had a great effect on production and consumption patterns of olive oil in Europe, there are, additional reasons why we are undergoing constant lifestyle changes which not only affect what we eat, but have, in fact, had enormous influence over the dynamics of the olive oil markets at national, regional, or local levels. As mentioned by Mr. Nickolaides, Director of the Mediterranean Agronomic Institute (MAICH), Chania, some of the factors include, European Union policies to allow "mixed oils" to be sold as olive oil, the lifestyle marketing of "light" olive oils as well as trends in global agriculture towards harmonisation which result in a loss of cultural and biological diversity. A return to ecological (organic) production methods, which has not permeated the market, will, if "quality" counts, run in competition to mass produced olive oil in the future.

One of the main factors which radically alters the dynamics of the cultural environment for olive oil production is the removal of self-sufficiency, ownership and power from the hands of the artisans (local producers) into the hands of, for example, multinational companies. Prof. Luis Bonet, Universitat de Barcelona was on hand to explain this phenomenon in the case of Spain.

Spain is the largest producer of olive oil in the world, approximately 1.5 million metric tonnes per year (this figure changes yearly depending on the harvest). 82% of the production comes from the region of Andalucia, particularly, the province of Jaen, which provides 40% of the total Spanish production and equal to 70% of Italy's total production. Quite clearly, olive oil production sustains the economy, cultural identity and heritage of this region and province. More recently, the question of sustainability is being called into question for four reasons:

1. 25% of its production is exported to Italy following which the oil is bottled and distributed all over the world under an Italian label – leaving the true identity of its creator in the shadows and the profits in foreign hands
2. change of European Union policies which used to provide badly needed subsidies to the farmers
3. new GATT rules (2001) which state that the public sector can not subsidise production (in which the EU has countered with arguments contradicting their own policies that the public sector must protect the ecological and cultural aspects of the olive oil sector and therefore the lively hood of their people!!)
4. buy-out of 70% of Spanish production by multinational corporations

One of the biggest problems facing the local Spanish producers is the recent control of the majority of olive oil production in Spain (70%) by major multinational corporations including: the Halian Corporation Ferruzi, the French Corporation Lesieur and the British company Uni-Level. This means that the majority of Spanish production is in foreign hands which control mechanisms such as quality levels, bottling etc. It has been forecas ted that such multinational corporations will move into other olive growing countries such as Tunisia or Morocco and begin to bottle "no-name" olive oil which is no longer attached or identified with a region or "terroir". Such economic motivations surely will not take into consideration the heritage and tradition of local artisanal techniques in favour of industrial and technological developments in production.

Can traditional practices be a basis for future standards of quality production and for the preservation of olive oil heath virtues against such multinational corporations? In the words of Christine Lacroix and George Dimitriadis, "small companies of quality products can compete against big companies based on principles of nutrition and food safe ty" It is necessary to maintain the integrity of our culture and past. In their opinion, this is easily accomplished when public institutions support traditional skills and provide facilities which support such processes.

VII. Authenticity, Terroir and Discerning Tastes

***A return to regionalisation in the face of globalisation?*⁷**

As we have seen above, one of the major problems facing olive oil producers is the influence of a homogenised market controlled by large corporations using highly developed industrial techniques, without a relationship to the groves from which the olives were harvested. The result of these trends has been a market saturated by olive oil products leaving consumers confused and olive oil being sold without local character or as hybrid products (e.g. mixed oils or the new "light olive oil). How can a market be created which demands individual olive oils with the local character in tact?

In order to answer our question on how to maintain quality, tradition and our cultural identity in a saturated market such as is the case for olive oil, we can turn to the French example of appellations d'origine controlle or AOC as a possible solution, keeping in mind that preoccupations with authenticity have not entered into the olive oil production market in the same way it did with wine.

⁷ This section of the report is indebted to the presentation and ideas put forward by Christian Teulade, SCAN (Société Coopérative Agricole du Nyonsais) and Rene Graz, Nyon.

On May 6, 1919, the system of appellations d'origine controlle (AOC) was defined by law in France. Sixteen years later, 30 July 1935, the French State established the "Institut National des Appellations d'Origine" under the Ministry of Agriculture to administer the AOC and today is responsible for products such as wine, dairy and other food stuffs. In 1989, the French Ministry of Culture dedicated a new division within its department to promote and encourage national culinary arts. More recently, an "exemption culturelle" for the AOC is being discussed in the face of regional and global trade agreements similar to the one imposed in protection of the audiovisual sector in France. Essentially all of these political and economic measures have resulted in a kind of guarantee on the part of the French state for the quality or "integrity" of the products produced in France.

One of the most interesting developments in France which the participants believed could be implemented in the olive oil sector is the AOC. Examining the French criteria in determining whether or not a product qualifies for an AOC, eg. the role of the people in the production, their knowledge of tradition and folklore or "savoir-faire", in conjunction with strict testing of the soil and quality of the air, is consistent with the principles put forward by the workshop. In France, the six "P's" of quality production include: produit, professionalism, pays, paysage, prix et paysante, and could be considered as indicators for maintaining the focus on the cultural aspects of olive oil production in Europe.

According to Christian Teulade, SCAN (Société Coopérative Agricole du Nyonsais), if we are going to produce regional quality products, then a certain degree of marketing or consumer demand is needed, which, of course, requires stimulation. Mr. Teulade recommended to the workshop that olive oil is promoted as a niche product in a mass (homogenised) market, however, he warns that an uneducated consumer base will only drive the prices to unreachable levels. Education of the merits of heritage and health, and the other 6 P's will help to enable implicit or explicit demands from the consumer. At least, in the area of olive oil, information on its health benefits have become wide spread throughout Europe. France, he says, is rediscovering olive oil production and considers it to be a product of the future, a political realisation which will help to fulfil such a strategy.

Participants agreed that the system of AOC could help to ensure the passing on of savoir-faire, assure consumer of authenticity (in a saturated market of mixed oils), and promote principles of terroir. Current laws in this area only require that the origin of where the oil is bottled, not where it is produced, is clearly indicated on the final product. Alternatively, the AOC was constructed on the principle of local knowledge of terroir and is virtually a religion in, for example, the world of wine or cheese. In any religion there are, of course privileged terroir and forms of apostasy. Terroir, in this sense, does not only mean terrain, soil or weather conditions, it envelopes a range of emotion, tradition, knowledge and pride, in other words, savoir-faire. No two regions or terroir have the same standards or place emphasis on the same techniques.

In several interviews with local producers in Crete, due to the lack of regulations or AOC in place, there is a great deal of deceptive labelling which has been accepted as common practice throughout the olive oil industry and in all oil producing countries. Such practices, for example, do not promote the integrity of the olive oil industry or promote "discerning tastes" for different kinds of olive oil, produced in different terroir or production conditions (eg. stone ground or ecological olive oil). Olive oil differs from one another in colour, texture, taste, health properties, smell and of course, taste which can stir memories when comparing the subtle but different products from similar or neighbouring grounds.

The Greek Association of Industries and Processors of Olive Oil (SEVITEL) has recently published a list of 12 basic questions which could help to define the "quality" of the olive and olive oil, and perhaps they and other questions could inspire us to consider developing an AOC for olive oil:

1. Does the olive tree have roots that are embedded deep in the country's history
2. Is there a rich fund of scientific knowledge and experience regarding its cultivation
3. Are the climatic conditions and ecosystem favourable to the cultivation of olive trees
4. Is the type of olive grove sympathetic to the fruit bearing cycle
5. Are the degree of expertise, status and knowledge of olive growers closely linked to their experience and enthusiasm for the olive grove
6. Are the varieties used the most suitable ones for the biotope in question
7. Has the degree of ripeness of the fruit been taken into account, and are the most suitable harvesting techniques used
8. Are suitable measures taken to clean the fruit before it is sent for processing
9. Does the length of time the olives are stored before pressing ensure that the fruit is of a good quality and the end-product is durable
10. Are the right methods of olive-pressing used
11. Are the standardisation and storage of the olive oil carried out under suitable conditions to ensure a consistent quality
12. Is the final product, the olive oil, checked for its wholesomeness

VIII. EU agricultural policies – where are the cultural dimensions?

Food policies do not take into consideration the way in which the use of food is embedded in the socio-cultural habits of the people whose diet it is intended to change. Even attempts by FAO and WHO to change food consumption patterns have failed (Stephen Mennell p.41)

In the previous section we demonstrated some of the main elements comprising the culinary cultural environment for olive oil production and consumption including: first pieces of evidence indicating the socio-economic importance of the olive tree, olives and olive oil in ancient times, the use of olive oil throughout the ages, some of elements which led to the spread of olive oil beyond the Mediterranean region, patterns of ownership affecting production processes as well as more fundamental issues affecting principles of authenticity, terroir and quality production. The following sketches one of the main forces which has significant effects in shaping the culinary cultural environment of olive oil production and consumption, namely, the EU regulations and their far reaching affects to local producers and their communities.

Throughout the conference, the role that the European Commission had and is playing in order to safeguard the cultural values connected with food production, trade and communication were debated, especially in consideration of the Maastricht Treaty, Art. 128.4 and the Agriculture Council's June 98 decision (including abolition of aid scheme to small producers). Have such strategies been to the benefit or detriment of quality and taste, the market forces and the interests of the consumers? Can quality and tradition be maintained in a harmonised market?

Background documentation on the CAP, the Maastricht Treaty, the Agriculture Council's decision and debates was provided to the conference participants. Throughout our debates

and interviews with the local community, workshop participants came to recognise several issues which need to be addressed in the context of EU agriculture and cultural policies and their future development. These include, but are not limited to:

Lack of consideration for cultural aspects in the development of key Community agriculture policies and strategies

The Maastricht Treaty, under the terms of Article 128(4) or otherwise known as the cultural awareness clause, states that the Community must take cultural aspects into account in all of its mandated areas. The new EU Framework Programme in Support of Culture (2000-2004) goes a step further by re-enforcing this principle, in particular as regards to respect for cultural diversity, the encouragement of creativity and cultural development and support for cultural co-operation and exchanges in Community policies. Their stated objective is to ensure the integration of cultural aspects into Community action and policy during 2000-2004 along three main lines including: a legislative framework favourable to culture, the cultural dimension of support policies and culture in the Community's external relations.

To date, and despite the existence of the cultural awareness clause since 1993, cultural aspects relating to agriculture are not mentioned or considered in, for example, the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). Many key Community policies and documents coming from the culture sector have tried to emphasise the inherent cultural nature of agricultural activities and how local or regional *savoir-faire* has generated a very wide variety of traditional products which are part of the cultural identity of the locality or region from which they originate. Support for rural development – to promote rural diversification, territorial identity, sustainable development – is also encouraged through the new Culture 2000-2004 framework plan.

With such explicit language directed towards the agriculture sector, we have to ask ourselves, for which reasons would they fail to acknowledge cultural aspects in the process of developing the new Community agriculture policies?

There is no doubt that the circumstances surrounding the development of harmonised agricultural policies, specifically on olive oil production are complicated. In fact, many Commission officials have stated that the CAP has been one of the largest challenges facing the Commission to date. The reasons for the level of difficulty are clear. Our role, and the role of DG X (culture directorate of the European Commission) is to clarify the difficulties and insist that cultural aspects be taken into account before the consequences of their economic oriented actions and policies catch up with the citizens of Europe.

While efforts are being made by DG X, they may not be the most appropriate solutions. For example, the new culture framework programme of DG X indicates plans to support specific cultural activities such as the creation of permanent cultural infrastructure (eg. eco-museums) or the promotion of cultural heritage products and activities (material, heritage, folklore, linguistic heritage, etc.) during the years 2000-2004 under its "rural development" strategy. While such recommendations might appear to be in keeping with overall Community principles, we have learned during our workshop that, in fact, consideration for the entire cultural environment for agriculture and its production is needed. Therefore, in addition to supporting the creation of museums or fixed monuments, the protection and preservation of traditional production methods or techniques are required. Rather than first creating a museum, consideration should initially be given to the establishment of those facilities which

are necessary to ensure the survival of universal principles such as diversity or identity and culinary cultural principles such as *savoir-faire*, artisanal production or *terroir*.

In the end, perhaps another approach to integrate cultural aspects into other Community policies should be considered.

Some cultural consequences of key Community agriculture policies

The new agriculture regulations, otherwise known as Agenda 2000 or the CAP, have been found to run contrary to respecting the cultural diversity of the Member States, as well as failing to recognise the fact that traditional products are part of the cultural identity of the locality or region from which they originate.

From beef to milk to olives, from France to Northern Ireland to Spain, both farmers and parliamentary representatives have been protesting against the new policies, especially the receding subventions to local producers. Their common and consistent arguments have been that such policies would not only raise already unprecedented levels of unemployment but also, in some cases, dismember communities or risk the loss of the culture (incl. knowledge) of those artisanal production techniques required not only to sustain quality production but also to protect *savoir faire* as an integral element of our cultural heritage. Many parliamentary representatives have, in fact, expressed fear of having to explain the new funding cuts to the farmers. The response given to them was that, "any reforms should ensure that the EU was compatible with WTO rules. The agreement (Agenda 200) cannot be jeopardised by farmers" (European Commission, Press Release, February 8, 1999). The new regulation went into effect as of 1 November 1998 despite public opinion and opposing voices in the European Parliamentary Committee. Clearly, such a statement suggests that strict economic factors are used in the evaluation of the cultural environment for agricultural production.

Special measures for olive oil production?

The EU's plan is aimed at regulating olive oil production across Europe by imposing quotas. The new quotas will lead to penalties for overproduction, reduced agricultural subsidies and thousands of job losses. According to Franz Fischler, the Agriculture Commissioner at the time, "the main objectives of the changes are to combat large-scale industrial fraud by basing the subsidises on the number of olive trees rather than the volume of oil produced and to combat consumer fraud wherein large scale producers are selling mixed oils as pure olive oil".

It is clear that, from a first glance, not only are cultural aspects not taken into account in the main objectives of the new olive oil production reforms, but that they seem almost honourable – to fight against fraud in the interest of providing quality products to the consumer. Before awarding honourable mentions to the reforms, let's take a close look at the objectives.

Prior to the June 1998 Agriculture Council Resolution for Olive Oil Reform, the Commission supported olive growers through direct aid which was paid exclusively on the basis of production⁸. The new approach states that subsidies will be calculated on the number of trees

⁸ In July 1998, a new agreement had been reached by the EU's agriculture ministers on fixing guaranteed quotas for olive oil production in individual countries. The compromise fixes the maximum guaranteed quantity (MGQ) at 1 777 261 tonnes for the next three years -- an increase of 31% on the current level and includes a 5%

rather than on the amount of olive oil produced which means that some countries, in particular Spain, will face a reduction of 30% of its current subsidies.

In a recent study, it was found that during the years 1991-1996, approximately 1,377 cases of fraud (double aid payments) were committed which totalled an amount of 181 million EURO. In a question and answer period of the European parliament in July 1998, it was announced that 85% of the amount of sums wrongly paid went to farmers in Italy, followed by 10% in Greece and less than 2% in each of Spain and Portugal.

If one of the main objectives of the reforms is to combat fraud and it is clear that there appears to be a concentration of fraud in one particular region over the others, should we not question the justification for such a harmonised approach? What will the consequences be? Let's consider Spain, for example, as a region identified with the least amount of fraudulent cases, as the world's largest producer of olive oil, considering that 40% of that production originates in Jaen, Andalucia (which has a rate of 20% unemployment) and the recent control of olive oil production by multinational corporations. The new harmonised regulations pose severe threats to the overall cultural environment of olive oil production in this region because local farmers will no longer have the subventions they require to maintain their local production. Multinational corporations which have already penetrated the production market will benefit from this situation and perhaps buy out a large majority of those local businesses. With economic oriented strategies and industrial techniques, this potential scenario puts at risk artisanal production techniques, savior faire and terroir which have been passed down from generation to generation.

Dr. Kambourakis, Crete, warned participants not to forget about the ecology of the cultural environment and the importance of sustaining the natural resources and cultural heritage of our terroir. Olive trees are important in arid areas, such as Jaen or on the island of Crete, because they preserve the fertility of dry regions. As we learned in our workshop from the local Cretan farmers, olive trees do not require a great deal of water and can, in many cases survive for long periods without rain provided that the trees are in good health. In fact, the olive trees maintain the stability of the land itself. As the EU subsidisation programme changes its indicator upon the number of trees per grove, farmers may resort to measures such as chopping down several of their ancient trees (an act punishable by death in former times!) which have been passed down from generation to generation, an action that will also alter the ecology of the land. The end result is the destruction, rather than protection or preservation of cultural heritage.

While most have argued that agriculture reforms were required (even the farmers would agree), the Parliamentary Committee responsible for devising the olive oil reform package has itself admitted that it was the reforms were prepared "hastily and on the basis of unreliable data". (European Parliamentary debate, July 1998)

reduction in production aid (ECU 1 322.50/tonne). The MGQ is split between the producer countries as follows: Spain 760 027 tonnes, Italy 543 164 tonnes, Greece 419 529 tonnes, Portugal 51 244 tonnes, France 3 297 tonnes. If in a given year, one country does not fully utilise national guaranteed quantity (NGQ), 20% of the unused part will be shared between those that have exceeded their NGQ. The remaining 80% will be added to the NGQ of the member state concerned for the following year.

Combating consumer fraud

In the Committee debates of July 1998, it was announced that the Commission will work to:

- more closely define categories of olive oil
- improve the reliability of information on olive oil production
- give consideration to a "quality" strategy .

In a Commission regulation of 22 December 1998 concerning marketing standards for olive oil, it outlined the terms for an olive oil quality strategy which must be carried out by 31 October 2001. Such terms include an optional and provisional system for the designation of the regional origin of olive oil which would be the subject of a common PDO (protected designation of origin) or PGI (protected geographical indication). The intention of these labels is to, "avoid confusion among consumers and therefore market disturbances". Quality, according to the Commission, is a key factor in fostering consumer loyalty and increasing consumption of olive oil in the European Union. The concept of quality depends on many factors relating to live production, oil manufacture and marketing". (European Commission Press Release, Brussels, March 18th, 1998).

While it is to be deplored that the rationale for introducing a quality strategy could not have included an objective such as "to protect the local integrity of the olive oil as a cultural good and to help educate and improve the consumers' ability to discern between products", we can hope that the Commission's process toward PDO and PGI will lead to the health of the cultural environment for olive oil production in Europe. After all, local self-sufficiency, to which such measures could contribute, is one of the main elements to maintain a balance in our cultural environments.

It is clear that such tools as the PDO and PGI are greatly welcomed in an environment where supermarkets are producing their own label brands of olive oil, where fraudulent mixed oils are sold as pure olive oil and where multinational corporations, such as Uni-Lever, which traditionally have nothing to do with olive oil production or by-products, are taking control of regional markets. Such proposed measures could also aid in the protection of local products such as the olive oil produced in Jaen, Chania or Tuscany by recognising, labelling and informing the public about the regional or local origins. All of this, is dependent, of course, on the ability of the communities and regions to maintain their artisanal production techniques in the face of industrial operations and multinational influence.

As in the wine market, there is always the danger, of course, that such labelling would relegate them to a status of "speciality, gourmet products" and result in prices which are inaccessible to the mass consumer and therefore end up supporting the cheaper, fraudulent products. A vicious circle to which a strong strategy is required to build up a consumer culture of discerning palates.

A Contradiction of Policy Objectives?

In Africa, when an old man dies, a library burns down

Amadou Hamp, *Our Creative Diversity*,
UNESCO World Commission on Culture and Development, 1996

Clearly one of the main messages emanating from the workshop is that economic indicators alone can be used to develop agriculture policies, or more specifically regulations for olive oil production. While determining subventions to farmers, it is important to question who are the farmers or which are the companies receiving the subvention. At the moment, there are no obligations put on those recipients of subvention to become caretakers of the cultural heritage and environment of olive oil production. They are not required to employ artisanal techniques or to preserve the terroir or savoir faire of generations of land and knowledge. Alternatively indicators for subvention aid are calculated on the amount of trees.

Policy strategies to reward those who are employing measures such as those recommended by the workshop participants to protect the culture of olive oil production as a public good could be a means to first, integrate aspects of culture to agricultural policies and to preserve principles of identity, diversity and expression in the face of harmonising tendencies. A contradiction arises in the policies of DG X to promote the flow and dissemination of information about Europe, while at the same time other areas of the Commission are not taking steps to ensure the safe guarding of knowledge through their respective policies. Preservation of knowledge, as demonstrated earlier, is an important aspect of cultural heritage and is essential to the further development of quality in an integrating Europe.

IX. Concluding Remarks: Olive Oil as a Legacy of the Mediterranean, European or World Cultural Heritage?

Despite differences in the cultural environments of North, South, East and West Europe, it has been proven that the habits and cultural goods from all parts of Europe have been appropriated and integrated, sometimes in illegitimate forms, well beyond their local communities. Clearly we can not dispute the fact that olive oil production has been at the epicentre of Mediterranean cultural heritage for centuries. Questions of whether or not olive oil as a part of the Mediterranean tradition can be shared with other parts of Europe have been answered. Through trade, tourism and policies of an integrating Europe, olive oil has extended well beyond the borders of the Mediterranean to all corners of Europe, even those with a "butter-culture", and have, in fact, changed the eating habits of Europeans. Rising consumption figures of olive oil in all parts of Europe prove not only the consumer demand for olive oil, but can qualify it as an element of the traditional cuisine of Europe.

Luis Bonet, Universitat de Barcelona emphasised the importance of sharing the Mediterranean olive oil culture with the rest of Europe for various reasons including health. Olive oil he states, can replace animal fats which contain less nutrients – however, he asks whether the mass production of olive oil throughout the Mediterranean by multinational corporations will not only destroy the local flavour but also the nutrients of the olive oil. He concludes that the protection or preservation of our principles of artisanal production techniques, authenticity, savoir-faire, terroir and discerning tastes, are not only important to

safe guard the cultural heritage of the Mediterranean, but should be considered as a means to promote the health of European citizens. Perhaps the rapeseed oil or butter farmers from Northern Europe would disagree.

Prof. Bonet, continues to poster the idea the Mediterranean heritage should and must be shared. "If we agree that this is something to be shared (and rising consumption figures seem to prove demand for olive oil) than we must preserve its quality and make it available at a price which is accessible to the general population. Europe is the main region producing olive oil in the world and should focus on an export strategy to share our rich European heritage". He concludes by stating that the olive oil policy of the EU must strive to preserve our tradition, for our ecological health, as an element of Europe's cultural heritage and as a heritage/cultural good which we can share with the rest of the world.

X. Declaration/conclusions

The final aim of the conference was to draw up a list of proposals or recommendations to be presented to the European Commission of how to integrate culinary culture (as a cultural resource) into contemporary agri-food and cultural policies. Based on a draft by Vladimir Skok, Board Member of ERICArts and discussed as well as modified by the participants, the "Rethymnon Declaration" reads as follows:

Dis-moi que tu manges, je te dirai qui tu es.

- Jean-Anthelme Brillat Savarin, France, 1825

Preamble

Food is a cultural resource which brings people together at the same time reflecting their heritage, manners and way of life. The participants of the ELEA conference met together on the island of Crete where the cultivation of olives is central to its cultural life. Issues such as artisan production techniques, authenticity, "savior-faire", terroir and discerning tastes were identified as important elements to understanding culinary culture. Building upon the multidisciplinary discussions and field research on the production and consumption of olive oil, the following key principles were identified and form the basis for a future action plan.

Rethymnon principles

1. Economic integration and globalisation continue to link cultures more closely together. At the same time they may work against cultural diversity and pluralism, in both the commonly understood arts and heritage aspects of a society as well as in popular cultural traditions including food and cuisine and rural ways of life.
2. Intangible heritage goes beyond languages and values and includes culinary traditions, history and conviviality. Creativity should be recognised as being as valuable and tangible in the culinary arts as it has been for the high arts.
3. Cultural diversity is as important as biodiversity for a sustainable future. Cultural homogenisation is as strong a force in the spread of fast foods and so-called "natural", but industrially-processed foods as it has been for other standardised cultural products, eg. in the field of film and television.

4. The defence of local and regional cultures requires the full and imaginative use by public authorities in partnership with civil society of the cultural resources and traditions available, including those relating to food and cuisine. In addition to food safety and nutritional value, emphasis should be placed on ensuring the authenticity of processes of production, the origin and quality of the product (“terroir”) as well as the local customs and traditions surrounding their use.
5. Economies of scale and market failure are as common in the activities of artisanal cuisine as they are in the cultural industries, with both requiring public sector encouragement. Markets alone can not maintain cultural diversity.
6. The essential aims of cultural policy are to establish objectives, create structures and secure adequate resources in order to create an environment conducive to human fulfilment. This goes beyond the arts.
7. Cultural policies should be reinforced in a way which identified food culture, cuisine and the culinary arts as valid objects for support and promotion.
8. Cultural considerations should be taken into consideration and integrated into other policy areas, including agriculture, social, rural and urban development.
9. Artisanal agri-food, cuisine and culinary heritage dimensions should be incorporated into tourism policies and programmes of agricultural and cultural ministries.
10. Foreign ministries, international cultural promotion agencies and trade ministries should incorporate the promotion of culinary culture in various aspects of their activities

XI. Epilogue: Furthering the goals of the "European Food Project"

The ELEA project was undertaken within the framework of the ERICArts initiative, "Integration through the Kitchen? – The European Food Project". It helped to clarify the means and procedures for the larger project as seen throughout this report. Since it was first proposed to the former EUROCIRCON Network in Budapest in the Spring of 1990, the framework for the European Food Project (EFP) has been in constant development. Conceptualised as a research, information and educational project, it takes into account the role food/cuisine plays in our cultural environment and how it contributes to social cohesion, cultural change, ecological progress and economic development; while taken into account in many studies, the aspect of nutrition is of secondary importance to this particular project.

"ELEA" was considered as a "sub-project" of the EFP and enabled us to elaborate on what these concepts mean and to demonstrate some of their interconnected points around the project's main principles. It has also reinforced our position that food/cuisine, as an important component part of our European cultural heritage, is under threat and measures must be taken to ensure freedom of choice, freedom of expression and principles of *savoir faire*, *terroir*, artisanal production techniques, authenticity and discerning tastes.

One of the main lessons to be learned from the ELEA project is that our cultural environment is the product of several hundred years of cultural change, appropriation, expansion, domination and now, harmonisation. Such forces have and are shaping our cultural identities and hence the diversity of our societies. The preservation and protection of our human treasures comprising not only our cultural heritage, but our identities (cultural diversity) is crucial. The EFP as an interdisciplinary, yet, micro-study of our cultural environment brings together such concepts by focussing on food as a cultural good or resource, while at the same time, making recommendations for policy change.

During the ELEA workshop in Rethymnon, ERICArts members took the decision to fully concentrate future EFP sub-projects, not on agricultural crops, plants, animals etc., but on those items which result from a transformation process of raw materials into products or cultural goods prevalent in our everyday life. For example, rather than focussing on olives or flour, the EFP would examine the cultural environment framing the production and consumption of olive oil or bread.

The main lines of investigation for all activities of the EFP are:

- The cultural environment for food/cuisine (eg. olive oil or bread) including cultural heritage
- Understanding the tradition/heritage of the production and consumption of food products such as olive oil or bread and how to balance past techniques with contemporary approaches such as ecological farming, health, nutrition and modern cooking techniques.
- Recognising the relationship between local production and world trade (eg. how agriculture or trade related policies effect the participation of local quality producers in different markets)
- Policies or strategies which integrate culinary culture as a cultural good/resource into contemporary agri-food and cultural policies

In addition to "ELEA", the European Food Project has launched another sub-project, "Bread-The World's Heritage" whose aim is to collect, record and archive bread heritage, hence "A Handbook of Bread Museums in Europe" being prepared by the NGO "The Blue Dragon" and the Zentrum für Kulturforschung and will be published in 2000. The bread project follows the same methodology as the ELEA project by recognising although bread is the single most represented food item on the table world wide, we know very little about its symbolic and ethnological meaning, cultural influence throughout history or more specifically about the range of varieties, baking methods or its value in everyday life. We do know, however, that traditional recipes are in danger of being lost and replaced by a standardised international cuisine which promotes the rise of industrial food or, more specifically, dominant chains of bakery stores. The research for this project began in 1996, when ERICArts member Dimitrije Vujadinovic and Zorica Milodanovic published "Bread in 200 Ways" in 1996. This particular research began to build an ethnological history of bread and presents 200 traditional and modern recipes from around the world.

A third sub-project, "Silver and Gold of the Sea: the Living Heritage of Fish Trade" is being planned for the year 2000.

Appendix I - Further Reading

- Accum, F.** *A Treatise on Adulterations of Food and Culinary Poisons.* 1820.
- Amouretti, Marie-Claire.** *Le Pain et l'huile dans la Grece antique. Annales litteraires de l'universite de Besanson.* Les Belles-Lettres, Paris, 1995.
- Amouretti, Marie-Claire and Comet, Georges.** *Le livre de l'Olivier,* Aix-en-Provence 1992.
- Autrand, Jean-Pierre.** *Les moulins a huile d'olives des XVIIIe et XIXE siecles.* Nyons, 1992.
- Balaam, D.M. and Carey, M.J.** *Food Politics: the regional conflict.* London, 1981.
- Balatsouras, Georges.** *L'olivier. L'huilerie contemporaine.* Athens, 1994.
- Barthes, R.** "Toward a Psychology of Contemporary Food Consumption", in *Annales*, 1961.
- Blitzer, H.** "Olive Cultivation and Oil Production in Minoan Crete" in M.C. Amouretti - J.P. Brun (ed.), *La production du vin et de l'huile en Mediterranee.* Aix en Provence 1991, BCH Suppl. 26 (1993).
- Bottani, Dominique.** *Le guide des routes de l'olivier,* Lyon 1994.
- Boudieu, P.** *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste.* London, 1986.
- Boulanger, Patrick.** *L'Olivier et ses huiles dans le pays d'Aix, passe et present.* Aix-en-Provence, 1995.
- Brillat - Savarin, J-A.** *La Physiologie du Gout,* France, 1825.
- Brun, Jean-Pierre.** *L'oleiculture antique en Provence. Les huileries du departement du Var,* ed. CNRS, Paris, 1986.
- Calais, Martine.** *Tresors du sud, L'olivier, les olives et l'huile d' olives .* Paris, 1997.
- Christakis G., Fordyce M.K and Kuurtz C.S.** *The Biological Aspects of Olive Oil.* Third International Congress on the Biological Value of Olive Oil, Olive Institut of Chania with the International Olive Council (Chania, 8-12 September 1980).
- Dazin, E., Reuzeau, J-Y.** *L' Anthologie Gourmande.* Bordeaux, 1995.
- Dolamore, Anne.** *The essential OLIVE OIL Companion, Recipes - Varieties Histories - Cultivation,* ed. Interlink Books, New York 1994.
- Douglas, M., Reumaux, F.** Complexite culturelle: cuisine et societe, Societes 19 (Septembre): 6-10, 1988.
- Emmerson, Mark – Ewin, Jeannette.** *A Feast of Oils, Inspirational Mediterranean Recipes for the Healthy Gourmet,* London 1996.
- Essemyr, M.** "Food, fare, nutrition: some reflections on the historical development of food consumption" in the *Scandinavian Economic History Review* 34(2), 76-89, 1989.

- Ferniot J., Le Goff, J (eds).** “La cuisine de la table: 5000 ans de gastronomic”, in *Histoire*, Special Issue, 1986.
- Forbes H.A. -Foxhall, L.** “The Queen of All Trees: Preliminary Notes on the Archaeology of Olive”, in *Expedition 21*, 1978.
- Giono, Sylvie.** *Le gout du Bonheur, La Provence gourmand de Jean Gioto*. Paris 1994.
- Gordon - Smith Clare.** *Au rendezvous des saveurs, huile d'olive*. Paris, 1997.
- Hamilakis, Y.** “Wine, Oil and the Dialectics of Power in Bronze Age Crete: A Review of the Evidence”, *Oxford Journal of Archaeology (OJA)* 15, 1996, pages 1-32.
- Laget, Francis.** “L'olivier symbolique”, in *Arcades*, Buis-les-Baronnies, 1991.
- Logue, A.W.** *Die Psychologie des Essens und Trinkens*. Spektrum Akademischer Verlag Heidelberg, 1996.
- Loussert, Raymond and Brousse, Gerard.** *L'olivier*, Paris 1978.
- Lupton, D.** *Food, the Body and the Self*. London, 1996.
- Melena, J. L.** "Olive Oil and other Sorts of Oil in the Mycenaean Tablets", in *Minos* 18 (1983), pages. 89-123.
- Mennel, S. et al.** *The Sociology of Food: Eating, Diet and Culture*. London, 1994.
- Micossi, S.** *Perspectives on European Food Legislation*. prepared for the Forum for US-FU Legal-Economic Affairs Conference, Helsinki, September 1998.
- Nudgley, John** *The Goodness of Olive Oil*. London, 1992.
- Peri C., Garrido, A., Lopez, eds.** *The Sensory and Nutritional Quality of Virgin Olive Oil*. Report of a symposium for the EU FLAIR Research Project, 23-24 November 1993, Milano.
- Pannahill, R.** *Food in History*. London, 1988.
- Toussaint – Samat, Maguelonne.** *Histoire naturelle et morale de la nourriture*. Paris, 1987.
- Verdie, Minelle.** *La civilisation de l'Olivier*. Paris, 1990.
- Warde, A.** *Consumption, Food and Taste*. London, 1997.