

## **BILATERAL RELATIONS BETWEEN GREECE AND OTHER COUNTRIES IN AGRICULTURAL AND RURAL SECTOR**

### **MEDITERRANEAN COUNTRIES**

#### **1. ISRAEL**

The Agreement on bilateral cooperation in the agricultural sector was signed in Jerusalem (07.10.1991) and covers subsectors such as land improvement, aquaculture. In addition, scholarships were granted to Bulgarian students for the Mediterranean Agronomic Institute of Chania and seminars on the Common Agricultural policy have been organised, and fishery, pasture, food technology, animal husbandry and veterinary practice, forestry, environment, research and marketing.

A Joint Committee of agricultural experts was set up, in the framework of the above Agreement, in Athens (21-22.07.1993). During the consultations, the two sides set out their priorities but no substantial progress was made towards the implementation and enforcement of the bilateral co-operation.

During the «AGRITECH 99» exhibition, the Greek Minister of Agriculture visited Israel (05-09.09.1999), after an invitation of his counterpart Minister. Both Ministers agreed on the necessity of activating the co-operation Agreement by convening the joint Greek-Israeli Committee once per year, in order to plan and specify the particular aims and interests of each country's administration.

The Greek side stressed out its interest in irrigation projects (new technologies in water saving, improvement of the quality of irrigation waters, cultivating methods for aquaculture - horticulture and flower production, processing of agricultural products, and juice-making from citrus fruits).

However, no initiative has been taken so far, given the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as well as the continuous crisis, Israel is faced with.

#### **2. LEBANON**

In the beginning of 2001, when the Greek Minister for Foreign Affairs met with the Lebanese Prime Minister, the Lebanese side expressed its wish to develop bilateral relations with Greece in agricultural sector. In May 2001, the Minister of Agriculture of Lebanon met with his Greek counterpart in Athens and during the consultations, reference was made to:

Greek investments in Lebanon;

Greek support to improving the EU market access to Lebanese products;

Training expertise on issues of processing and standardisation of fruits, olive oil, potatoes, organisation of co-operatives and small agricultural

industries;

Greek firms building irrigation projects.

Finally, a Protocol on economic, scientific and technical co-operation in agricultural sector between Greece-Lebanon was signed in Beirut (21.01.2004), in the framework of the formal visit of the Greek President of Democracy to Lebanon.

In December 2003, in the framework of the Protocol of the 1<sup>st</sup> Joint Ministerial Committee (Beirut, 24.02.2003), the Greek side organized and implemented, in the Mediterranean Agronomic Institute of Chania, a training seminar for 20 Lebanese agriculturists on issues of olive cultivation, and quality control (06-16.12.2003).

### **3. PALESTINE**

Greece and Palestine have long and friendly relations. As far as the institutional framework is concerned, the Greek Government and the Palestinian Liberating Organisation (PLO) have signed an Agreement for Economic, and Technological Co-operation (Athens, 22.11.1999), which also provides for joint activities in the sectors of agriculture and agricultural industry.

In November 1999, the Palestinian Minister of Agriculture visited Greece and the two sides signed a Memorandum for co-operation in the sector of agriculture. This Memorandum provides a legal framework for exchanging know-how on cultivating practices, organizing research programmes and training seminars, boosting joint investments and mutual support in international fora.

It should be mentioned that prior to this Memorandum, the Greek Minister of Agriculture had visited both Israel and Palestine in the occasion of the exhibition AGRITECH, in Haifa. Besides, the General Secretary of the Greek Ministry of Agriculture had represented Greece in the International Meeting for Agricultural Development of Palestine, in Hebron.

In practice, the Greek Ministry of Agriculture sent over to Palestine in 1999 300 tonnes of raisin sultana, 300 tonnes of olives and provided 7 scholarships to Palestinian students for postgraduate courses in Agriculture and Regional Development.

In the biennium 2001-2002, the Greek side implemented 2 training seminars in the Mediterranean Agronomic Institute of Chania for experts from the Palestinian Ministry of Agriculture, on issues such as: exploiting EU initiatives for development of the agricultural sector, agribusiness management, Common Agricultural Policy, World Trade Organisation and marketing of agricultural products.

### **4. TUNISIA**

The 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Protocol of the extended Joint Ministerial Committee led to the implementation of the following Programmes:

Training Tunisian experts in fishery culture.

Training Tunisian experts in producing and exploiting forestry products.

Training Tunisian women in income diversification activities and provision of know-how in building institutional framework for Agricultural Home Economic services.

Training Tunisian experts in protecting the wild fauna.

Greece is planning, within 2004, a training programme in drying raisins.