

The Euro-Mediterranean agricultural system

General context

. The Euro-Mediterranean partnership has postponed the issue of agricultural exchanges; negotiations are scheduled to start on a country by country basis as of 2001.

. Agricultural production in the North and South of the region is in direct competition (fruit and vegetable): thus, the opening of the European market to products from the south may unbalance the market if due care is not taken.

Impact on the free trade area

- . Potential direct competition between products of the north and south of the Mediterranean if the agricultural negotiations are restarted;
- . Opportunities related to the development of the demand for food in the south corresponding to the rising standard of living;
- . Valorisation of a Mediterranean type agriculture and agricultural production for the European markets.

Stakes and axis

Stake 1 - Compensate the effects of competition for the most exposed geographical areas of the north

Axis 1.1 Set up a compensation programme for those geographical areas which are the most exposed to competition from the south of Europe

Stake 2 - Organise the players in the agricultural sector

Axis 2.1. : Organise a Mediterranean agriculture dialog
Axis 2.2 : Co-operate in the field of biological agriculture

Stake 3 - Valorise the Mediterranean agricultural system

Axis 3.1 : Encourage rural development
Axis 3.2 : Promote traditional agriculture
Axis 3.3 : Promote traditional agricultural products

Stake 4 - Assistance in the structuring and development of third countries agricultural sector in the perspective of a free trade area

Axis 4.1 : Technical assistance for those productions where the south is showing a deficit
Axis 4.2 : Co-operation in the field of water
Axis 4.3 : Providing assistance in the professional organisation of the south agricultural sector