



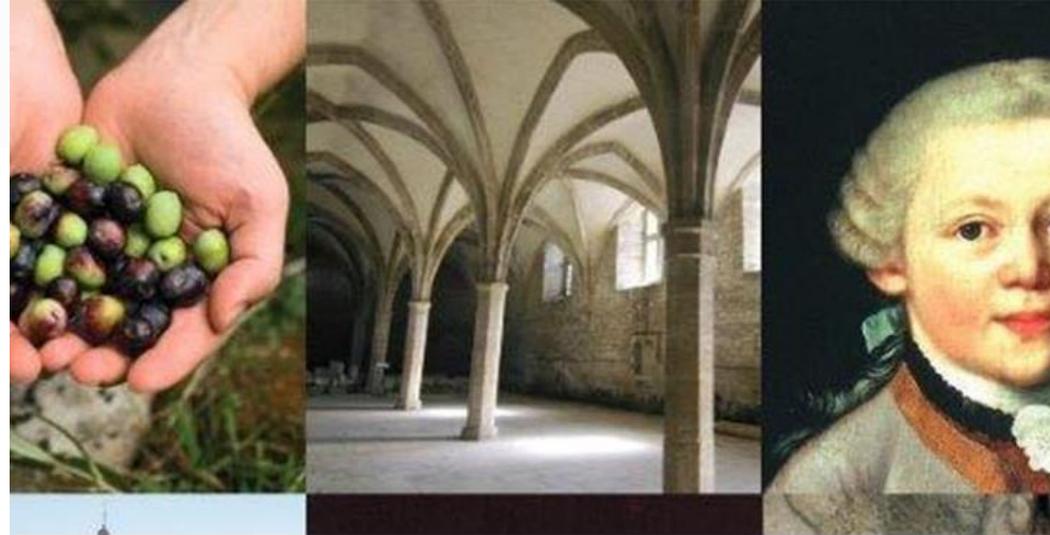
**The Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe:  
the instrument of cultural diplomacy of Local  
Authorities**

Milena Bertani  
Presidente Aiccre



Launched in 1987 with the Santiago de Compostela Declaration, the **Council of Europe's Cultural Routes Programme** demonstrates how the heritage and cultures of European regions contribute to a shared cultural heritage and encourages European citizens to rediscover their heritage.

The Programme Routes preserve and enhance Europe's natural and cultural heritage to improve the living environment and support cultural, social and economic development. They promote a form of cultural tourism that supports sustainable development.

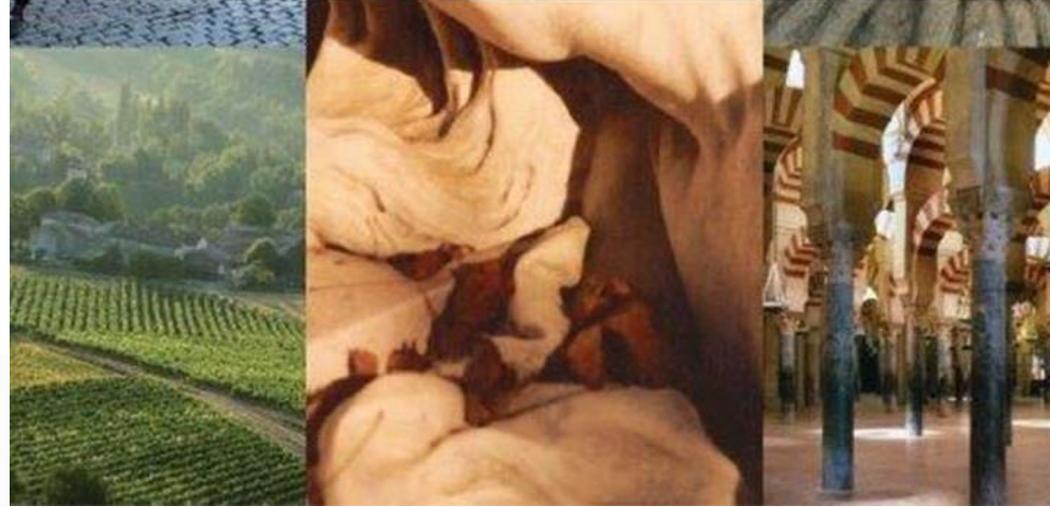


Cultural route  
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Itinéraire culturel  
du Conseil de l'Europe

COUNCIL OF EUROPE

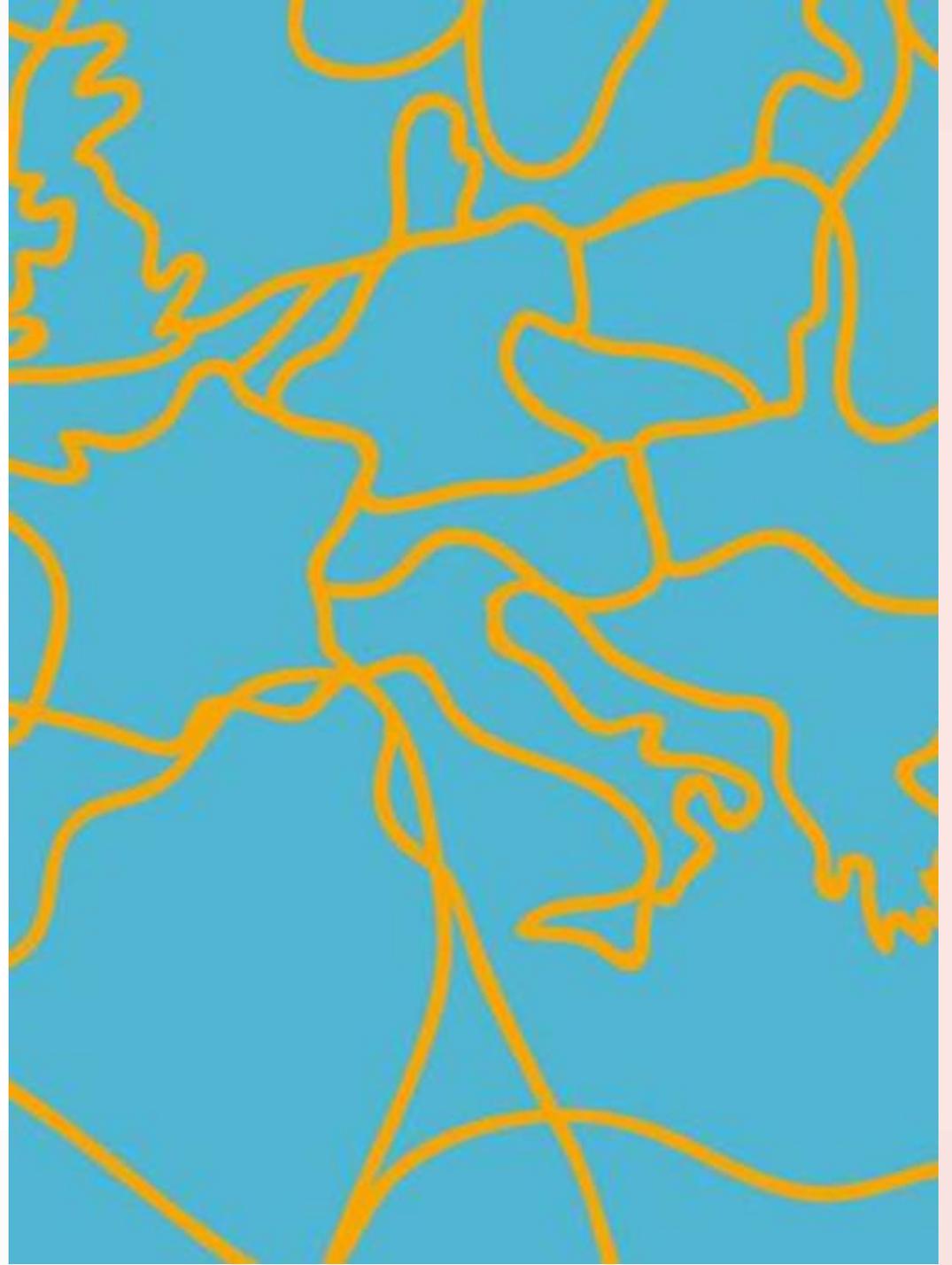


CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE



The "Cultural Route of the Council of Europe" **certification is a guarantee of excellence.**

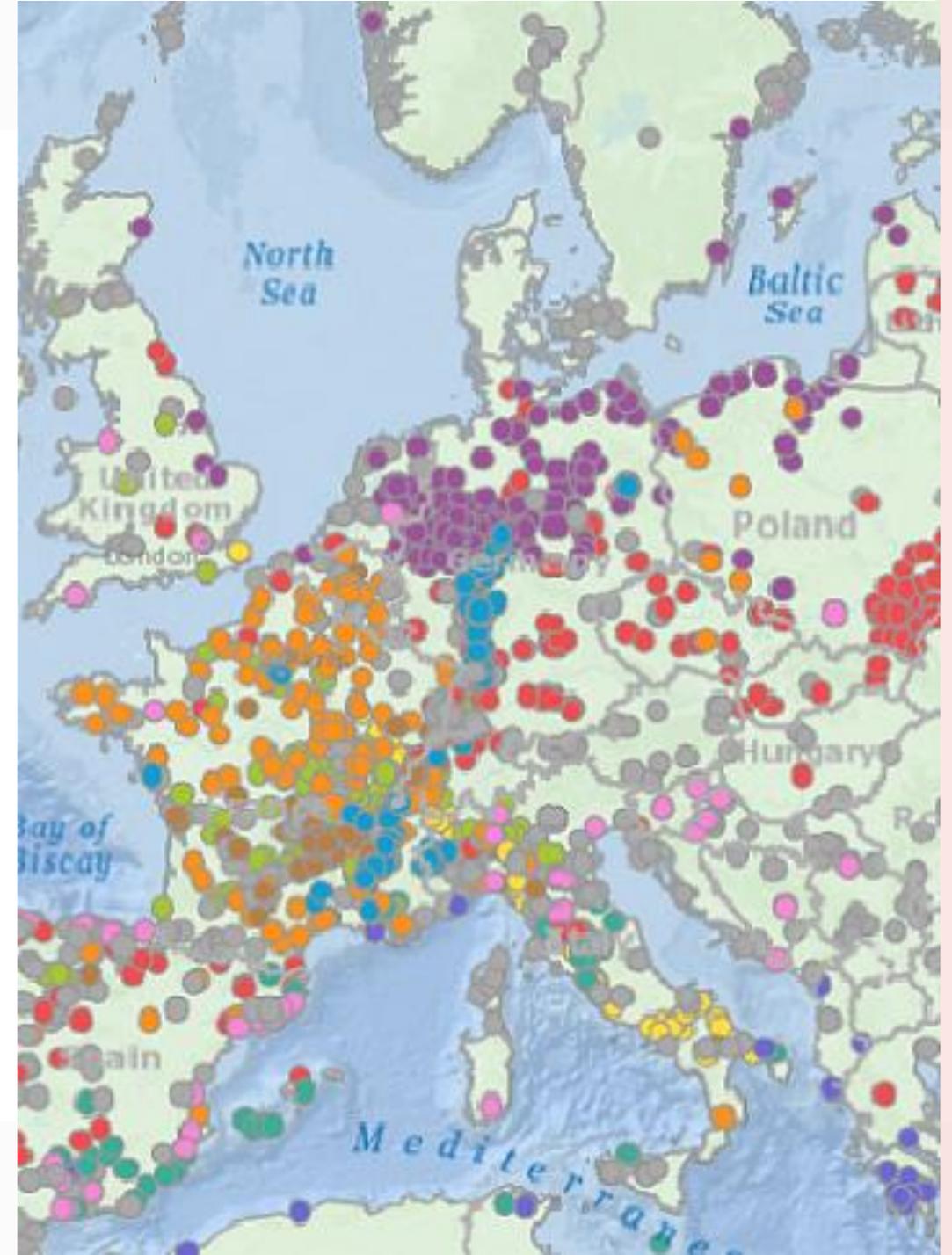
The networks carry out innovative activities and projects related to **five main priority areas of action**: cooperation in research and development; enhancement of European memory, history and heritage; cultural and educational exchanges for young Europeans; contemporary cultural and artistic practices; cultural tourism and sustainable cultural development. Through its programme, the Council of Europe offers a **model for the transnational management of culture and tourism** and fosters synergies between national, regional and local authorities and a wide range of associations and socio-economic actors.



## The cultural diplomacy of local authorities

The **Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe** are an invitation to travel and discover Europe's rich and diverse heritage, bringing together people and places in networks of shared history and heritage.

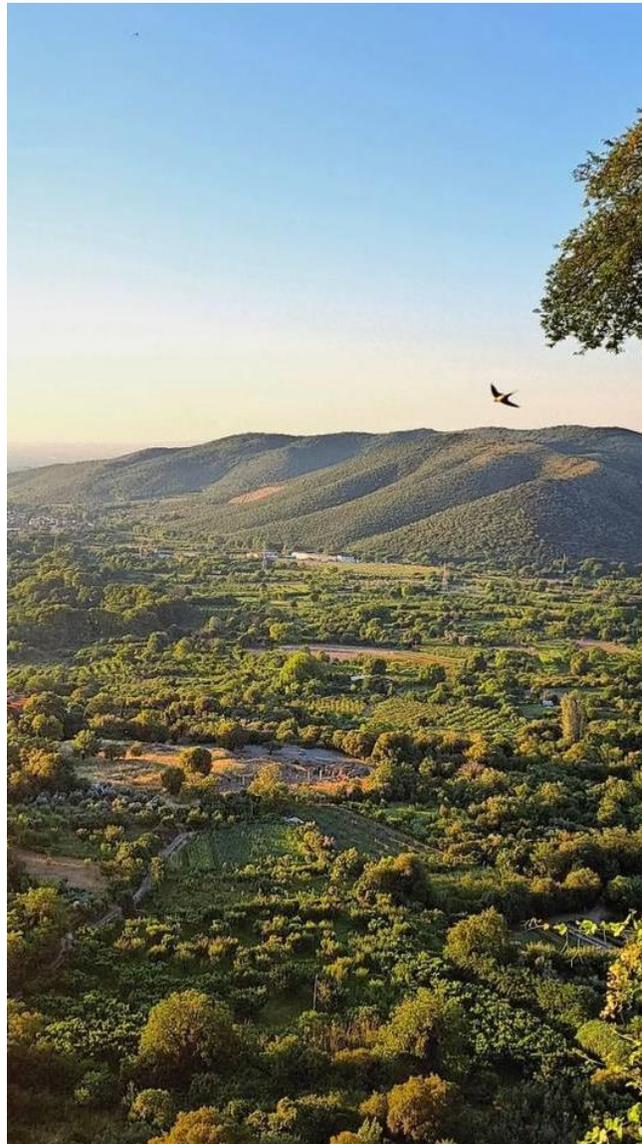
They put into practice the **values of the Council of Europe**: human rights, cultural diversity, intercultural dialogue and cross-border reciprocal exchanges, and **build bridges between countries, regions, local authorities and citizens** through common and shared projects across the European Union and beyond, which **strengthen Europe's image outside the continent and its relations with the rest of the world.**



**Cultural diplomacy** plays a crucial role in enhancing mutual understanding, promoting national interests, and addressing global challenges through cultural exchange and cooperation. Both bilaterally and multilaterally, it is a **powerful tool for promoting peace, stability and international relations.**

The **dimension of culture in the Mediterranean** is not confined to museums or in any case to the places traditionally assigned to it: on the contrary, it is pervasive, and concerns everyday reality to the point of becoming one with the landscape.





# The Cultural Route of the Mediterranean Peoples



The richness and diversity of landscapes is a distinctive feature of the European continent.

There is probably no other place where the signs of human interaction with nature in the landscape are so varied, contrasting and localized.

Despite the immense scale of socio-economic changes that have accompanied the wave of industrialisation and urbanisation this century in many parts of Europe, much of this diversity remains, giving a distinctive character to countries, regions and local areas.

*EEA - European Environment Agency, 2016*

# Food Landscapes in Europe

Agriculture has always been more than just food production. **Over the centuries, agricultural practices have shaped the European landscape, local communities, economy and cultures.** A hundred years ago, the countryside was dotted with small farms, and many homes in urban areas had small vegetable gardens. The markets offered local, seasonal products, and eating meat was a special event for most Europeans.

**Today's European agricultural landscapes** are increasingly **characterised by a low diversity of crops** and large areas and increasingly large land on which only a few varieties are grown. In these territories **characterized by intensive agriculture**, biodiversity is lower than in those where smaller fields with different crops prevail, separated by rows of shrubs and small woods.

- ♦ Agriculture and food are at the heart of the European way of life. Rooted in rich traditions, the ways in which we produce and appreciate food have shaped the communities, cultures and landscapes that define Europe.
- ♦ Agriculture and the food sector are essential to sustain rural and coastal communities that are dynamic and economically prosperous. Dynamic rural and coastal areas are key to countering depopulation and enabling the 'right to stay'.
- ♦ The future of this strategic sector depends on the ability of the Union and its Member States to create the right conditions to achieve 'a future-ready agri-food sector that operates within planetary boundaries'.
- ♦ It is therefore crucial to return to the "roots" and re-establish the link between food, territory, seasonality, local cultures and traditions.

*A vision for agriculture and food. Together, building an attractive EU food and agriculture sector for future generations - COM/2025/75 final*

# Aree rurali

## Unione Europea



PIL -25%  
rispetto alla  
media UE

22% di  
cittadini con  
alto livello di  
istruzione

137 milioni di abitanti



30% dei  
cittadini  
della UE

Oltre l'80% del  
territorio della UE

40% dedicato ad  
attività agricole



-19% rispetto  
alle aree  
urbane



59% delle case ha  
connessione internet veloce  
-28% rispetto alla media UE



Gender gap  
occupazionale  
del 13%

# Characteristics and importance of Europe's rural areas

- economic, environmental and social diversity characterises rural areas and communities in Europe;
- **Minorities and diverse ethnic groups living in rural areas are crucial for the sustainability of rural areas.** Their culture, traditions, heritage and way of life contribute not only to Europe's diversity, but also to our continent's landscape, biodiversity, economy, culture and social cohesion;
- relevant to the **conservation of Europe's natural and cultural heritage;**
- relevant to the **value of rural resources, such as ensuring a secure supply of quality food, developing the circular economy and combating climate change;**
- relevant to **increasing the resilience of rural communities,** through the participation of inhabitants, knowledge exchange, support and capacity building.

To ensure that they can continue to play these essential roles, a European Commission Communication has set out a long-term **vision for the EU's rural areas up to 2040**, identifying areas for action for stronger, connected, resilient and prosperous rural areas and communities.

Local and regional authorities play a crucial role in organising and supporting culture in rural areas.

**Rural culture plays an important role in the maintenance and management of cultural landscapes, biodiversity and traditional values:** some rural areas with high natural values form specific biocultural areas where the environment and the local economy coexist in a sustainable way, as an integral part of the culture and traditions of these communities.

**European Cultural Routes**, within a country and beyond its borders, with the participation of the population and all relevant actors, make a **significant contribution to the dissemination of local and regional cultural expressions, while promoting lesser-known regions and supporting employment, job creation and entrepreneurial activities in rural areas.**

*«Foods are a higher truth, they often mark the real frontiers. A distinction was rightly made between the Beer Peoples and the Wine Peoples. The olive and its oil, the fig tree, the vineyard and the grapes explain Mediterranean civilization better than a mass of historical documents or classified monuments».*

*Gabriel Audisio  
Jeunesse de la Méditerranée*



05/05/2025



# Mediterranean land of mestizos: Culinary migrations and food landscapes



FoODLAND - or the Food Landscapes of the Mediterranean - is a project of Aiccre born with the aim of attributing cultural value to the food of Mediterranean civilizations by inextricably linking it to the production landscapes and cultivation methods, integrated into local history.

While recognizing the intrinsic value of the Mediterranean Diet attributed by UNESCO, the locations of FoODLAND intend to represent other values of Mediterranean food culture.

# Permanence and adaptability, two fundamental traits of the Mediterranean

Even before becoming a unifying basin of men and peoples, the Mediterranean appears as a successful experiment in coexistence between man and nature, with landscapes that hold together, after millennia, the stories through which human civilization has developed.





*Culture and history are lowered directly into things, into the stones, into the wrinkles on the faces of men, into the knowledge of wine and oil, into the color of the waves.(Predrag Matvejevic)*

Throughout the Mediterranean area, **nature and culture have produced the infinite variety of places**, based on different efforts and natures in a proverbial balance, giving life to a **myriad of landscapes that are an expression of their exceptional variability.**

These landscapes represent **values** that are the result of a shared heritage: they are **territorial markers, historical elements that have become the "symbol" of a geographical area of southern Europe, constituting new heritage objects.**

Their aesthetic values possess an intrinsic character that varies with time.

*What is the Mediterranean?*

*A thousand things together.*

*Not one landscape, but countless landscapes.*

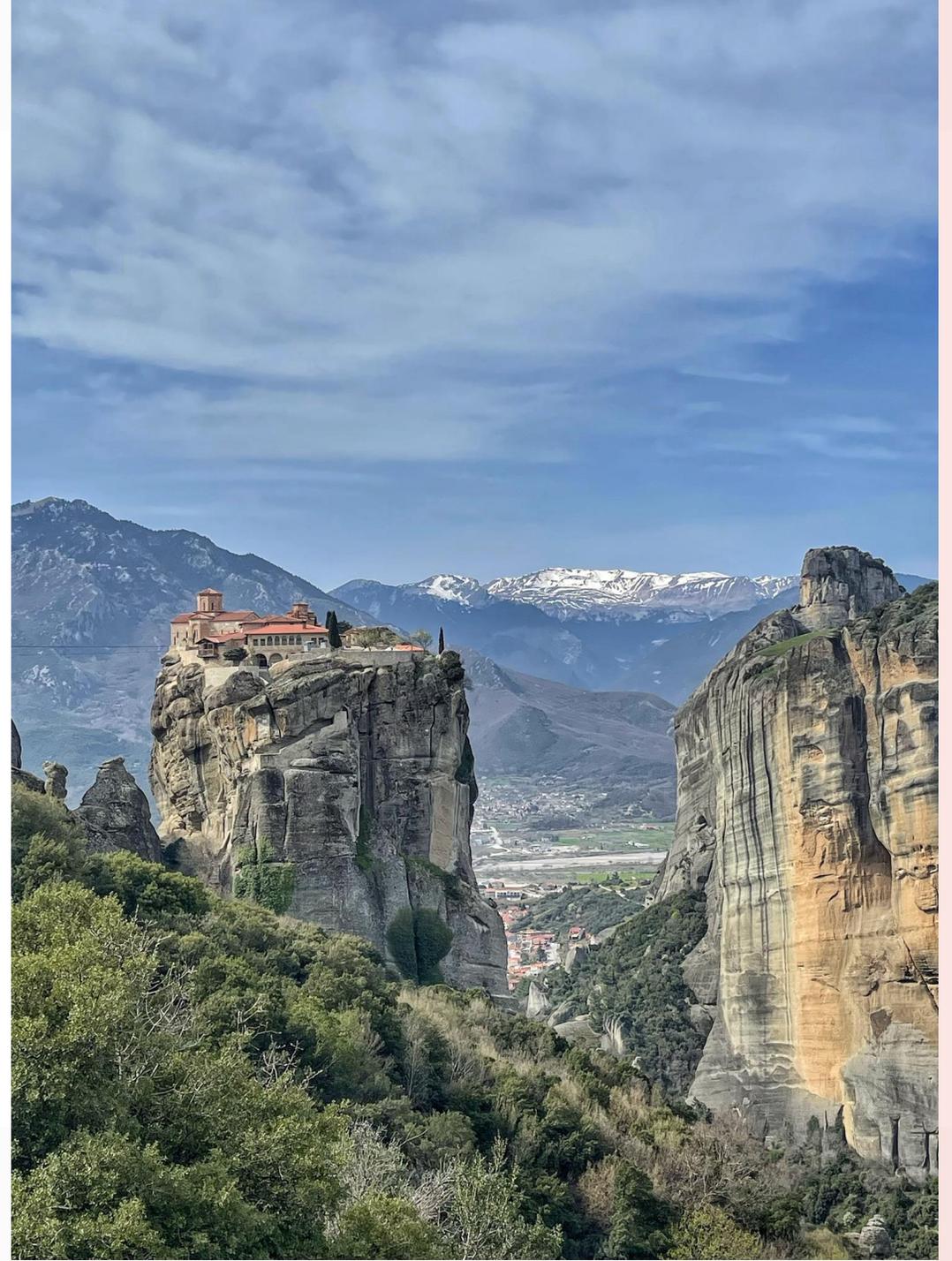
*Not a sea, but a succession of seas.*

*Not one civilization, but a series of civilizations stacked on top of each other.*

*Travelling in the Mediterranean means encountering the Roman world in Lebanon, prehistory in Sardinia, the Greek cities in Sicily, the Arab presence in Spain, Turkish Islam in Yugoslavia.*

*It means sinking into the abyss of centuries.*

(F. Braudel)



In food landscapes it is not possible to implement conservation policies by crystallizing the past, as in a museum, but it is necessary to manage the natural evolution of ecosystems, maintaining their original, distinctive characteristics.



Sublime places of land and sea become the protagonists of the narrative through the men and women who generated them.

Wild resources take on cultural value where they have filled the voids, left uncultivated by humanity.

**The uncultivated land is a refuge area for biological diversity.**

*How do you explain the deep essence of the Mediterranean?*

*The explanation lies not only in nature, which has also done much in this direction, nor only in man, who has obstinately tied everything together, but in the confluence of favors and curses - both numerous - of nature and the manifold efforts of men, yesterday as today. (F. Braudel)*



FoODLAND's philosophy and goals are expressed in the following photos:

An activity carried out in a sustainable, eco-friendly way;

The effort of the men involved in production passes to that of other men and women who will wisely use that product to prepare dishes that can enhance its qualities and taste, the result of that particular terroir;

The protection of biodiversity is visible from the quality of the landscape produced and the presence of numerous species present.









*"There are ten, twenty, a hundred Mediterraneans, and each of them is in turn subdivided. If for a moment we shared the real life of the fishermen of yesterday and today, we would learn that everything changes from one point of the coast to another, from one seabed to another, from a sandbar to a rocky bed. But on land it is the same thing; we are still in the Mediterranean, of course; the climate of Cádiz recalls that of Beirut, the Provençal Riviera resembles the southern coast of the Crimea, the vegetation of the Mount of Olives, near Jerusalem, could very well be in Sicily - of course, but the land is not worked in the same way, the same tools are not used, nor the same style of impaling or piling the vine, Not the same wines, olive trees, figs, laurels, not even the same houses, the same customs. Geography has often only sketched these differences; the past, a relentless manufacturer of particularisms, has accentuated everything, spreading its delicious colors everywhere."*

*Fernand Braudel*

# A multifaceted variety shares the pleasure of consciously inhabiting the land

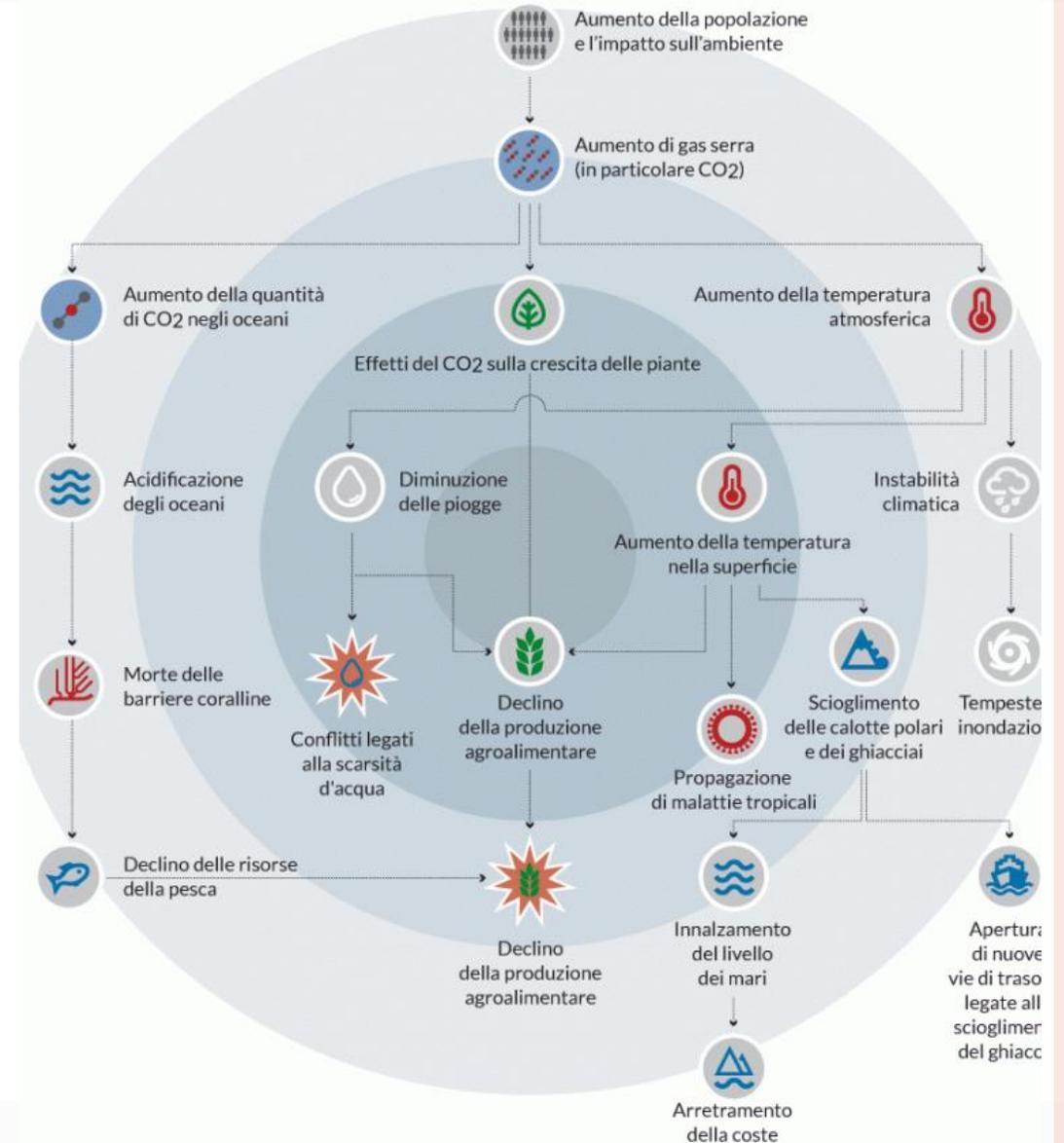
- The **Mediterranean region** is one of the most important birthplaces of cultivated plants in the world: in it there are **numerous areas with an exceptional concentration of biodiversity** and a **high density of endemic species** that are very important for the entire continent.
- An extraordinary variety that is also reflected in the **sea. Species richness is ten times higher than the world average**
- The particular geological and climatic characteristics of the European territory overlooking the Mediterranean have determined the succession and overlapping of different episodes of colonization, favoring a **great wealth of biodiversity** that has produced a **great variety of landscapes**. The rural ones, the result of human activities, of the history of the territories, of the overlapping of the areas cultivated with pasture or woodland, still speak of places, traditions, cultures and flavors of inestimable economic and social value.

This formidable hotspot is now subject to rapid anthropogenic changes



## La catena dei cambiamenti climatici

CAUSE / EFFETTI



As a **result of climate change**

the cultivation of the olive tree in Italy has arrived close to the Alps, in the Po Valley, about half of the national production of tomatoes for preserves and durum wheat for pasta, typically Mediterranean crops, is grown today.

the vineyards have even reached the peaks.

It is in the province of Sondrio, beyond the 46th parallel, the last northern frontier of Italian olive oil. In the last ten years – according to Coldiretti – the cultivation of olive trees on the sunniest ridges of the Valtellina mountains has gone from zero to about ten thousand plants, on almost 30 thousand square meters of land.

Italian wine has increased by one degree in the last 30 years, but over time there has been an advance in the harvest of up to a month compared to the traditional month of September. The heat has also changed the distribution of the vineyards on the territory which tend to expand upwards with the presence of the vine at almost 1200 meters above sea level.

Heating also causes the traditional environmental conditions for the maturation of cured meats, for the refinement of cheeses or the aging of wines.

A situation that in fact puts at risk the heritage of typical products that owe their specific characteristics essentially or exclusively to the geographical environment including human factors and precisely to the combination of natural and human factors.

But the ongoing climate change also manifests itself with the higher frequency of extreme events with seasonal shifts, short and intense rainfall and the arrival of new dangerous alien parasites.

# Taste and smell: the food that produces landscape

Food, better than other symbols, promotes a system of identification and mapping of cultural heritage in synergy with biological diversity, cultural diversity and cultural heritage. The experiences of the inhabitants take voice to tell this widespread local heritage, often invisible, which "originates landscapes" capable of building a personal emotional, affective, gustatory geography, always evolving.

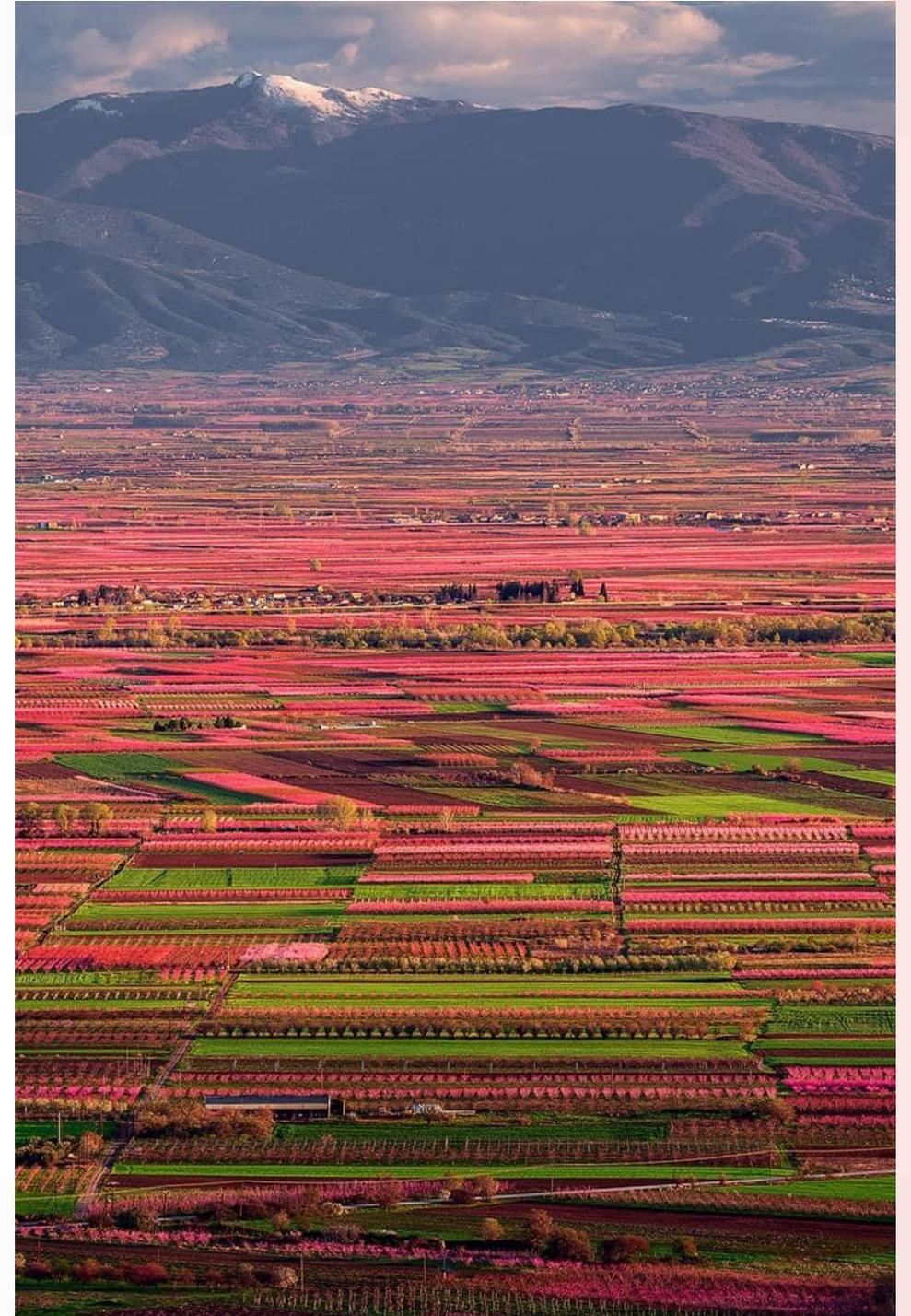
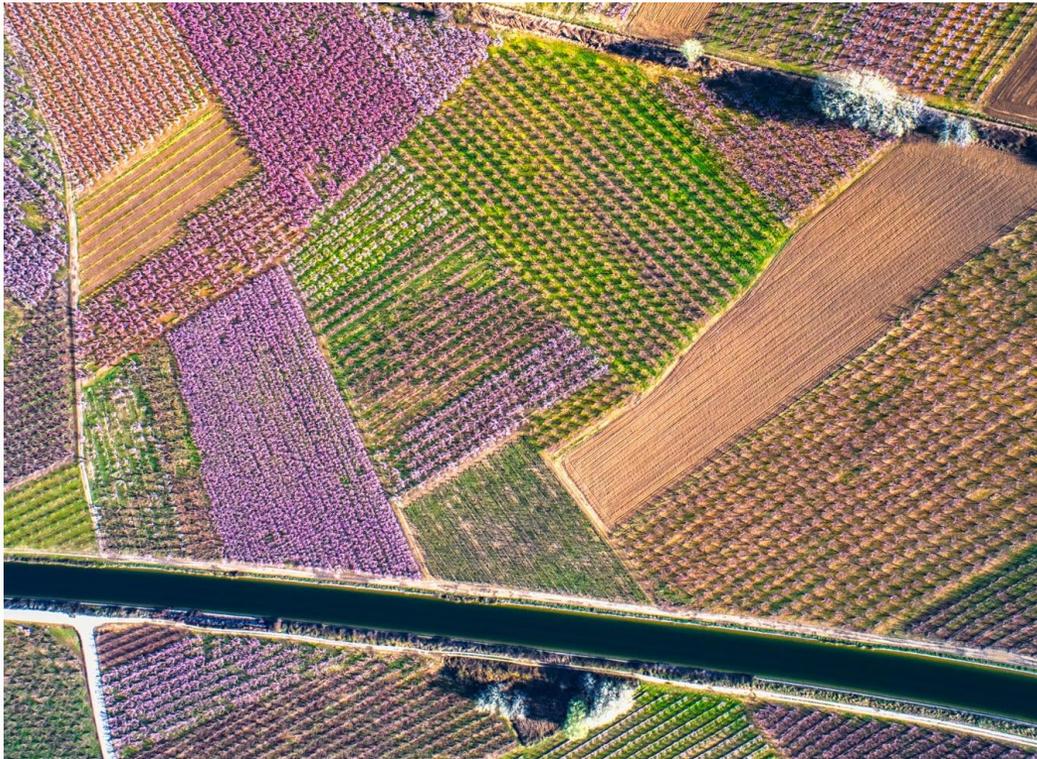


Our food identities, observed from afar, seem monolithic, while seen up close they reveal a varied fabric of differences.

If we **reconstruct the origin of food**, we discover that for many the declaration of **uncontrolled designation of origin** applies.



*The Mediterranean is not just geography.  
Along the coasts of this sea passed the  
silk road, the roads of salt and spices, of  
oils and perfumes of amber and  
ornaments, of tools and weapons, of  
wisdom and knowledge, of art and  
science crossed.*  
(Predrag Matvejevic)



*Every day you learn something from this infinite range of flavors and knowledge. These traditions can be perpetuated and also transformed, enriched, and misled. This is what I repeat to the chefs I am raising and to the students of our schools. You have to focus on what you know how to do, on your terroir, on your history while continuing to be curious, observing and discovering the world to undergo new influences, to introject and enrich yourself with a new experience.*

*Alain Ducasse – A life of taste and passion*

# Taste designs new itineraries in the Mediterranean

They will produce cereals and wine, and they will feed themselves by obtaining flour from barley and wheat, kneading excellent cakes and baking breads. As a side dish they will have salt, olives and cheese, and they will boil onions and vegetables. They will have dried figs, chickpeas and broad beans, and they will toast myrtle and beech berries over the fire, which they will accompany with a moderate intake of wine...

Plato, Republic 372



# Bread, the food of the peoples

In the **Mediterranean area** there are about **1350 types of bread**, from simple breads such as Jewish unleavened bread or Arabic pita bread (flat, leavened, round wheat-based bread, typical of the Middle East and North Africa that seems to have originated in Syria), to elaborate breads enriched with seeds, vegetables or dried fruit.



The **Greeks** learned the art of bread-making from the Egyptians: in their world the idea of bread was closely linked to that of the fertility of the earth. The students proved worthy of their skilled masters: they perfected the **construction of public ovens**, bringing this art to high levels, and produced bread in many excellent species. The Greeks were also responsible for the **establishment of bakers' associations** with precise rules for working and processing bread.

According to chroniclers of the time, already in the **classical period** - between the sixth and fifth centuries B.C. C. – **there were 72 different types of bread: 50 of simple dough and 22 more complex** (the ancestors of pastry). Renowned were, for example, the breads of Cappadocia (leavened with milk) and Cyprus (baked under the embers) or the fragrant amolcée, the bread of the peasants. The most famous of the entire Attic production was the bread sold in the agora: "so white that the ethereal snow wins in candor", according to the praise made of it by Arcestratus of Gela (fourth century BC). For Hippocrates, the best was the "obelites", cooked on a spit.

The most widespread, almost a national dish, was the "maza", which was consumed throughout the Hellenic world. It was barley flour added to water, honey or milk. It was eaten both fresh, in the form of a kind of soup, and dried, but also cooked, like a kind of cracker. In this case, it was often even used as a serving dish. A curious bread was in the shape of a mushroom, called "boletos".

The most valuable wheat flour bread (ἄλευρα) was reserved for feast days. There was also no shortage of greased focaccia, seasoned, flavored with honey and sesame or with wine.

There were also numerous ceremonial breads, offered on altars to the various deities. There were also special breads, prepared for various occasions (weddings, funerals, baptisms, etc.).

The "gamelio", for example, kneaded with honey and sesame, was the bread eaten during wedding banquets. The "koliva" made with seeds and dried fruit, mixed with honey, was inevitable in funerals. This is a custom that has come down to the present day.

Greek breads had names related to the shapes, the types of cereals used, the ingredients, the cooking methods and, above all, the rites for which they were intended. Among the many breads, the most common was the aghelaios, from which our classic loaves originated.

Bread made with rye flour was called òlyra while chondrite was made with spelt flour.

Each Greek city had its own characteristic shapes and enriched the bread with the products of its territory (honey, wine, aromatic herbs, various seeds).

# Historical curiosities

Athenaeum of Naucrati writes "The learned at banquet" at the end of the first century A.D.

More than for its literary beauty, the volume is remembered for being a very useful anthology of previous texts that would otherwise be lost: in fact, it cites seven hundred authors, a thousand titles, twelve thousand verses.

The scholars speak of theater and philosophy but the "scene" is that of a banquet. There is, for example, a long review of breads that gives us an idea of how sophisticated the ancient cuisine was.

Athenaeus, *Deipnosophistae*, 3.75-79,

*"Trypho of Alexandria, in his book on Nature, lists various types of bread (if I remember correctly): leavened bread, unleavened bread, loaf made with the best wheat flour, bread made with semolina, wholemeal bread (this, he says, is better for digestion than white wheat flour bread), rye loaf (or spelt), of single-grain wheat and millet. Semolina bread\*, he says, comes from wheat, because there are no barley groats. "*  
*(\*coarser ground flour)*

*Then there is a classification that derives from the forms of cooking:*

*ipniten (baked)*

*Escharites (cooked over high heat)*

*achaina [baked by women in large ritual loaves]*

*kribanite [cooked in earthenware containers]*

*encryphias (cooked in ashes)*

*dipunon (biscuit - baked twice)*

*laganon*

*apanthracis (cracker cooked on coals)*

*hemiartion (half loaf)*

*placite (flat cheese bread for children)*

*daratos (unleavened bread, also called Cilician)*

*agelai (common bread)*

*autopyrus (wheat flour loaves)*

*Orindes (rice flour loaves)*

*collabos (rolled bread made from fresh wheat and milk)*

*maconidos (with poppy seeds)*

*Chrysocollos (with linen and honey, golden in color)*

*collyra (a very ancient bread)*

*obelias (bread worth an obolus, perhaps cooked on a spit or in the ashes)*

*etnites or lekithites (a rolled bread)*

*Nastos (a white leavened bread)*

*Heracleon (a sort of savory pie of bread and cheese)*

*thronos (the morsel for the oldest and most respected of the table)*

*apopurias (a leavened loaf baked in ashes)*

*Artoptikinos (with plenty of yeast)*

*Kappadokios (Cappadocia bread, a fluffy bread made with milk, oil, and salt),*

*boletinos (a mushroom-shaped bread, with the "chapel" covered with poppy seeds and baked on stones)*

*strepticias (with a little honey, pepper, oil or sometimes lard. When lard is used, it is also called "artolaganon")*





*The emotion of a flavour is not simply born from a dish, it is intimately connected to the magic of the place and the authenticity of the welcome received*

*Relais & Châteaux Manifesto – Unesco*

FoODLAND has the vocation of wanting to identify food landscapes of indisputable quality thanks to the values expressed by the **Mediterranean Food Landscape Charter**.



# Mediterranean Food Landscapes Charter

- *mountain, hilly and lowland areas and localities, areas of lake, river and maritime systems, - even small - characterised by traditional productions, consolidated culinary and eno-gastronomic typicality or characterised by the presence of traditional productions or techniques of cultivation, breeding and fishing, processing and transformation, or at risk of extinction;*
- *garrisons of historical and architectural value inserted in contexts of agro-environmental - naturalistic value;*
- *areas located in the system of national and regional Protected Areas, in the Natura 2000 Network Sites and in the Unesco Biosphere Reserves characterized by the presence of traditional productions or techniques of cultivation, breeding and fishing, processing and transformation;*

- *rural landscapes or ecosystems at risk of extinction;*
- *areas characterized by the presence of wild resources with cultural value as an expression of traditional collection, processing and use techniques;*



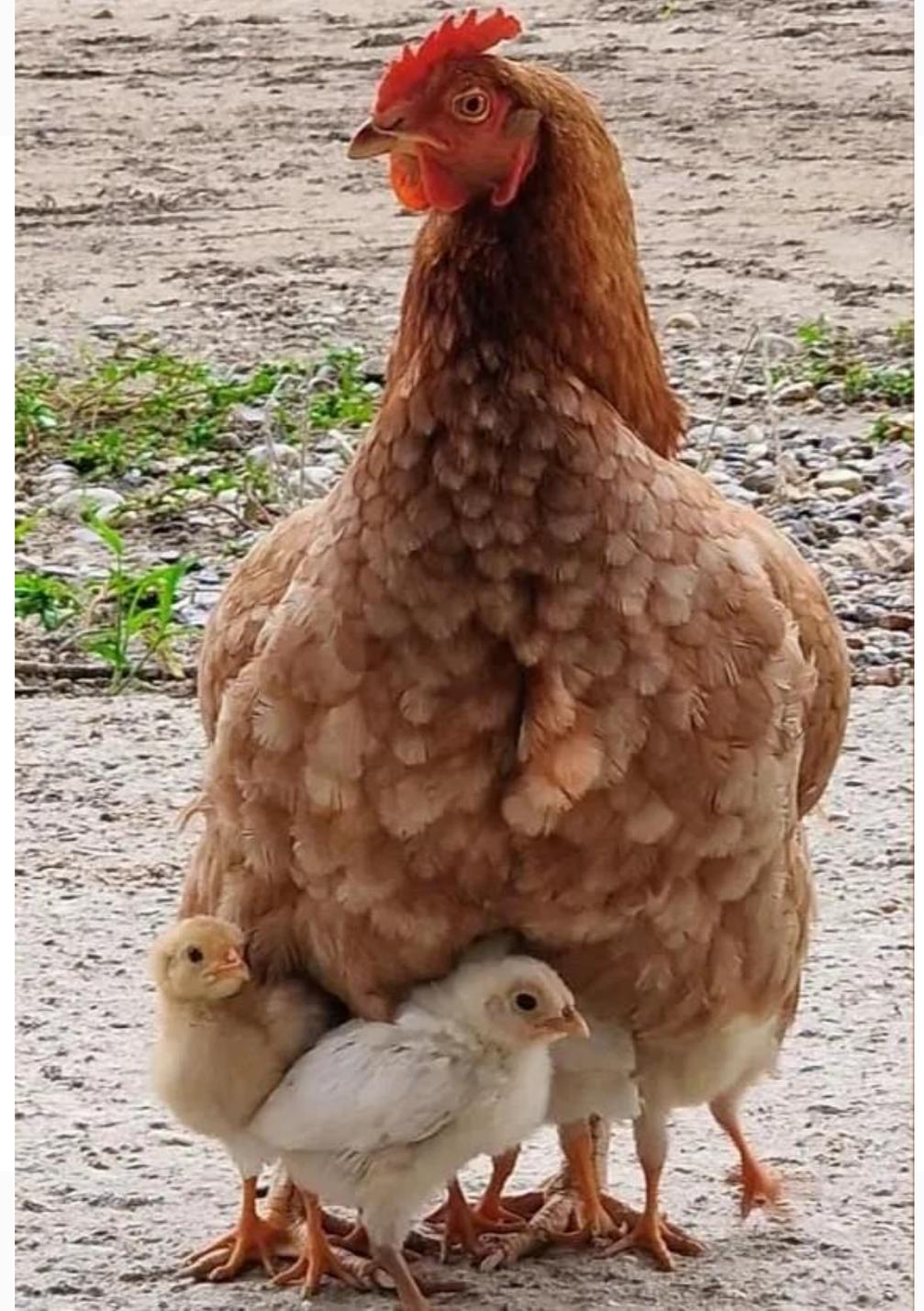
- *cultivation, breeding or processing techniques or practices that ensure greater environmental sustainability;*
- *producers and companies dedicated to the preservation and protection of typical crops and products, their transformations;*
- *communities and associations dedicated to the preservation and protection of food and wine culture and traditional or endangered productions;*
- *communities committed to protecting the local territorial variety, preserving the richness of identities without renouncing the taste for contamination, reinforcing the emotional capital linked to roots, typicality and territorial location;*
- *producers and companies that, in balance between tradition and innovation, transform the landscape on the basis of principles consistent with tradition and with the vision of a sustainable future;*
- *products, traditional processes, recipes and knowledge certified as municipal names or similar terms;*
- *Ecomuseums, peasant museums and food-related museums.*

# Implementation and development of FoODLAND's Food Landscapes

- geo-historical gastronomic redefinition of the Mediterranean, starting from food productions and their evolutionary history, deepening their origin, their journey in space and time to arrive on our tables, the roots from which recipes, dishes and specialties were born in order to identify paths, contaminations, similarities and differences between the great Mediterranean food cultures;
- photographic and narrative cataloguing of the individual food landscapes, identified and inventoried as intangible cultural heritage of the Mediterranean;



- A **collection of recipes and products**, an Anthology to represent the sublimation of local cuisines, highlight diversity, tell the story of the protagonists of the dish or gastronomic activity, whether they are landscapes, territorial agro-biodiversity, the main ingredients of the dish, cooks, chefs and communities that have perpetuated the transmission of traditional or innovative recipes. The Anthology will tell the stories of each dish, a summa of the history of a territory and its products, of the history of the men and women who inhabit those lands committed to handing down gastronomic traditions through their work and creativity.
- **narration, in the languages of the Mediterranean, of the stories of the food landscapes.** Anecdotes related to local life and locals who are personally committed to making the Mediterranean a better place. A window wide open on the thousand faces and the numerous suggestions of lands only apparently known.



- **networking or creation of new widespread ecomuseums**, an expression of the intangible cultural heritage of the Mediterranean.
- **definition of FoODLAND Itineraries dedicated to evolutionary gastronomy**, food and wine journeys on the road, gastronomic orienteering between traditional trattorias and restaurants, bars and historic shops or in the middle of nature (farms, farmhouses, mountain huts and refuges, etc.), places of production and transformation. The food and wine promotion will take place in collaboration with
  - ✓ local authorities and communities to represent the sublimation of local terroirs and cuisines, highlighting diversity through products;
  - ✓ Masters of Cuisine, Chefs and Cooks linked to the gastronomic traditions of the Mediterranean, also revisited by experimenting with new tastes and new sensations;
  - ✓ the guardians of territorial identity (producers, processors, merchants of a local "savoir faire").

# The future of FoODLAND

Cultural route  
of the Council of Europe  
Itinéraire culturel  
du Conseil de l'Europe



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## Cultural Routes ACADEMIC WORKSHOP

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Thank you for  
attention

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