

BILATERAL RELATIONS BETWEEN GREECE AND OTHER COUNTRIES

IN AGRICULTURAL AND RURAL SECTOR

ASIA

1. CHINA

The bilateral relations between Greece and China in the sector of agriculture were boosted during the last triennium, after the formal visit of the Greek Prime Minister in China (3-9.6.2002), where one Memorandum and one Agreement were signed in the sector of agriculture and forestry.

Up to date, the Greek side has already implemented two 3-week training seminars on olive-cultivation and olive production, attended by 3 experts of the State Forestry Administration of China (December of 2002 and December of 2003).

Furthermore, a contractual agreement was signed between the Greek Ministry of Agriculture and the National Institute of Agronomic Research for implementing a Programme of Technical Assistance for olive cultivation in Gansu, province of China (Donation of LATSIS Group Companies).

So far, five Chinese experts have already attended a training seminar in the Institute of Semitropical Plants and Olive-Tree, in Crete (2-24.2.2004).

2. INDIA

The bilateral relations between the two countries are kept to the signature of the Memorandum for Mutual Understanding in the agricultural sector (5.2.2001), during the formal visit of the Greek Prime-Minister in India.

In August of 2000, an Indian delegation visited Greece and met with the Greek Ministry of Agriculture, the General Secretary and other experts of the service. In that meeting, no specific issues were put forward by the Indian side, and the discussions mainly concerned issues of marketing and processing agricultural products.

In so far, no substantial progress has been achieved, in promoting the bilateral co-operation of the two countries.

3. IRAN

During an official visit of the Greek Minister of Agriculture in Teheran (01.05.1999), the two countries signed an Agreement for economic, scientific and technical co-operation in the sector of agriculture, followed by a relevant Memorandum, specifying the main actions for implementation within the biennium 1999-2000.

In September 2000, the Greek Deputy Minister of Agriculture visited Teheran, where the two countries signed the Minutes for the bilateral co-operation on issues of modern cultivations, horticulture, phyto-sanitary protection, grapes and

raisins, agricultural research and marketing of agricultural products.

As a follow up, the Greek side organised:

- A training visit of Iranian experts in the Sea Biology Institute of Crete, on issues of aquaculture, ichthyo-genetic stations, as well as meetings with experts from the Ministry of Agriculture, the Association of Greek Sea-cultures and the Association of Greek ship-owners (December of 1999);
- A seminar for olive cultivation in the Institute of Semitropical Plants and Olive-Tree of Crete (Chania, September of 2000);
- A visit of an Iranian delegation, headed by two Deputy Ministers of Agriculture, in the exhibition AGROTICA 2001, in modern cow-breeding units of Northern Greece and in the dairy industry FAGE;
- A ten-day training seminar on olive-cultivation in the Institute of Semitropical Plants and Olive Tree of Crete (Chania, December of 2002);
- A ten-day seminar on viniculture, in the Mediterranean Agronomic Institute of Chania (December of 2002).

4. JAPAN

During the formal visit of the Greek Prime-Minister in Japan (3-8.3.2002), there has been a promise to the Japanese Prime-Minister for providing technical assistance and know-how on olive cultivation issues.

Following this promise, the Japanese side made a specific request, asking for several olive trees to be planted in the island of TESHIMA, an environmentally degraded area due to toxic wastes (1970-1990).

The Greek side managed to overcome the lack of a relevant legal framework covering the bilateral relations. The request was met and 150 saplings were picked from the plant nurseries «KOSTELENOS» and sent to Japan. It is worth mentioning that in order to get round the bureaucratic procedures, «KOSTELENOS» plant nurseries donated the saplings to the Greek Ministry of Agriculture, also covering the air-freight cost from Athens to Osaka.

Due to the strict relevant legislation, the saplings went through all the necessary phyto-sanitary controls in Greece and received all the required certificates. After the quarantine period, the saplings were planted in the island TESHIMA (24.2.2003), with a big ceremony.