

IRRIGANTS d'EUROPE

The European sector of Irrigated Agriculture join in a single association

IRRIGANTS d'EUROPE is seeking to associate most of the national association representing irrigated agriculture in Europe, thus is actively engaged in enlarging its associates and representativeness.

The founders, are the national association in charge of irrigation water management of the Member States where irrigation is most diffused: **ANBI** - *Associazione Nazionale Consorzi di Gestione e Tutela del Territorio e Acque Irrigue* (IT), **FENACORE** - *Federacion Nacional de las Comunedades de Regantes de España* (ES), **Irrigants de France** (FR) and **FENAREG** - *Federação Nacional de Regantes de Portugal* (PT).

The participants are driven by the common awareness that the irrigated agriculture is essential for a balanced and sustainable growth of the entire European agriculture, and particularly of the Mediterranean one.

The modern agriculture, mainly irrigated agriculture, brought economic development and food security to the society. Much has been done to make more sustainable use of the resource, investments were made to support sustainable and environmentally friendly growth in the sector, which is now among the most advanced and innovative in the agricultural sector and beyond.

The forthcoming great season of technological innovation offers tremendous opportunities for irrigated agriculture. But while increasing the ability of science and farmers to solve problems related to irrigation, there is the risk of a decreasing perception among European citizens of its importance. The innovative strength of the sector is likely to be overwhelmed by uncertainty. Uncertainty of the future, driven by policies sometimes culpably blind to the benefits of irrigation, uncertainty of markets shaken by waves of speculation and unsustainable price volatility of agri-food products, uncertainty of costs to farmers should bear, starting from the hoary and penalizing discussion on water pricing in agriculture.

What **IRRIGANTS d'EUROPE** proposes is to create that commonality of purposes and actions guiding them on the path of an active and proactive participation, at last involving the irrigated agriculture representatives in decision making and in the creation of policies relevant for the sector:

- **IRRIGANTS d'EUROPE** want to bring together the irrigated agriculture sector at European level, restoring legitimacy to the proper use of water resources in modern agriculture, enabling them to face the contradictions and challenges of globalization.
- **IRRIGANTS d'EUROPE** want to give a single voice to irrigated agriculture before the European Institutions.
- **IRRIGANTS d'EUROPE** want to participate in the governance of processes, at all levels, starting from the European level.

Attention must be paid to a water policy for the Mediterranean area, with the emphasis on the unavoidable necessity of irrigated agriculture in southern Europe, while creating the background and conditions for a harmonious and sustainable development of new irrigated areas of central, northern and Eastern Europe. **IRRIGANTS d'EUROPE** aims supporting future development of irrigation in these areas engaging them in a dialogue and knowledge co-creation with those countries having a long tradition and experience in irrigation.

Declaration of Santarém in support of irrigation

On June 14th, 2017, Portugal receives the ceremony for the signing of the constitution of **IRRIGANTS D'EUROPE**, whose purpose is defending and developing of the European Irrigation.

The largest Associations managing water in agriculture joined for a better dialogue with the European Institutions and to assure a jointly oriented strategy to increase of irrigation and its communities, that allows an evolution of the activity, based on the sustainable water management, the promotion and competitiveness of the irrigation sector. Irrigation and water management are the keys of a sustainable agriculture which will answer to the challenges of climate change and food security. For that reason, it is important to develop now a medium and long-term strategy in Europe with sufficient means to accompany these evolutions.

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Since its inaugural steps, **IRRIGANTS d'EUROPE** cover of about 75% of the irrigated areas in Europe, 7,7 out of 10,2 million hectares, which largest part is managed every day by the founders, and its representativeness of the irrigated agriculture sector will soon increase.

Portugal is honoured to receive the inaugural **IRRIGANTS d'EUROPE**, an initiative integrated in the National Agriculture exhibition, in Santarém. In the constitution ceremony the present "Declaration of Santarém" will be presented and delivered to the **Portuguese Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Development, Dr. Luís Capoulas Santos**, in the presence of **Mr. Eduardo Oliveira e Sousa, President of the Portuguese Farmers Confederation**, and the host of this initiative. In order to attend this important event, the most representative stakeholders and organizations of the Portuguese national agricultural sector were also invited.

Dr. Luís Capoulas Santos, as Minister of Agriculture, has always promoted the sustainable development of the irrigated areas, currently embodied in the National Irrigation Program promoted by the current Government, and at the same time offering the great experience and access to irrigation techniques that Portugal has, 'know-how' that can be used in other countries. In previous functions, Dr. Luís Capoulas Santos was also the Rapporteur of the European Parliament, from 2008 to 2013, for the reform of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), during which he managed to maintain the support to irrigation, as a strategic sector for the European Union countries, situation that will be one of the priorities of this new organization, with the proximity of a new revision of Agricultural Policies.

The present Declaration marks the constitution act of **IRRIGANTS d'EUROPE**, on **June 14th, 2017**, in Portugal - Santarém, at 16:00 hours, on the CNEMA's Administration meeting room, and summarizes the intentions of the association in the defence of irrigation in the European context, in accordance with the "Rome Agreement" the founders had formalized on March 16, 2017, in Rome.

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Goyne
J. J.
M. Oliveira e Sousa

Therefore, **IRRIGANTS d'EUROPE** want to set up an European strategy for irrigated agriculture as a response to the great challenges of our time: the climate change and the protection of human health, the energy consumption, the environmental protection and the multifunctionality of agriculture, the food security for present and future generations.

IRRIGANTS d'EUROPE aims to actively participate in European decisional processes, offering the wealth of experience and the knowledge of the territories that represents, helping with the recognized capability of its Members to innovate while maintaining strong roots in centuries of management and governance of water in agriculture.

The **IRRIGANTS d'EUROPE** association has as its purpose:

- Carry on activities aimed to promote and represent the irrigated agriculture and water management in agriculture sector at European and international level, representing its members before European Union and its institutions and encouraging them to participate actively in the implementation of European Union' water policies;
- Promote and undertake cooperation in the irrigation and use and management of water in agriculture sector, between the European bodies in charge of water management in agriculture;
- Collate and provide relevant information, points of view, guidelines, working and positioning papers, opinions, to its associates and to the European Institutions;
- Collaborate with universities on research and innovation processes in irrigation and water management;
- Promote activities useful to highlight the benefits and positive externalities produced by irrigation for the environment and for the entire society;
- Encourage and enable communications at all levels about the importance of irrigated agriculture;
- Carry out all other actions related or functional to the realization of an active and effective participation.

Irrigated agriculture has great potential in terms of production of public goods, and it is supported by excellent technical capabilities, and still has untapped resources. **IRRIGANTS d'EUROPE** aims making them come out, obtaining the proper recognition, mobilizing in support of the common objectives of promoting quality agricultural production, which will produce in food security, adaptation to climate change, bio-economy and circular economy, for the sake of the rural society that depends of the correct and careful use of water resources. This can be obtained only by working together closely with the European institutions, proactively, with a strong presence in Europe.

Santarém, 14th June 2017

The signatory organizations:

ANBI FENACORE FENAREG Irrigants d'France

