

**Speech of Prof. Mouin Hamzé**  
**Secretary General of the CNRS-L**  
**Partnership for Research and Innovation in the Mediterranean Area**  
**4PRIMA Stakeholder Meeting (Alignment of Research Programmes)**  
**CNRS-L; Beirut, Lebanon (February 16, 2017)**

**Dr. Cosimo Lacirignola, Secretary General of CIHEAM;**  
**Carolina Rodrigues, Policy Officer, Directorate General of Research and Innovation; EU Commission;**  
**Partners & Stakeholders;**

Allow me to first welcome you in Beirut and at the National Council for Scientific Research – Lebanon (CNRS-L) and express our deep appreciation for your kind participation at this 4PRIMA Stakeholder Meeting on the Alignment of Research Programmes within the Partnership for Research and Innovation in the Mediterranean Area.

This event is part of a three day multi-project event that we are delighted to host.

- A meeting of the ERANETMED funding agencies yesterday initiated the first steps towards the Third ERANETMED Call; and as a project has laid the foundation and paved the way for a long-term (10 year) – collaborative programme.
- Tomorrow, and within the framework of the MEDSPRING Project - that has and will continue to enhance collaborative opportunities between our regions - a National Science Café and Awareness Raising Event will present the state of the art in CNRS-L research in Early Warning Systems, Solar Energy Applications and Marine Research in Lebanon as case studies and best practices for enhanced bi-regional collaborations. An awareness session will focus on opportunities for cooperation. We are glad that many will join us tomorrow.

We have actively worked together for over 10 years now; and through new opportunities, programmes and projects will continue to refine our collaboration based on new challenges, more resources (human and financial), new priorities and new possibilities.

The PRIMA initiative and 4PRIMA Project are thus a natural continuation towards building on our bi-regional collaborations.

The 4PRIMA Coordination and Support Action will create the bases and will develop a set of activities aimed at supporting the establishment of a long-term, well-structured and integrated partnership for research and innovation on food systems and water resources, among countries from both sides of the Mediterranean Sea (“PRIMA Initiative”), based on better coordination, collective and consequently, clear and tangible mutual benefits.

Noting that we do not work in isolation, and that many initiatives and programmes are well established and working in parallel to this collaboration; The aim of this 4PRIMA event, organized within Work Package 2 (under the leadership of the CIHEAM & CNRS-L) on the **Alignment of Research at National, European and International level – State of art** will support dialogue among national R&I funding institutions, agencies & programme managers to explore the way forward towards common research activities dealing with food systems and water resources; paving the way for an effective and long-term cooperation among programs, initiatives and actors identified.

In this next section of the programme, invited stakeholders will introduce the activities of their national programmes, agencies & funding institutions with a focus on possible alignment within PRIMA thematic scope (Water & Food); focusing on gaps and needs for the cooperation - thematic priorities & actions – like mobility, training, innovation, and others. The discussions that follow will allow all participants to delve in an open dialogue on joint activities to be undertaken within the PRIMA Programme for enhancing Cooperation Opportunities.

Finally, I am confident that you will join me in recognizing the continued support and efforts of our PRIMA colleagues and partners, with particular mention of the University of Siena, MIUR, & WP2 Co-Leaders CIHEAM / IAM-Bari. And of course, the efforts of the CNRS-L organizing team for these events (Ms. Rula Atweh & Ms. Tracy Hindi) who have worked to ensure the success of this event.

I take this opportunity to welcome all of you again, wish you a pleasant stay in Beirut and wish us all active and successful discussions this afternoon.

**Thank you.**