



IOC

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AT THE IOC



THE IOC WELCOMES ITS NEW DEPUTY EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS

ABDERRAOUF LAAJIMI AND IMDAT PEKDEMIR ARE THE IOC'S NEW DEPUTY EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS



The IOC has recently welcomed its new Deputy Executive Directors (DED), who, on Monday, July 1, took up their respective positions within the Organization. **Abderraouf Laajimi** and **Imdat Pekdemir** were elected by the IOC's Council of Members at the 118th plenary session in November 2023.

Mr. **Laajimi** (Tunisia) is responsible for the IOC's operational departments, including Research and Standardization, Economics and Promotion, and the Olive Growing, Olive Oil Technology and Environment Units. An agricultural engineer and expert in agri-food marketing, Mr. **Laajimi** holds a PhD in Applied Economics and an MSc in Agricultural and Food Marketing. Also a professor of agricultural economics, he served as Head of Cabinet and as Director General and Advisor to Tunisia's Minister of Agriculture, among other notable professional roles before joining the IOC.

Mr. **Pekdemir** (Türkiye) oversees the Executive Secretariat's administrative and financial affairs, as well as the IT Systems and Observatory Department. With a degree in Political Science and Public Administration and an MA in European Studies, Mr. **Pekdemir** has held various positions within the Turkish public administration, such as rapporteur for the Presidency of Türkiye and Head of Department for the Ministry of Education. He has also worked as a consultant for the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), alongside other key positions.

Mr. **Pekdemir** (Türkiye) oversees the

The Executive Secretariat of the IOC extends a warm welcome to the new management team, who join **Jaime Lillo**, Executive Director, in guiding the Organization towards future achievements.



THE IOC CONVENES ITS COUNCIL OF MEMBERS

REPRESENTATIVES OF THE IOC'S MEMBER STATES GATHER TO WELCOME NEW MEMBERS AND DISCUSS UPDATES FOR THE YEAR

The IOC convened the **119th plenary session** of its **Council of Members** on Tuesday, June 25 at the headquarters in Madrid. It brought together delegations from most of the organization's 20 Member States, who represent around 94% of the world's producing countries of olive oil and table olives.

The representatives and the IOC's Executive Secretariat met to welcome the countries that have most recently acceded to the **International Agreement on Olive Oil and Table Olives**, 2015, namely the **Republic of Azerbaijan** and **Bosnia and Herzegovina**. They also welcomed the **Republic of San Marino's** participation as an observer following their official request to join the IOC. Among the topics of discussion at the plenary were also the IOC's progress in 2024, upcoming projects, as well as current challenges and opportunities for the global olive sector. Climate change, which poses a particular hurdle for the olive sector, is being addressed by the IOC through a variety of actions, including knowledge transfer activities, expert missions, the "Dialogues for the Future" initiative, inter alia, falling under the IOC's motto "Olive oil is good for your health and for the planet". The assembly concluded with the flag rising ceremony to honor the **Republic of Azerbaijan's** adherence to the Agreement and the country's incorporation to the IOC family.



The session counted on the online presence of the **Minister for Agriculture of Jordan** and on a pre-recorded video from the **Spanish Minister for Agriculture**. The IOC welcomed the in-person participation of the Ambassadors to **Spain** of **Argelia, Argentina, Azerbaijan, Egypt, Jordan, Libya, Tunisia** and **Uruguay**, and other key authorities, including the Chair of the Council of Members, currently held by Iran, and the Chair of the Advisory Committee, now held by Tunisia. Also present were Heads of Delegation from the **European Commission, Türkiye, Saudi Arabia, Morocco, Iran** and **Uzbekistan**, and representatives from observer members, including the **United States of America (USA), Brazil**, the **Arab League** and **San Marino**. Among the attendees were also the newly appointed IOC Deputy Executive Directors from **Tunisia** and **Türkiye**.



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Spain's Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food **Luis Planas** recalled that climate change is one of humanity's most significant challenges, and that "to cope with water shortages or the appearance of possible pests and diseases, we need to focus on innovation". He underlined the relevance of the [recent agreement](#) between the IOC, the Spanish Government and the FAO to include the international olive germplasm bank in Cordoba under the **International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA)**. "Multilateralism and international coordination are fundamental," he said. "We need coordinated, precise responses. That's why the IOC's role is strategic."

The Minister of Agriculture of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, **Khaled Musa Al Henefat**, who held the IOC chairmanship for two years until December 31, 2023, participated online from Amman, stressing the importance of IOC member countries working together to address vital issues for the olive oil sector, and encouraging the organization of promotional campaigns to spread knowledge about the health benefits of olive oil across the board.

Jaime Lillo, IOC Executive Director, welcomed the participation of the IOC's member countries, emphasizing that their contribution reflected the importance and involvement of these countries with the Organization and the olive sector as a whole.





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On the occasion of the 119th plenary session, a number of decisions affecting almost all of the IOC's operational units were presented by the specialized committees and adopted by the Council, including decisions to revise the method for the organoleptic assessment of virgin olive oil, the IOC Trade Standard applying to olive oils and olive-pomace oils, and Memorandums of Understanding with a number of institutions, such as the Spanish National Research Council or the UC Davis Olive Center. Moreover, the Council said its farewell to **Mustafa Sepetçi**, IOC DED for administrative affairs whose term in office concluded on June 30 after eight years working for the organization's Secretariat.

The 119th session, which was followed by key sector events like the **Mario Solinas Quality Awards ceremony** for the quality of northern hemisphere extra virgin olive oils (June 25) or the **Olive Oil World Congress** (June 26-28), defined the IOC's course of action and established an action plan for the next six months. We report on both events in the following pages of this newsletter.





THE PRIZE-GIVING CEREMONY OF THE 2024 MARIO SOLINAS QUALITY AWARDS

THE IOC AWARDED THE 2024 MARIO SOLINAS PRIZES TO THE BEST EXTRA VIRGIN OLIVE OILS FROM THE NORTHERN HEMISPHERE

The awards ceremony for the renowned **Mario Solinas Quality Awards** took place at the Caja de Música Auditorium in Madrid's Cibeles Palace on Tuesday June 25, 2024, as part of the 119th session of the IOC Council of Members.

Among the personalities who spoke at the ceremony were **Jaime Lillo**, Executive Director of the IOC since January 1, 2024, and the first Spanish Director since the establishment of this intergovernmental organization in 1959; Dr **Mercedes Fernández Albaladejo**, Head of the IOC's Standardization and Research Unit; H.E. Mr **Mohammad Mehdi Boroumandi**, Vice-Minister of Agriculture of Iran (I.R.); **Francisco Javier Hernández Martínez**, General Coordinator of the Office of the Deputy Mayor of the City of Madrid; and H.E. **Mrs. Fatma Omrani Chargui**, Ambassador of Tunisia to Spain.

Multiple members of the diplomatic corps accredited in Madrid, as well as delegations and observers from all over the world attending the 119th session of the IOC Council of Members, also contributed to the success of the IOC's Mario Solinas Quality Awards prize-giving ceremony.

On the occasion of the 24th edition of the Mario Solinas Quality Awards for Extra Virgin Olive Oil Quality (Northern Hemisphere), the IOC signed a collaboration agreement with Madrid Salud to disseminate knowledge about olive oil quality.





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Convened in December 2023, the competition welcomed the participation of 113 extra virgin olive oils from 10 countries. Spain, once again, submitted the largest number of samples (57), followed by Tunisia (27), Portugal (15), Italy (4), Jordan (3), Greece (2), China (2), Algeria (1), Croatia (1) and France (1).

The members of the international jury selected the six oils with the highest scores in each category.

In the **Robust green fruitiness** category, the gold medal went to Aziende Agricole di Martino from Trani (Italy). The first prize in the **Medium green fruitiness** category went to Accademia Olearia of Alghero (Italy).

The best **Delicate green fruitiness** olive oil of this edition came from the Tunisian oil mill Adonis, located in Slouguia. In the **Ripe fruitiness** category, the international jury – composed of heads of IOC-recognized tasting panels and chaired by Plácido Pascual – awarded the highest score to the oil presented by Domaine Fendri, in Sfax (Tunisia).

In the **Small-scale producers** and **Packers** categories, gold medals were awarded respectively to the La Loma de Canena oil mill (Spain) and Aceites Oro Bailén Galgón 99, Villanueva de la Reina (Spain).

For more information, click [here](#).





THE IOC, THE SPANISH GOVERNMENT AND THE FAO SIGN AN AGREEMENT FOR THE CONSERVATION OF THE OLIVE GROVE'S PHYTOGENETIC HERITAGE

THE TRI-PARTNERSHIP AIMS TO CONSOLIDATE THE IOC'S INTERNATIONAL NETWORK OF OLIVE GERmplasm BANKS UNDER THE FAO'S INTERNATIONAL TREATY ON PLANT GENETIC RESOURCES FOR FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

The **IOC**, the intergovernmental organization coordinating the international network of olive germplasm banks; the **Spanish Government**, host of one of the most significant international collections of *Olea europaea*; and the **United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization** (FAO) came together on June 14 to sign a historic collaboration agreement to consolidate Spain's collection under the FAO's **International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture** (ITPGRFA).

This agreement underscores yet another step towards the conservation of the olive grove's

phytogenetic resources. These resources play a fundamental role not only in the conservation of biodiversity and as the foundation of this agro-food socio-economic activity, but also in addressing the challenges posed by climate change, by determining what varieties are the most resistant to pests and diseases, drought, and other significant challenges. One of the IOC's primordial objectives is the identification, conservation and utilization of the olive grove's phytogenetic resources. The IOC coordinates olive germplasm banks in almost all its twenty Member States, as well as seven international collections, one of them in Spain. The Organization and the FAO signed a Memorandum of Understanding in 2021 to develop, promote and strengthen joint actions to foster a more efficient and sustainable olive sector. Consolidating the international network of olive gene banks under the ITPGRFA is a strategic step in this regard, which is why the IOC actively encourages its member countries to sign agreements such as this one with a view to consolidating an international network of olive germplasm banks under the auspices of ITPGRFA. In this regard, Spain, the world's first producer of olive oil and host to a vast international collection of *Olea europaea* in Córdoba, is the first country to sign an agreement with the ITPGRFA and the IOC to conserve and foster research with regards to the olive sector.

Jaime Lillo, IOC Executive Director, welcomed the tripartite agreement, recalling that "part of the solution to climate change lies in the olive grove's phytogenetic resources, which constitute a real treasure for our shared heritage."

Luis Planas, Spanish Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, highlighted the importance of the plant genetic diversity from the World Olive Germplasm Bank. According to **Planas**, "Spain is responsible for guaranteeing that the olive tree continues to be one of the essential crops to guarantee food security and the backbone of large rural areas and a source of wealth for olive-growing communities".





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The ITPGRFA Secretary, **Kent Nnadozie**, emphasized that “this landmark agreement, which integrates the olive collections in Cordoba into the multilateral system of the Plant Treaty, is a significant milestone for the world’s agriculture and biodiversity. It underscores the global commitment to preserving the genetic diversity of olive plants and promoting equitable access to these vital resources. Together with the IOC, we are ensuring that these valuable resources are conserved and made accessible for the benefit of all, fostering sustainable agriculture and global food security”.

The Andalusian Regional Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries, Water and Rural Development, **Ramón Fernández Pacheco**, and the Rector of the University of Cordoba, **Manuel Torralbo Rodríguez**, also took part in the event, as an example of the inter-institutional public-private collaboration.

The IOC is the world’s only international, intergovernmental organization exclusively dedicated to the olive sector. Under the International Agreement on Olive Oil and Table Olives, 2015, that it administers, it is the international host institution of the network of olive germplasm collections, representing a global, freely accessible resource for the scientific community of healthy and authentic *Olea europea* phylogenetic resources.

Spain is the world’s first producer of olive oil and host to one of the most important IOC international olive germplasm collections in Cordoba with almost 1000 varieties. The **Government of Spain** is heavily involved in conserving the world’s olive heritage and fostering the sector’s sustainability.

The **United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization** adopted the **International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture** in 2001 to include the conservation and sustainable use of plant genetic resources for food and agriculture, and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from their use.





The IOC participates in the first edition of the Olive Oil World Congress

A KEY EVENT DEALING WITH THE SECTOR'S CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The **Olive Oil World Congress'** (OOWC) first edition took place from Wednesday 26 to Friday 28 June, 2024. Over those three days, more than 300 registered participants from 25 nationalities gathered at the headquarters of the **Spanish National Research Center** (CSIC, by its French acronym) to discuss about obstacles and possibilities for the olive oil sector at all moments of the product's value chain. The OOWC – which counts on the IOC among its institutional partners – aims to convene biennially to take stock of the olive sector's status, with a particular focus on climate change.



The opening and institutional act of the OOWC was attended by **Abdessalem Loued**, Chair of the IOC Advisory Committee; **Javad Mirarab**, Chair of the IOC's Council of Members; **Francisco Javier Moreno**, Vice-President of International Relations of the CSIC; **Pedro Barato**, President of the Spanish Olive Oil Interprofessional; and **Raúl Compés**, Director of the International Center for Advanced Mediterranean Agronomic Studies (CIHEAM) in Zaragoza; followed by an inaugural presentation by **Jaime Lillo**, IOC Executive Director.

Loued stressed the need for innovation: "Quality is essential for conquering large markets that are not yet convinced about using olive oil in their food. We have to produce quality and offer consumers around the world this product at the best possible price and, for that, we need innovation". For **Mirarab**, the OOWC has the potential to "bring the olive oil community together more intimately and with a double motivation: to examine problems and solve shortcomings".

The opening speeches were followed by **Lillo's** inaugural lecture entitled '**A vision for the future: meeting challenges, leveraging opportunities**'. The IOC Director stressed the need to "produce more oil and in a sustainable way, while also facing the challenges of globalization and climate change."



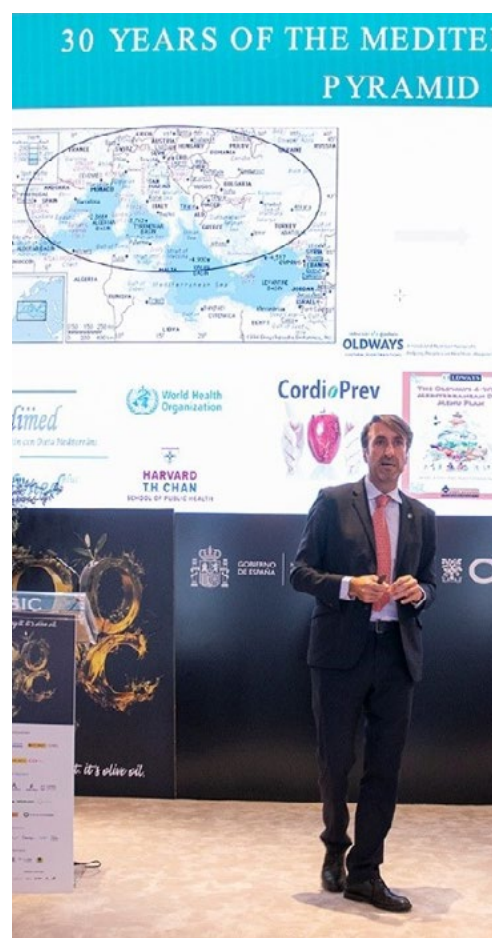
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The closure of the OOWC counted on the intervention of Spain's Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, **Luis Planas**, and other high-level authorities, including **Eloisa del Pino**, CSIC President, **Ricardo Migueláñez**, OOWC Secretary General, and the aforementioned **Lillo** and **Compés**. In his speech, Minister **Planas** highlighted that olive oil "is a unique element of the Mediterranean diet, but it is not only a food product, it shapes a lifestyle and a gastronomic culture that means health and future." "We make policies based on scientific evidence, something that is fundamental to be able to face all the future challenges we have" he added.

The OOWC was divided into eight segments, all of which tackled different aspects of the product's value chain. A number of IOC officials participated as speakers or moderators over the three days. You can read more about the OOWC's program and conclusions on the [conference website](#).





OLIVARES VIVOS+ PRESENTS ITS GROUNDBREAKING RESULTS AT THE IOC'S HEADQUARTERS

WITHIN THE EU'S LIFE PROJECT, OLIVARES VIVOS+ IS THE LARGEST STUDY ON THE OLIVE GROVE'S BIODIVERSITY

The pioneering results of the [LIFE Olivares Vivos+](#) project were presented at the headquarters of the IOC on June 18, 2024. This initiative, aimed at enhancing biodiversity and sustainability in olive groves through the implementation of environmentally friendly agricultural practices, clearly demonstrates the high ecological value of olive groves for conserving biodiversity in Europe.



In a landmark presentation, **Olivares Vivos+** unveiled the results from more than 1,600 taxa and 330,000 registered records across olive groves from four Mediterranean countries that underline the olive grove's role as a strategic crop for the conservation of our natural heritage. The project, developed in Spain, Portugal, Italy and Greece, highlights the significant ecological importance of olive groves in preserving biodiversity across Europe and beyond. Launched in 2015 under the framework of the European Union's (EU) LIFE projects, **Olivares Vivos+** is coordinated by **SEO/BirdLife**, conducted by the **University of Jaén** and the **Spanish National Research Council (CSIC)**, and counts on the IOC's support, inter alia, since 2021. The study underscores the unquestionable value of olive groves for preserving biodiversity, shedding light on the serious impact of agricultural intensification on the diversity of flora and fauna and helping researchers understand the consequences of increasing climate aridity on the diversity and composition of biological communities.

On the occasion of the results presentation of Olivares Vivos+, **Jaime Lillo**, IOC Executive Director, stated that "we are presenting the results of the largest study on olive biodiversity to date, as part of the EU's



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LIFE project, Olivares Vivos+. This initiative shows that agriculture, biodiversity and environment can be mutually reinforcing, particularly in an environment where we all have to face the challenge of climate change.”

SEO/BirdLife Executive Director, **Asunción Ruiz**, highlighted that “Today we are taking another step towards the necessary change in the agrifood model. And we do it with science, because thanks to the data we can propose productive systems that generate profitability by promoting biodiversity. Olivares Vivos crosses borders and, now more than ever, supports the Europe that society needs, which goes hand in hand with nature as the only guarantee for the future.”

“It’s true that sustainability is fully integrated into business and political discourse, but it is time to take action. And Olivares Vivos is a proven tool to start on this path. Because biodiversity, in addition to being a fundamental pillar of sustainability, is its best indicator. Biodiversity is sustainability that can be seen, smelled, heard and felt,” remarked **José Eugenio Gutiérrez**, Director of LIFE Olivares Vivos+.

Diving into the project’s results, **Pedro J. Rey**, Ecology Professor at the University of Jaén, underscored that “There is also a geographical and regional segregation in the identity of taxa (species, genera), which means a remarkable renewal of them along this geographical gradient, which contributes to increase the overall diversity, and which is compatible with geographical and deforestation gradients typical of the Mediterranean.”

On the **CSIC**’s behalf, technician **Rubén Tarifa** added: “With these new data, Olivares Vivos has combined the results of both LIFE projects, obtaining the most complete vision ever achieved of the biodiversity of the olive grove in general and, in particular, in the Iberian Peninsula, which, with more than 3 million hectares, is home to more than 50% of the European olive grove.” “This makes us optimistic about managing biodiversity in olive landscapes in the face of increasing aridity due to climate change, since the agri-environmental scheme of the Olivares Vivos model, which already works by recovering biodiversity in relatively mild conditions, will also do so in semi-arid conditions” said **Francisco Valera**, CSIC scientist at the Experimental Station of Arid Zones.

Present at the tribune were also **Francés Boya**, Secretary General for the Demographic Challenge of the Ministry of Ecological Transition and the Demographic Challenge; **Paz Fentes**, Deputy Director General of Herbaceous and Industrial Crops and Olive Oil of the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food; **Isabel Uceda**, Deputy for the Environment of the Provincial Council of Jaén; **José María Martell**, Vice President of Scientific and Technical Research of the CSIC; and **Nicolás Ruiz**, Rector of the University of Jaén.

Also participating in the presentation day by video were the Spanish Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, **Luis Planas**; the Director of Biodiversity and Natural Capital in the European Commission’s Directorate General for the Environment, **Humberto Delgado**; and **Mariana de Gracia Canales Duque**, Deputy Minister of Common Agricultural Policy and Agro-environmental Policy of the Regional Government of Castilla-La Mancha.

Since 2015, **Olivares Vivos**, funded by two LIFE projects, has developed an innovative olive growing model through collaboration among farmers, scientists, and conservationists. Among other actions, the current **LIFE Olivares Vivos+** project (2021-2026) aims to accelerate the dissemination of this model across major European olive-growing regions, extend it to other products like table olives, and adapt it to crops such as almond trees, vineyards, and rainfed arable crops.



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The **LIFE Olivares Vivos+** project is developed by **SEO/BirdLife** as the coordinating partner, along with the **Provincial Council of Jaén**, the **University of Jaén**, the **Experimental Station of Arid Zones (EEZA)** of the CSIC (EEZA-CSIC), the **University of Évora**, the agricultural and forestry cooperative **DREAM-Italia**, the **Helena Agricultural Organization**, and **Juan Vilar Consultores Estratégicos**. The project is financed by the LIFE program of the European Commission and is also co-financed by the **Provincial Council of Jaén** and the **Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries, and Sustainable Development of the Regional Government of Andalusia**, with additional financial support from the **Interprofessional Association of Spanish Olive Oil**, the **Regional Government of Castilla-La Mancha**, and the **Caja Rural de Jaén**.

The **IOC**, the only international, intergovernmental organization dedicated to the world's olive groves, has supported the **LIFE Olivares Vivos+** project since 2021 through the dissemination of the initiative's results.





THE IOC AT FUNDACIÓN DEL OLIVAR'S WORKSHOP ON THE OLIVE OIL SECTOR'S DIGITALIZATION

THE MEETING AIMED TO ANALYZE THE CONTRIBUTION OF NEW TECHNOLOGIES TO THE OLIVE OIL SECTOR



This event, titled “**POOLred Events: EVOO Digital, Market and Consumption,**” was organized by the **Fundación del Olivar** with the institutional patronage of the IOC. It was held on June 20, 2024, at the Terra Oleum Museum, the foundation's headquarters in Menjíbar (Jaén), and brought together numerous experts and professionals from the olive oil sector to examine the impact of digitalization processes on specific aspects of the olive oil market.

The Head of the IOC's Laboratory and Tasting Panels Management Section, Dr. **Ibtihel Khemakhem**, was invited to participate in the inauguration ceremony of this event, alongside the regional delegate for Agriculture, Fisheries, Water, and Rural Development of Jaén and president

of the Fundación del Olivar, **Soledad Aranda**, and the Deputy Director-General of Caja Rural de Jaén, **Luis Jesús García-Lomas Pousibet**. The main objective of this event was to analyze the positive impact of digital advances, such as the olive oil production price information system, **POOLred**, and the digital platform for sensory analysis of virgin olive oils, **Intrapanel**, created by the Fundación del Olivar, on the current market landscape and the harmonization of virgin olive oil tasting panels worldwide.

Dr. **Khemakhem** explained to participants that the IOC was created in 1959 under the auspices of the United Nations and described the main objectives and activities of this intergovernmental organization in the standardization and research field of olive oil and table olives.

She also participated in a roundtable discussion dedicated to new technologies applied to improving the quality of extra virgin olive oil, notably referring to the Intrapanel platform provided by the Fundación del Olivar. Dr. **Khemakhem** emphasized the usefulness of this digital platform in the context of the harmonization workshops for tasting panels organized annually by the IOC. The objective of these workshops, attended by more than 100 IOC-recognized tasting panels, is to minimize discrepancies between the panels' results, improve the quality of the virgin olive oils produced, and facilitate international trade. The Head of the IOC's Laboratory and Tasting Panels Management Section highlighted the positive contribution of using this platform during the assessment of extra virgin olive oils submitted for the latest edition of the [IOC Mario Solinas Quality Awards](#). Her intervention was followed by a tasting session of various oils.

*Since its creation in 1990, the **Fundación del Olivar** has organized numerous scientific, technical, and cultural activities to promote, study, and conduct research and activities on issues related to olive cultivation, its challenges, and future prospects.*



IOC TAKES PART IN AN EVENT ORGANIZED BY THE ARAB OLIVE OIL WOMEN'S NETWORK

UNDER THE PATRONAGE OF THE PRINCESS OF JORDAN

Convinced of the vital role played by women in educating future generations in healthy, sustainable eating habits, and of their significant contribution to spreading the culture of olive oil consumption, the IOC continues to support all women involved in the world olive sector. It was in this capacity that IOC Executive Director **Jaime Lillo** expressed his interest in the event organized from May 25 to 30 in Jordan by the Arab Olive Oil Women's Network, led by Jordanian engineer **Nehayah Shafer Almuhaissin**.

Imene Trabelsi, Head of the IOC's Promotion Department, represented the Organization at this event, which included a high-level scientific conference organized under the patronage of **Her Highness Princess Basma bint Ali bin Naif of Jordan**, and attended by numerous experts from Arab and European countries, as well as representatives of the Jordanian Ministry of Agriculture and international institutions.

The program also included numerous olive tourism activities and awareness-raising seminars for rural women and young university students at a number of Jordanian sites (schools, museums, cultural and historical centers, etc.), as well as olive groves and oil mills located in various Jordanian towns (Ajloun, Wadi Rum, Irbid, Petra, etc.).

For **Imene Trabelsi**, "This event was an excellent opportunity to present the IOC's activities and to communicate on best practices for producing quality olive oil in line with IOC trade standards, and on the role of quality labels". The Jordanian authorities and key players in the olive sector were very interested in strengthening cooperation with the IOC.





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On the occasion of the scientific conference entitled “OLIVE OIL, THE MIRACLE OF THE MEDITERRANEAN BASIN”, organized by the Arab Olive Oil Women’s Network in cooperation with Pandolea association headed by Italian expert **Loriana Abbruzzetti**, and held under the patronage of **Princess Basma bint Ali bin Naif**, Honorary President of the Jordanian Olive Oil Women’s Network, the Princess expressed her passion and deep interest in the olive sector. Recalling her country’s profound ties with the olive tree, Her Highness emphasized the role of women in spreading olive oil culture.



In her speech, **Imene Trabelsi** stressed the need to adopt effective marketing strategies to promote olive oil and ensure better access to niche markets through tourism activities offering tourists the chance to learn more about the olive oil production chain, the historical roots of olive culture and enjoy an immersive consumption experience of olive products. On behalf of the IOC’s Executive Director, she presented the Princess of Jordan with a box containing the winning olive oils of the 2024 IOC’s **Mario Solinas Quality Awards**.



ENHANCING THE PUBLIC'S KNOWLEDGE ABOUT THE INTERNATIONAL STANDARDIZATION OF OLIVE PRODUCTS

A CONFERENCE AND TASTING SESSION LED BY THE HEAD OF THE STANDARDIZATION AND RESEARCH UNIT

On Thursday, June 6, Dr. **Mercedes Fernández** gave a lecture on the international standardization of olive products, followed by a tasting session of some of this year's winning extra virgin olive oils (EVOO) of the **Mario Solinas Quality Awards**, at the National Archaeological Museum in Madrid. The event was organized with the **Fundación del Olivar**, with whom the IOC has signed a collaboration agreement, and in the framework of the Museum's temporary exhibition "**Convivium: the archaeology of the Mediterranean Diet**".



Dr. **Fernández**, the Head of the IOC's Standardization and Research Unit, gave a lecture open to the general public on the organization's work and its role in the international standardization of olive products, with particular focus on the norms and standards related to the production and marketing of olive oils and the importance of quality of these products, as well as their benefits for consumer health. She also led an olive oil tasting session, explaining to participants the organoleptic assessment of virgin olive oils used to determine the quality of said oils diving into the criteria and techniques used for tasting them, and



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explaining the positive attributes and defects that can be detected through sensory analysis. Around thirty attendees had the opportunity to enhance their knowledge about olive oil and the complex mechanisms behind their standardization while enjoying a tasting session.

The IOC's Standardization and Research Unit and **Javier Olmedo**, Managing Director of Fundación del Olivar, also had the opportunity to visit the abovementioned temporary exhibition on the archaeology of the Mediterranean Diet and to hold a meeting with the exhibition's director, **Isabel Izquierdo**, and the museum manager, **Francisco Narváez Vila**.



THE IOC AT THE CLOSING CEREMONY OF CORDOBA UNIVERSITY'S MASTER'S DEGREE IN OLIVE GROWING AND OLIVE OIL TECHNOLOGY

SINCE 1995, THE IOC HAS AWARDED SCHOLARSHIPS TO MORE THAN 70 STUDENTS IN THIS MASTER'S PROGRAM

The IOC was represented by **Juan Antonio Polo Palomino**, Head of its Olive Oil and Environment Department, at the closing ceremony of the fifteenth edition of the Master in Olive Growing and Olive Oil Technology at the University of Cordoba, which took place on May 28 in the auditorium of the University's Rabanales campus, in the presence of 23 students of seven nationalities (Algeria, Egypt, Greece, Morocco, Portugal, Tunisia and Spain) who have completed their specialization course or one of its modules this year. Of these students, 4 received IOC scholarships to continue their studies: **Mohand Amokrane Bouchabane** (Algeria), **Evangelos Mitropoulos** (Greece), **Ahmed Oujdi** (Morocco) and **Alexandre José de Melo Andrade Sousa** (Portugal).



This biennial Master's program, designed to meet the growing demand for top-level technical specialists in the olive sector, is organized by the University of Cordoba (UCO), the Ministry of Agriculture of the Autonomous Region of Andalusia, IFAPA (Andalusian Institute of Agricultural, Fisheries, Food, and Ecological Production Research and Training), CSIC (Spanish National Research Council), the International Centre for Advanced Mediterranean Agronomic Studies (CIHEAM) in Zaragoza, the FPCO (Foundation for the Common Heritage of Olive Groves) the IOC.



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Since its launch in 1995, the course has been taken by 347 students from the following 25 countries: Spain (118), Algeria (51), Morocco (37), Tunisia (35), Portugal (20), Egypt (13), Türkiye (12), Albania (10), Argentina (9), Chile (9), Syria (7), Italy (5), Greece (4), Lebanon (3), Mexico (2), Montenegro (2), Peru (2), Croatia (2), Belgium (1), Brazil (1), Iran (1), Palestine (1), Jordan (1), Libya (1) and Israel (1). Of these 347 students, over 70 have benefited from an IOC scholarship.

At the graduation ceremony, the Head of the IOC's Olive Oil and Environment Department recalled one of the main challenges facing the sector: "To produce more and better, sustainably, taking into account economic, environmental and social aspects". He congratulated the students and encouraged them to be proud of having been trained "in the Silicon Valley of agriculture".

As highlighted at the closing event, one of the main attractions of this Master's degree is undoubtedly the excellence of its teaching staff, which is made up of professors from the UCO, the various collaborating organizations (IFAPA, CSIC, FPCO, AGAPA, Junta de Andalucía), the universities of Jaén, Málaga, Madrid and Seville, as well as leading companies in the sector.

The IOC regularly takes part in meetings of the Master's executive committee. The first two meetings this year, held on January 23 and May 28, enabled the various stakeholders to discuss ways of modernizing, optimizing and adapting the Master to professional accreditation.





FUTURE ACTIVITIES



THE IOC SET TO PARTICIPATE IN THE UPCOMING INTERNATIONAL OLIVE SUSTAINABILITY CONFERENCE WITH THE UC DAVIS OLIVE CENTER

[The International Olive Sustainability Conference \(IOSC\)](#) will be held at the University of California at Davis' (UC Davis) Olive Center from September 5 to 7, 2024, as provided for in the collaboration agreement signed on May 23 between the IOC and the University.

The IOSC will bring together a wide range of stakeholders, including researchers, growers and producers from around the world, to discuss the sustainable development of olive growing and olive oil production. The conference [program](#) will focus on soil health, biodiversity, the different uses of oil mill by-products and input management. Presentations will also focus on food choices and the countless benefits of olive oil for human health and the environment, as well as concepts of economic and social sustainability. The event promises to be decisive for collaboration and discussion on the present and future of the olive sector. Two representatives of the IOC will be taking part: **Abderraouf Laajimi**, the IOC's new Deputy Executive Director, who will give the opening speech on "The current situation and sustainability challenges for the global olive sector", and **Lhassane Sikaoui**, Head of the IOC's Olive Growing, Olive Oil Technology and Environment Unit, who will talk more specifically about the "Carbon balance of olive groves".

The [UC Davis Olive Center](#) is a renowned research and education center at the University of California, Davis, established in 2008 and dedicated to the study and promotion of olives and olive oil. It is part of the Centers of Excellence at the Robert Mondavi Institute, with more than 15 years of experience working on olives in California and worldwide to enhance experts' skills.



INTERNATIONAL
OLIVE
SUSTAINABILITY
CONFERENCE



THE IOC IS ORGANIZING A SEMINAR ON THE VALORIZATION OF OLIVE BY-PRODUCTS AND WASTE MINIMIZATION

THE SEMINAR, ORGANIZED IN COLLABORATION WITH THE UNIVERSITY OF JAÉN, WILL TAKE PLACE FROM 16 TO 20 SEPTEMBER, 2024

The seminar on the **“Sustainable valorization of by-products and waste minimization in the olive industry”**, organized by the IOC’s **Olive Growing, Olive Oil Technology and Environment Unit** together with the **University of Jaén**, has been postponed to September for reasons beyond the IOC’s control and in order to guarantee the participation of students from all IOC member countries. The course will now take place from Monday 16 to Friday 20 September 2024, in morning and afternoon sessions held in English, French and Spanish at the University’s campus for in-person participants, and online for those unable to travel to Spain.

It is well known that olive trees are one of the most important crops in the Mediterranean region and beyond, being a fundamental economic and land resource. We live in a time where reducing environmental pollution is one of humanity’s most significant and urgent challenges. In this regard, the olive oil and table olive production chain represents a double-edged blade: it generates by-products, such as pruning waste, wastewater and pomace, which are difficult to manage and are a source of environmental concern while, simultaneously, being a very attractive potential source of income. There is growing interest in the effective and sustainable use of these by-products, making the spreading of knowledge and the dissemination of novel approaches, methods and innovative tools for their management a key item for the olive sector’s agenda.



It is in this context that the IOC and the University of Jaén will sign an operational agreement for the organization of the aforementioned seminar in September. The course is aimed at technicians from IOC member countries with an interest in environmental governance and the management of the olive production chain. They will acquire in-depth knowledge about an array of topics, including: possible effects of the management and processing of by-products; technologies used for waste treatment and reuse; usage of by-products for energy purposes; treatment of liquid effluents from olive oil mills; physico-chemical processes for reducing toxicity; phenolic compound reduction for their potential use as bioactive compounds in food; applications of olive mill wastewater to soil; and alternative uses of solid wastes as compost for producing low-cost fertilizers.

The forthcoming seminar aligns with the IOC’s extensive initiatives aimed at enhancing the sustainability of the olive sector and disseminating knowledge about the growingly appreciated alternative uses of olive by-products, which could greatly influence the investment returns within the olive sector.



THE IOC LAUNCHES THE 1ST EDITION OF THE MARIO SOLINAS QUALITY AWARDS IN THE SOUTHERN HEMISPHERE

THE IOC'S PRESTIGIOUS MARIO SOLINAS QUALITY AWARDS WILL BE TRAVELLING TO URUGUAY IN 2024 AS PART OF A NEW SPECIAL EDITION DEDICATED SOLELY TO EXTRA VIRGIN OLIVE OILS FROM THE SOUTHERN HEMISPHERE

The IOC's **Mario Solinas Quality Awards** competition for the quality of extra virgin olive oils was launched during the 2000-2001 crop year to honor and commemorate the memory of Italian professor **Mario Solinas**, a great promoter of the sensory analysis of virgin olive oil. The competition's main aim is to reward extra virgin olive oils with the best sensory attributes in each of the categories set out in the competition rules. As well as recognizing the meticulous work and dedication of producers, this competition is a benchmark in the olive sector and encourages producers to reach new heights in terms of quality.

Given the difference between the olive harvesting periods in the southern and northern hemispheres, **Uruguay** proposed launching a specific edition of the Mario Solinas Quality Awards adapted to the harvesting period of southern hemisphere countries. This request was studied by IOC experts in the organoleptic assessment of olive oils and approved by the Organization's Council of Members at its 118th session in





ANNOUNCEMENTS AND FUTURE ACTIVITIES

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November 2023. The 2024 edition will therefore take place in Uruguay. The principle of alternating between Uruguay and Argentina has been suggested for the organization of future editions of the Mario Solinas Quality Award in the southern hemisphere.

This decision underlines the IOC's commitment to promoting and strengthening the excellence and quality of olive oils worldwide. It also reflects the desire to encourage international cooperation, share best practices and recognize producers of exceptional extra virgin olive oils around the world.

This initiative will also strengthen the ties between the IOC and southern hemisphere countries, with the hope that it will encourage new countries in this region to join this intergovernmental organization. It opens the door to a host of exceptional extra virgin olive oils from the olive-growing regions of the southern hemisphere.

The rules of the Mario Solinas Quality Awards for the southern hemisphere are available [here](#) in English, French, and Spanish.

The EVOO samples for the 2024 crop year and the required documents must be sent by **August 15, 2024** to the following address: Laboratorio Tecnológico del Uruguay – Sede Central – Av. Italia 6201, 11500 Montevideo, Uruguay.

With the samples, all participants of this edition are also requested to send this form required by the General Directorate of Customs of Uruguay to participate in the "IOC Mario Solinas Quality Awards – Southern Hemisphere 2024" ([see instructions](#)).





DATES OF THE 120TH SESSION OF THE COUNCIL OF MEMBERS

The dates for the 120th session of the IOC Council of Members were recently approved by Council Chairman **Javad Mirarab**. The **specialized committees** will meet on November 12, 13 and 14 by videoconference. The meeting of the Advisory Committee on Olive Oil and Table Olives will be held on November 19, the day before the **plenary session** of the Council of Members (November 20). The Executive Secretariat is currently preparing for **World Olive Day**, which will be celebrated exceptionally this year on November 21 (the official date is November 26) to ensure the participation of all Council representatives on this day. Read the next article to find out more.





THE IOC IS PREPARING TO CELEBRATE WORLD OLIVE DAY 2024

THE IOC WILL COMMEMORATE THE 30TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE PUBLICATION OF THE MEDITERRANEAN DIET PYRAMID

In November 2024, the IOC will celebrate the 30th anniversary of the official publication of the **Mediterranean Diet Pyramid** in the margins of **World Olive Day**. The IOC would like to recognize the people and organizations that pioneered this initiative, as well as the impact this work has had on the preservation and advancement of this Mediterranean cultural heritage for the benefit of the health of humanity.

Many of the leading scientists in health and the Mediterranean Diet, **true eminences of science and knowledge**, are still active and making a decisive contribution to promoting human and planetary health. In a world facing the challenge of feeding a growing global population in a healthy and sustainable way, the **Mediterranean Diet** - with olive oil as an essential ingredient - is more relevant than ever.

The **IOC** is celebrating **World Olive Day** on Thursday, **November 21**, to recognize the indispensable contributions of the olive tree and to promote the spreading of knowledge and understanding of the importance and benefits of the Mediterranean Diet.

The **Mediterranean Diet**, traditional to the olive-growing areas of the **Mediterranean Sea**, is one of the healthiest eating habits in the world. **Olive oil** is an essential part that facilitates the increased incorporation of vegetables and other plant-sourced foods in dietary patterns, providing health benefits that are recognized by numerous scientific studies. These include reducing the risk of cardiovascular disease, the ability to improve brain health, providing essential antioxidants that fight cellular aging, and the prevention of certain cancers.

Although this diet has a millennia-old tradition, it was not properly recognized until a group of leading nutrition scientists, public health experts, food and cultural scholars began to investigate the patterns of the traditional Mediterranean Diet circa 1960. These efforts, building on the earlier pioneering work of **Professor Ancel Keys** and his 'Seven Countries Study' and led by world-renowned institutions such as the **Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health–Department of Nutrition** and the **World Health Organization** in collaboration with **Oldways Preservation & Exchange Trust**, culminated in a series of conferences and papers that established the "**Healthy Traditional Mediterranean Diet Pyramid**," recognized worldwide.

This group of experts developed and presented the **International Conference on Mediterranean Diets** in 1993, a follow-up conference in 1994 and a series of scientific articles published in special issues of the **American Journal of Clinical Nutrition** in 1995 and 1997, which awakened international interest in this culturally rooted, plant-forward nutritional pattern, changing the course of global nutrition research and public health orientations.

We will provide you with more information in the coming months to present the final program for this day and the speakers invited by the IOC to commemorate the thirtieth anniversary of the Mediterranean food pyramid, in which olive oil and table olives play such an important role.





MEETINGS OF THE
EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT



IOC EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR MEETS WITH THE DIRECTOR GENERAL OF AOAD

A courtesy meeting took place on Wednesday, July 3, at the IOC headquarters in Madrid between **Jaime Lillo**, Executive Director of the IOC, and **Ibrahim Adam Ahmed-El-Dukhari**, Director General of the Arab Organization for Agricultural Development (AOAD), an entity operating under the umbrella of the League of Arab States.

Both officials underscored the importance of cooperation between their two organizations to develop a collaboration program in the field of olive growing. This impulse is particularly timely considering the recent establishment in Tunis (Tunisia) of an international office in charge of the olive sector in the Arab world.

The meeting, which was also attended by **Abderraouf Laajimi**, the IOC's new Deputy Executive Director in charge of operational affairs, provided an opportunity to discuss future possibilities and activities for cooperation between the two organizations to support the olive sector in Arab countries and globally.

[The Arab Organization for Agricultural Development](#) (AOAD) operates within the framework of the League of Arab States to create innovative, harmonious, competitive and sustainable Arab agricultural sectors, strengthen food and nutritional security, and contribute to the eradication of poverty.





OLIVÉRICA PRESENTS ITS OBJECTIVES TO THE IOC

Representatives of Olivérica, a recently created association of Spanish and Portuguese hedge olive growers, met on June 6 with IOC Executive Director **Jaime Lillo** and part of his team, as well as other officials from the Executive Secretariat.

For Olivérica's President **Gregorio Álvarez Cabrerros**, "it's gratifying that the main intergovernmental body dedicated to regulating and promoting the world olive oil market was able to listen to the challenges and objectives of this farmers' association". These include "spreading the word about the excellence and health benefits of extra virgin olive oil", an objective very much in line with the IOC's mission.

At a meeting at the IOC headquarters in Madrid, the two organizations discussed issues of interest to the olive oil sector, including innovation and new technologies applied to the sector and its products. According to IOC Executive Director **Jaime Lillo**, "Olivérica promotes values that we share: producing olive oil of excellence, which contributes to the fight against climate change and to feeding the world population in a healthier and more sustainable way".

In his presentation, Mr. **Lillo** highlighted a number of strategic areas for collaboration between the IOC and Olivérica: the health benefits of extra virgin olive oil, the internationalization of the product, the sustainability of its production to combat climate change, improving the quality of the oil produced, the search for excellence in the sector, the digitization of processes for greater efficiency in production systems, and so on.





MEETINGS OF THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT

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For Olivérica's President **Gregorio Álvarez Cabrerros**, "following the IOC's principles to defend the benefits of extra virgin olive oil is an initiative that will have repercussions for the entire sector". Mr. **Álvarez** advocated for the technification of production systems to make more efficient use of resources, produce higher quality olive oil, and improve the competitiveness of the olive oil sector.

Olivérica is a non-profit association of hedge olive growers in Spain and Portugal. One of its aims is to represent the interests of these olive growers to the authorities and society at large.





PUBLICATIONS AND NETWORKS



PUBLICATIONS AND NETWORKS

FOLLOW US THROUGH OUR NETWORKS!

Many of you are already following us on social media, through the IOC press review, [OLIVE NEWS](#), where the latest news from the international olive sector and other articles on topics of interest such as the Mediterranean diet, health, etc., are collected and published in Spanish, English, French, and Italian. This press review is updated daily. Since its launch in December 2013, more than **12,500 articles** have been collected in this press review, which has more than **9,300 subscribers** and has already received over **380,000 visits**. All articles published on [Olive News](#) are also available on X (formerly Twitter) at the following address: @iocolivenews. The IOC also has a dedicated page on LinkedIn (International Olive Council). Don't wait longer to subscribe and stay tuned with the olive world!





STAY TUNED!

<http://www.internationaloliveoil.org>

Keep up with the olive sector through Olive News:

<https://www.scoop.it/topic/olive-news>

and everything that is going on at the IOC:

<https://www.linkedin.com/company/international-olive-council/>

Our scientific journal *Olivae* is available at:

<https://www.internationaloliveoil.org/publications/>

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