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DIVERSIFOOD European Project: A new food culture towards agricultural sustainability

“Sustainability is the new way of thinking agriculture”. With this statement **Véronique Chable** of the French National Institute for Agricultural Research (**INRA**) and coordinator of **DIVERSIFOOD** explains the main concept of the project, funded under the European Union's **H2020 Programme**.

The project's goal is to enrich the diversity of cultivated plants. According to the Food and Agriculture Organization, over the last century about **75% of the world's crop varieties have been lost**. Our alimentation mainly relies on three crops: wheat, rice and maize, which constitute the 60% of our calories. This food variety loss has brought many consequences also for human health.

For this reason, the European Union has lately taken important actions towards the greening of agriculture, with a significant focus on **agrobiodiversity** (i.e. number of species, varieties in cultivation and diversity within varieties). “DIVERSIFOOD project wants to meet this challenge, giving a significant contribution in promoting diversity in agriculture” Véronique says. “Diversity is the key for to greater **sustainability** and a robust **strategy for coping with climate change**.”

Linked with the diversity concept, the second innovation of the project lays in its methodology, the so-called **multi-actor approach**. This means the participation of all the people involved in the food chain, from field to fork, from farmers to citizens.

By integrating existing networks across Europe, DIVERSIFOOD will strengthen the “food culture” to achieve local high quality food systems. The project consortium is composed of **21 partners**, in 12 different countries. Specific experimental trials will be settled across Europe on more than 20 crop species (<https://www.google.it/maps/d/viewer?mid=zKtItfzAiOI4.k7ZOAFiHZCCI&usp=sharing>), in order to evaluate the genetic resources of **underutilized and forgotten plant species for organic and low-input agriculture**. Definitely oriented toward the future, DIVERSIFOOD aims also to generate a new diversity and to develop new healthy and tasty produce.

“In this way, DIVERSIFOOD will promote a new food culture towards agricultural sustainability, embedding healthy and tasty local products in regional food systems” Véronique says.

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