

PRESS RELEASE

102ND SESSION COUNCIL OF MEMBERS OF THE INTERNATIONAL OLIVE COUNCIL (MADRID, 24-28 NOVEMBER 2014)



The Council of Members of the International Olive Council (IOC), the intergovernmental organisation mandated to administer the 2005 International Agreement on Olive Oil and Table Olives, held its 102nd session at IOC headquarters from 24 to 28 November 2014. The session took place with Turkey in the chair and the European Union in the vice chair.

The meetings of the specialist committees (economic, technical, promotion and financial) were held on 24 and 25 November. The Council of Members met from 26 November onwards.

In the economic area, the Council of Members approved the report of the Economic Committee, including a set of documents prepared by the IOC Executive Secretariat from data notified by Members and adopted by the committee, i.e.:

- Final world balances for olive oils and table olives for the 2012/13 crop year
- Provisional world balances for olive oils and table olives for the 2013/14 crop year
- Estimated world balances for olive oils and table olives for the 2014/15 crop year

View the balances at: http://www.internationaloliveoil.org/estaticos/view/134-approved-balances?lang=en_US

The Council of Members was given an update on Executive Secretariat activities in the economic sphere, particularly the work accomplished by the working groups on costs of production and statistics.

On the promotional front, the Council of Members examined the positive outcomes of the promotional campaign underway in Brazil, due to end this year. It was told about certain national promotional activities run by member countries or carried out by signatory associations of the self-monitoring quality control agreement with IOC grant funding as well as about the next call for expressions of interest in promotional grants.

Other subjects reported were the online publication of the next issue of the IOC journal *Olivæ* and the launch of a campaign in Japan in 2015 to boost olive oil consumption and increase awareness of the IOC trade standard. A call for tenders will be held soon to select a public relations agency to implement this new campaign.

When broaching trade standardisation, the Council of Members noted the activities implemented in this field since the start of the year, with the focus on the award of IOC recognition to 65 chemical testing laboratories and 57 sensory testing laboratories and the conclusions of the working groups in place on olive oil composition and varietal identification, organoleptic assessment of virgin olive oils and tasting panel harmonisation, and new testing methods. It noted the action planned until the end of the year, notably a meeting of the expert group on the organoleptic assessment of table olives, and adopted the programme proposed for 2015 including a third international course for the leaders of table olive tasting panels and a workshop on the application of specific chemical methods of analysis.

The discussions held by the associations belonging to the quality agreement for the quality control of olive oils and olive pomace oils sold in non-IOC Member importing countries were also reported to the Council.

It endorsed the revised rules of the international competition for the 2015 Quality Award for the best extra virgin olive oils. Two editions of the competition are planned, one in February and the other in June, to make it easier for countries from the southern hemisphere to participate. To increase the visibility of the competition and attract new contestants, the prize award ceremony will be held in New York on 29 June 2015 during the Fancy Food Show.

On the training side, the Council was given an update on the second international course for the leaders of table olive tasting panels, the continuing PhD studies of four IOC scholarship students and the progress in the university specialisation course for panel leaders.

It was also informed about the technical assistance and extension programmes awarded IOC grants and the international genetic resources seminar due to be held in Tunisia in mid-December to present the results of the pilot olive nursery project – designed as the second stage of the RESGEN genetic resources project – and to consider the creation of a network of national and international varietal collections to study varietal performance in different climates (CLIMOLIVE).

Lastly, the Members approved the programme proposed for 2015. This comprises a range of activities including the continuation of the technical assistance scheme, the award of scholarships for the ongoing PhDs and 20 scholarships for the 13th edition of the university expert diploma in virgin olive oil tasting. Four international courses are also scheduled next year, one for the leaders of virgin olive oil tasting panels, and the others on chemical methods of analysis, by-products reuse and integrated control.

In the case of R&D and environmental affairs, Members heard reports on the conclusion of the IRRIGAOLIVO research and training project on sustainable water management in olive growing and the work carried out as part of the RESGEN project. They were also updated on the progress in the project for the creation of pilot demonstration and training olive nurseries to improve the application of olive propagation techniques.

The work carried out at the world olive germplasm collections in Izmir (Turkey) and Marrakech (Morocco) was another subject considered by Members, plus the plan to compile a methodology guide to the CO₂ balance in the life cycle of olive oil. The activities proposed for 2015 were also discussed, notably a seminar on the carbon footprint of olive oil, a spreadsheet for calculating greenhouse gas emission and capture throughout the life cycle of olive oil, an international seminar on olive plant production techniques and the coordination of the network of IOC olive banks in the CLIMOLIVE project.

Although Members accepted the 2015 budget and the Technical Committee report, it was not possible for the proposed Decisions to be formally adopted. This is expected to take place at an extraordinary session scheduled at the beginning of February 2015.

Members decided to continue working on the wording of a new International Olive Oil and Table Olive Agreement for negotiation under the umbrella of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) in early October 2015. In this context, the terms of office of the Executive Director and Deputy Director were extended for a year.

On Thursday 27 November, the Executive Director, accompanied by the Deputy Director and the IOC Chairman, signed an agreement on behalf of the IOC with the World Olive Germplasm Bank of Cordoba (Spain), which now belongs to the international network of world olive banks alongside the Marrakech and Izmir collections. The Cordoba Bank was represented by the Counsellor for Agriculture of the regional government of Andalusia, Elena Víboras, the President of the Research and Agricultural Training Institute (IFAPA), Maria del Carmen Ortiz, and the Vice Chancellor of the University of Cordoba, José Carlos Gómez, who also attended the reception held afterwards for session participants, the press and the diplomatic corps to celebrate World Olive Day.

Madrid, 1 December 2014

Executive Secretariat International Olive Council
