

Note from Representative of France in PRIMA Board of Trustees

1) Understanding how to monitor and to reduce zoonotic risks through eco-health approaches in the Mediterranean basin

The present crisis observed with Covid-19 calls for a better understanding, prevention and reaction to emergent threats caused by zoonotic risks. Our relation with animals and the environment causes transmission of pathogens, including viruses, into human populations from other species, as with the SARS-CoV-2 virus. Such risks are also present in the Mediterranean basin through the coexistence of wildlife reservoirs, vector species and livestock, and also through contaminations in the food chain. Moreover, animal displacement through trade, changes in landscapes, in livestock breeding, and climate change are known as factors that may increase risks levels in the future for some of the emerging infectious diseases. Further research aimed at projecting future risks according to changes in biophysical, agricultural, ecological and socio-economic factors is needed, as well as studying prophylaxis (e.g. by changes in livestock breeding, nature and wildlife protection, trade, food systems) and disease control strategies, while taking into account differences across regions in the Mediterranean basin. The role of nature-based solutions (NBS) could be considered, e.g. extending protected and buffer areas to reduce contacts between reservoirs and livestock, improving treatments of livestock wastes, reducing emissions of dust and fine particles (spreading pathogens) by improving vegetation cover and reducing ammonia emissions.

2) Understanding and reducing impacts on food systems in the Mediterranean basin

The current Covid-19 crisis has impacts both in terms of food supply (through the disruption in supply chains, in logistics, and in labor for food production, processing and retailing) and on food demand (through loss of income and unemployment, affecting the most fragile populations, the poorest countries or those most dependent on imports). Therefore, the FAO foresees a rise in chronic undernourishment at global scale within the coming months (despite a low oil price, which tends to reduce food prices). Better understanding how the current crisis affects food production, access to food and nutrition and how to reduce the vulnerability of the poorest, of children, women and other categories at risk should therefore be undertaken, also accounting for changes in prices, in eating habits and consumer preferences during curfew and the impacts of disruptions in markets and trade. The role of public policies and of stimulus packages to improve food security, recover production potential and trade could be compared across countries and discussed by reference to SDGs and the Paris agreement on climate.