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JAIME LILLO ASSUMES HIS POSITION
AS IOC EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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JAIME LILLO ASSUMES HIS POSITION AS IOC EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The IOC kicks off the new year with the arrival of **Jaime Lillo López** as new Executive Director. **Lillo**, from Spain, was elected as the new leader of the intergovernmental organisation at the June 2023 meeting and by consensus of the IOC Council of Members.

The agricultural engineer is thoroughly familiar with the organisation, having devoted the last seven and a half years to serving as Deputy Executive Director and overseeing operational activities. During this period, he played an active role in implementing the IOC's expansion strategy, bringing in new members and getting closer to the main consumer countries of olive oil and table olives that act as observers of the organisation. **Lillo** has also helped improve the harmonisation of international trade standards for olive oil and olive-pomace oils, supervised a significant increase in IOC recognised sensory analysis laboratories, as well as launched numerous activities relating to the environment, climate change, olive genetic resources and sustainability.

Jaime Lillo is committed to enhancing the IOC's role as the only intergovernmental organisation in the world bringing together almost all producing and consuming countries of olive oil and table olives. Under his leadership, the IOC is set to boosting the coordination of political activities with its members, in particular regarding sustainability and the olive orchard's unique contribution to fighting climate change.



Over the next few years and under the umbrella of a common agenda and continued dialogue with its member countries, the IOC aims to increase its visibility on the world stage to elaborate on the objectives laid out in the International Agreement on Olive Oil and Table Olives, bolstering the trade standard for these products to facilitate trade flows and decrease barriers, and strengthening technical cooperation as a whole to spread better practices and improve oil quality and consumer knowledge of the endless attributes of the olive tree's products.

With a degree in agricultural engineering from Madrid's Polytechnic University and specialised in agricultural economy, the IOC's new Executive Director has longstanding experience in the sector. Further to his status as official of the Spanish Corps of Agricultural Engineers since 2001 and of the European Commission Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development since 2004, **Lillo** has held several decisive roles in the Spanish and European agricultural agendas of the last decades. These include, but are not limited to, his role as Deputy Director General for the Spanish Ministry of Agriculture, where he coordinated agricultural and rural development policies between the EU and international partners (2007 - 2010). Also noteworthy is his former appointment as chief advisor on agriculture, fisheries and food at the Permanent Representation of Spain to the EU, during which he acted as spokesperson at the Special Committee on Agriculture, directed the ministerial office in Brussels, represented his country vis à vis the EU institutions, took part in negotiations relating to agricultural policy and international trade, and acted as adviser to EU agricultural ministers (2010 - 2016).



RECENT ACTIVITIES
AT THE IOC



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THE IOC POOLS INTERNATIONAL EFFORTS TO ADDRESS CLIMATE CHANGE

THE WORKING GROUP ON THE CARBON BALANCE OF OLIVE ORCHARDS BEGINS ITS WORK

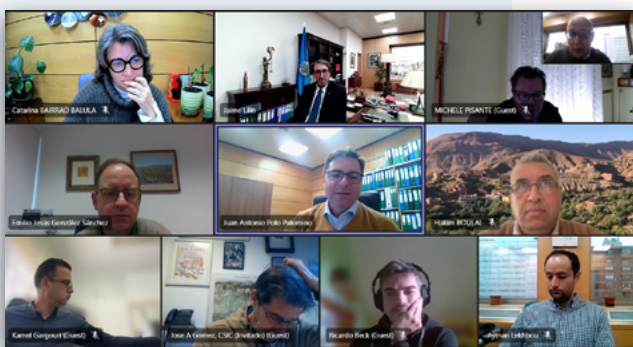
On Wednesday 6 February, 2024, scientists in the field of the carbon balance of olive groves met virtually for this IOC-hosted meeting. This marks the first of a series of scheduled encounters for this working group who will advise the IOC on the olive tree's role in the fight against climate change. The meeting was organised by the IOC's Olive Growing, Olive Oil Technology and Environment Unit and inaugurated by IOC Executive Director Jaime Lillo, who recalled that recognising the contribution of olive orchards as part of the strategy to combat climate change will be one of the Organisation's main lines of work under his mandate.

The international task force, with backgrounds in a diversity of fields ranging from the ecology

behind olive cultivation to the modelling of soil carbon fluxes, will guide the Executive Secretariat to develop a robust methodology and easy-to-use tools for determining the carbon balance of olive groves, with a view to encouraging the conversion to carbon credits that can be traded on the voluntary emissions market. The objectives of the IOC's working group are, namely:

- Provide evidence of the olive grove's role as a tool in the fight against climate change due to its capacity as a CO₂ sink;
- Define a robust methodology based on scientific knowledge for calculating the carbon balance of olive groves;
- Develop easy-to-use software tools for calculating the carbon balance;
- Design a voluntary carbon credit certification scheme for the olive sector that is compatible with the European Commission's regulations;
- Establish the IOC as the forum and catalyser for the above, with a view to underscoring and disseminating the olive tree's role in combating climate change.

The working group was established as a result of the international workshop organised by the IOC in October 2023, under the title "Carbon balance of the olive sector: part of the solution against climate change", which brought together around 300 specialists from 30 countries. As a result, the subsequent November meeting of the Committee on Technology and the Environment agreed to set up this task force with the view of enhancing the olive tree's contribution to the global strategy for addressing climate change.





THE IOC HOSTS A REFRESHER COURSE ON OLIVE OIL STANDARDS

THE TRAINING WAS AIMED AT TECHNICIANS OF THE SPANISH SUPERMARKET CHAINS ASSOCIATION

On Wednesday 7 February, the IOC welcomed representatives of the Spanish Supermarket Chains Association (ACES) for a refresher course on international standards applying to olive oil and an update of the current market situation and forecasts. The training was organised by the IOC's Standardisation and Research Unit, headed by **Mercedes Fernandez**, in collaboration with the Spanish Ministry for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (MAPA).

The course was aimed at technicians in charge of ACES member companies in the purchasing, commercial management, legal, quality control and food safety departments. It was presented by **Jaime Lillo**, IOC Executive Director, and **Aurelio del Pino González**, ACES President.

Lillo analysed the status of the olive oil market and its forecasts, enhancing attendees' knowledge regarding supply conditions, such as traceability and controls, from a national and international perspective of production and marketing. Dr. **Fernández Albaladejo** provided an overview of the international regulations applicable to olive oil, particularly the IOC trade standard as the main reference for other international, supranational and national standards. She outlined the importance of the harmonisation of the different standards in order to improve product quality, facilitate international trade, prevent fraud and protect consumers.





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MAPA representative **María José Pro González** dove into Spanish national regulations concerning olive oil, giving an outline of the labelling and marketing requirements to include in supply contracts, as well as the controls to be carried out at reception and sales points. **Marta Garrido García**, Technical Advisor, and **Beatriz Baena Ríos**, Head of Laboratories Service, General Sub-directorate of Food Quality Control and Agri-food Laboratories, explained the basics for establishing criteria and parameters for product control in accordance with Spanish national regulations, as well as the steps to be carried out in the field of supply contracting and product monitoring, with a view to guaranteeing the traceability and quality of olive oils put on sale.



The course ended with an olive oil tasting session that allowed the participants to enrich their knowledge and understanding of the sensory and organoleptic attributes of different olive oils.

ACES is a national employers' organisation created in Spain in 2002 as a non-for-profit entity. It aims to represent, promote and defend common business and social interests of organised retail companies in the Spanish food sector operating under the self-service model, structured in chains, with nationwide presence.





JAPAN HAS SET STANDARDS FOR EVOO LABELLING BASED ON THE IOC STANDARD

OLIVE OIL IS THE FIRST VEGETABLE OIL IN JAPAN IN VALUE TERMS

On Wednesday 17 January, IOC Executive Director **Jaime Lillo** received a delegation from the **Japanese Oilseed Processors Association (JOPA)** at the Organisation's headquarters. The delegation included **Akira Saito**, JOPA Executive Director, and **Toshiyuki Yoshi** from the **Japan Inspection Institute of Fats and Oils (IIFO)**. The visit aimed to follow up on previous encounters between the IOC and JOPA, with a view to strengthening the relationship between both organizations in the light of Japan's growing interest in the olive oil sector. In fact, olive oil is the country's top ranking vegetable oil in value terms. From March 2024, Japan will enforce its first ever regulation for olive oil labelling, entirely based on the IOC's trade standard. An initiative encouraged by JOPA, the nation is the first non-IOC member to make the Organisation's trade standard a national regulation. Moreover, Japan now counts on a total of five physico-chemical and analysis laboratories and two tasting panels recognized by the IOC.

The meeting, which was also attended by representatives of the IOC's **Economic and Promotion and Standardisation** and **Research Units**, included a presentation of the Organisation's latest work and a recap of the world market of olive oil and table olive production, exports and imports, followed by an update of the Japanese association's recent developments. Both organisations then held an in-depth discussion on





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an array of issues regarding the tightening of bonds between Japan and the IOC. JOPA representatives conveyed the complex road to achieving the adoption of the IOC trade standard for labelling regulations, approved by the National Fair-Trade Commission and the Japanese Consumer Agency and scheduled to be adopted nationally in March 2024. This achievement was warmly welcomed by the IOC. **Jaime Lillo** also congratulated the Association for their incredible accomplishment in terms of the recognition of five physico-chemical analysis laboratories and two sensory panels. He recalled that in 2017, on the occasion of the Executive Secretariat's visit to Japan, the country did not count on any recognized laboratories nor tasting panels recognized by the IOC at the time.

Other topics of discussion included the possibility of accession to the Organization and Japan's potential participation as an observer country, the importance of increasing promotion activities in the Asian country, and specificities concerning the recognition of sensory and physico-chemical analysis laboratories.

This meeting was part of the ongoing commitment to foster and amplify the relations that have been carefully developed over the course of several years. Amongst other milestones, Japan welcomed an IOC-led promotion campaign hosted by JOPA in 2018, and both organizations co-hosted a seminar in Tokyo entitled "Evolution of current markets: expansion of olive oil in Japan and the world" in 2020. Representatives from Japan's Ministry of Agriculture, JOPA and the IOC also convened virtually in 2022 to bring the intergovernmental organization closer to Japanese olive oil sector stakeholders.

Japan's increasing interest in fostering its olive oil sector under the IOC's guidance is enthusiastically greeted by the Organisation, the world's only intergovernmental organization exclusively dedicated to the standardisation and the promotion of the sustainable production and consumption of olive oil and table olives across the globe.



THE IOC INTENSIFIES ITS EFFORTS TO COMBAT *XYLELLA FASTIDIOSA*

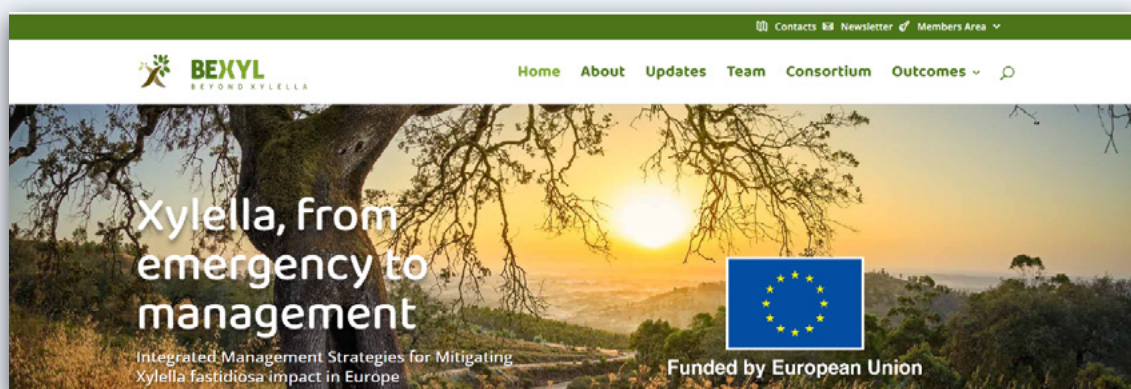
THE ORGANISATION RENEWS ITS COMMITMENT WITH THE BEXYL PROJECT

Within the framework of the multiple actions taken by the IOC to combat *Xylella fastidiosa*, the most threatening plant pathogen affecting olive trees, the organisation renewed its commitment with BeXyl Project in January 2024. The IOC will focus on knowledge transfer and the dissemination of the results of this EU-funded project that seeks to deal with the existence of *Xylella fastidiosa* and preventing future outbreaks.

Since 2022, **“Beyond Xylella: integrated management strategies for mitigating *Xylella fastidiosa* impact in Europe”** has worked to optimize the application of research findings related to this dangerous infection through a comprehensive and multidisciplinary research strategy based on a multi-actor approach.

As a project board member, the IOC has renewed its commitment to enhance the capacity of olive growers and nursery persons fighting *Xylella* by transferring knowledge, supporting research planning and backing the implementation of study results. Moreover, IOC representatives are expected to participate in a series of informative events, field trials, surveys, workshops and discussion panels, through which the adoption of sustainable solutions will be encouraged.

The fight against *Xylella fastidiosa* and its disruptive effects on olive groves and other plants unquestionably calls for cooperation from all sector stakeholders, from farmers and scientists to governments and international organizations, such as the IOC.





THE IOC WELCOMES THE ORGANISERS OF THE 2024 EDITION OF THE QOCO COMPETITION

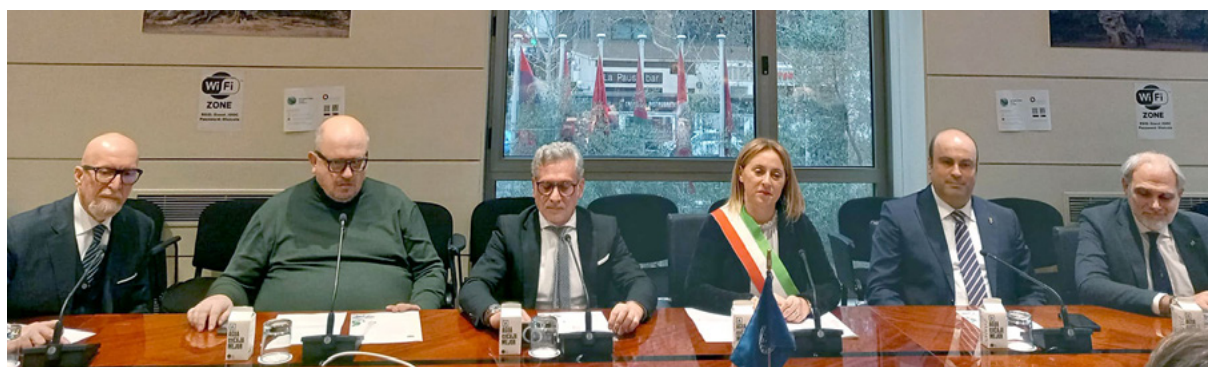
THEY CELEBRATED THE EVENT LIVE FROM THE IOC HEADQUARTERS

The 16th edition of “**QOCO, a trickle of extra virgin olive oil in the plate**”, was presented at the IOC headquarters in Madrid on Friday 9 February. The ceremony gave the world’s olive-growing community – from Uruguay and Argentina in the West, to Japan in the East, and including Iran, which holds the presidency of the IOC Council of Members in 2024 – the opportunity to follow the proceedings live.

QOCO, whose objective is to bring together the experiences and cross-cultural influences of young Euro-Mediterranean chefs, is a competition of the highest level where the only winner is the quality of extra virgin olive oil. The 16th edition of Qoco will take place in Andria (Puglia, Italy) from 22 to 24 March 2024.

QOCO enjoys, since last year, the institutional patronage of the IOC. This year, the Council of the City-Province of Andria wanted to return the institutional courtesy of the IOC by paying homage to the highest intergovernmental olive-growing institute in the world by presenting the varnishing of the 16th edition of QOCO directly at its headquarters in Madrid.

“We are honoured to receive this certificate of esteem and recognition from the City-Province of Andria led by the **Mayor Giovanna Bruno**, the Councillor for Productive Activities, **Cesare Troia**, accompanied by the President of the Italian Oil Cities Association, **Michele Sonnessa**”, reported **Jaime Lillo Lopez**, Executive Director of the IOC. “We are convinced,” he added, “that this proximity of QOCO’s organisers to the goals of the Executive Secretariat is in line with the objectives in the IOC’s International Agreement”.





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The Executive Director also recalled that the IOC website dedicates an entire section to Mediterranean cuisine under the heading 'culinary', all to be discovered and enjoyed to enhance the health properties of this noble product.

The Mayor of the City-Province of Andria, **Giovanna Bruno**, emphasised in her message of greeting that she fully shared the invitation of the Executive Director of the IOC, **Jaime Lillo Lopez**, expressing her desire to intensify collaboration between the two institutions. "Great minds think alike", added Mayor **Giovanna Bruno**. "Our objective is to push our collaboration towards excellence in order to support the objectives of the IOC's International Agreement by giving our companies producing high quality extra virgin olive oils all the opportunities that the agreement can offer them."

The Executive Director, **Jaime Lillo Lopez**, received the Italian delegation with the Head of the Standardisation and Research Unit, Dr. **Mercedes Fernandez**, who provided the visiting delegation with an overview of the activities carried out by the Executive Secretariat.





QVEXTRA! SIGNS A MULTIANNUAL GRANT AGREEMENT WITH THE IOC

THE ASSOCIATION WILL ORGANISE TWO CONFERENCES ON THE PRODUCT'S NUTRITION AND HEALTH LABELLING

On Wednesday 14 February, QvExtra! President, **Soledad Serrano**, and **Herminia Millán**, General Manager, met with IOC Executive Director, **Jaime Lillo**, to sign a multiannual grant agreement within the framework of the IOC's promotional grants scheme. QvExtra! is an international association dedicated to promoting high-quality extra virgin olive oils (EVOO). Among their activities is the organisation of the 2nd and 3d Conference on Nutrition and Health Labelling of EVOOs in the European Union in 2024 and 2025, respectively, for which they will channel the IOC's multiannual grants. On the occasion of their visit to the IOC's headquarters, QvExtra! representatives and the IOC's Executive Director discussed about a series of issues concerning the olive oil sector, particularly the importance of enhancing consumer knowledge regarding EVOO quality and the need to encourage a comprehensible labelling scheme for EVOOs that highlights the product's undeniable health benefits. The sustainability of the olive oil sector, across all of its axes, was also among the topics of conversation, as were the IOC's efforts to harmonise international trade standards concerning olive oil.

QvExtra! is an international association established in 2013 by Spanish olive oil producers who seek to promote and disseminate the multiple benefits of high-quality EVOOs.





MEETING OF THE IOC'S EXPERTS IN THE ORGANOLEPTIC ASSESSMENT OF VIRGIN OLIVE OILS

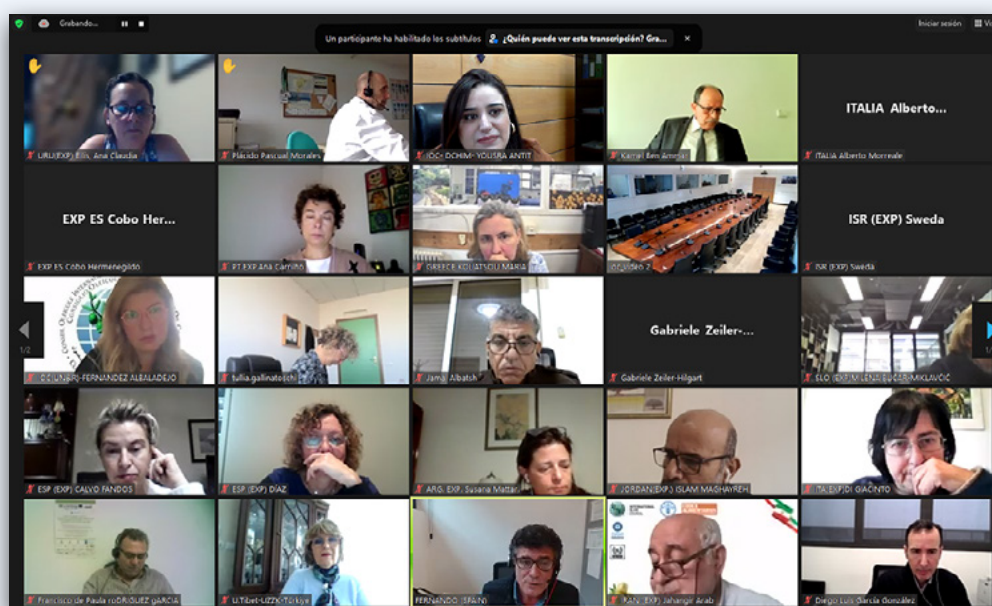
EXPERTS MET VIRTUALLY OVER A TWO-DAY PERIOD TO PROVIDE AN UPDATE ON THEIR WORK

The IOC **Standardisation and Research Unit** organised a virtual meeting on 13 and 14 February with experts and advisers in the organoleptic assessment of virgin olive oils officially designated by IOC member countries.

The participants, most of whom are panel leaders from IOC-recognised tasting panels for virgin olive oils, provided an update on the ongoing studies devoted to sensory analysis that are being carried out by several electronic working groups, as well as assessing potential new projects. They also examined the latest revisions to the organoleptic assessment method and evaluated the details of resolutions approved during the 118th session of the Council of Members. The experts addressed the program of the 5th workshop on the harmonisation of IOC-recognised tasting panels, to be held by videoconference from 17 to 19 September this year.

Other topics of discussion included accreditation, taster training, reference material, borderline olive oils, as well as the results of the studies on the ripe Picual and Chemlali varieties and the volatile profiles of these oils. The IOC Executive Secretariat took the opportunity to remind the experts that the deadline for receiving extra virgin olive oil samples for the Mario Solinas Quality Award in the northern hemisphere has been extended to 22 February 2024.

This group of experts is scheduled to meet again in hybrid format on 25 and 26 September, 2024.





ANNOUNCEMENTS AND FUTURE ACTIVITIES



ANNOUNCEMENTS AND FUTURE ACTIVITIES

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DEADLINE EXTENSION OF THE MARIO SOLINAS QUALITY AWARD NORTHERN HEMISPHERE

The deadline for sending EVOO samples to the prestigious Mario Solinas Quality Award (24th ed.) has been extended to Thursday 22 February, 2024.

The Mario Solinas Quality Award is a non-profit competition that aims to promote excellence in the olive oil industry, highlighting the dedication and skills of producers who achieve the highest quality standards in their extra virgin olive oils (EVOOs).

The rules for the 24th edition of the Mario Solinas Quality Award competition for northern hemisphere countries are available here in English, French and Spanish.

The deadline for registration and submitting samples for this edition has been extended to Thursday 22 February, 2024.

The samples and required documents outlined in the competition rules must be submitted to the IOC Executive Secretariat (Calle Principe de Vergara 154, 28002 Madrid, Spain) from Tuesday to Friday before the deadline.

All samples will be evaluated by the international jury between 5 and 8 March, 2024.



THE IOC MARIO SOLINAS QUALITY AWARD 2024 IN THE SOUTHERN HEMISPHERE

THE MARIO SOLINAS QUALITY AWARD TRAVELS TO URUGUAY

The IOC's prestigious Mario Solinas Quality Award competition, which is awarded every year to the best extra virgin olive oils, will be travelling to Uruguay in 2024, as part of a new special edition of the competition dedicated solely to oils from the southern hemisphere.

This initiative opens the door to a host of exceptional extra virgin olive oils from the olive-growing regions of the southern hemisphere.



The IOC's Mario Solinas Quality Award competition for the quality of extra virgin olive oils was launched during the 2000-2001 crop year to honour 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 recognising the meticulous work and dedication



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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 Award, adapted to the harvesting period in southern hemisphere countries. This request was studied by IOC experts in organoleptic assessment and approved by the Organisation's Council of Members at its 118th session in November 2023. The 2024 edition will therefore take place in Uruguay. The principle of alternating between Uruguay and Argentina has been suggested for the organisation 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 recognise producers of exceptional extra virgin olive oils around the world.

This initiative will also strengthen the links between the IOC and southern hemisphere countries, with the hope that it will encourage new countries in this region to join the international organisation.

The rules of the first edition of the Mario Solinas Quality Award for the southern hemisphere are available here in English, French and Spanish.

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

APPLICATIONS FOR SCHOLARSHIPS FOR THE INTERNATIONAL EXPERT COURSE IN VIRGIN OLIVE OIL TASTING

THE DEADLINE FOR APPLYING FOR A SCHOLARSHIP IS SUNDAY 31 MARCH, 2024!

The IOC is now accepting applications for scholarships for the International Expert Course in Virgin Olive Oil Tasting taught at the University of Jaén (Spain). The course is designed with the aim of fostering the transfer of technology in order to enhance the knowledge of the composition and quality characteristics of virgin olive oils. Professionals from IOC member countries with at least five years of experience in olive oil mills, olive oil quality control, or olive oil research and/or development are invited to apply. The course will take place from September 23 to December 19, 2024, in Jaén.

The deadline for applying for a scholarship is Sunday 31 March, 2024.

More information regarding the course and the IOC's scholarships (principles, exclusion, selection and award criteria), as well as the application form, are available through the IOC website.





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AN UPCOMING SEMINAR ON THE VALORISATION OF OLIVE BY-PRODUCTS AND WASTE MINIMISATION

ORGANISED JOINTLY WITH THE
UNIVERSITY OF JAÉN FROM 2 TO 7 JUNE,
2024

The IOC's Olive Growing, Olive Oil Technology and Environment Unit is co-organising a seminar with the University of Jaén on the "Sustainable valorisation of by-products and waste minimisation in the olive industry". It will be held at the University's campus in morning and afternoon sessions from Sunday 2 to Friday 7 June, 2024, both in-person and online, in English, French and Spanish.

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 organisation of the aforementioned seminar in April. 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.



Universidad de Jaén





MEETINGS OF
THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT



HIS MAJESTY KING FELIPE VI GREETES JAIME LILLO

ON THE OCCASION OF THE ROYAL RECEPTION TO THE DIPLOMATIC CORPS

To inaugurate the new year, a reception for the diplomatic corps accredited in Spain was held at the Royal Palace in Madrid on Wednesday 31 January, 2024. Among the attendants was **Jaime Lillo** in his new role as the first Spanish Executive Director of the IOC.

The IOC was established in 1959 under the auspices of the United Nations to administer the International Agreement on Olive Oil and Table Olives. Since then, the Organisation has signed a Headquarters Agreement with the Kingdom of Spain, host country of this international organisation, which governs the rights, immunities and privileges of the IOC's headquarters, staff and representatives.



MEETING BETWEEN THE IOC EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AND SPAIN'S MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE

SPAIN REITERATES ITS SUPPORT TO THE
WORLD'S ONLY INTERGOVERNMENTAL
ORGANISATION DEDICATED TO OLIVE OIL AND
TABLE OLIVES

On Monday 29 January, Spain's Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, **Luis Planas**, welcomed the newly appointed IOC Executive Director, **Jaime Lillo**, at the Ministry's headquarters in Madrid. Minister Planas conveyed his support to the IOC's priorities within the



framework of the new mandate presented by Mr. **Jaime Lillo**, the IOC's first Spanish Executive Director. Both representatives took stock of the world olive oil sector and the challenges ahead, particularly in what regards climate change. They also discussed the evolution of prices, the olive grove's sustainability, the harmonisation of standards, olive oil's health attributes, and how to better approach consumer countries, among other topics.

The IOC is headquartered in Madrid, Spain, since its establishment under the auspices of the United Nations in 1959.

COURTESY VISIT FROM THE AMBASSADOR OF URUGUAY

URUGUAY WILL BE THE FIRST COUNTRY TO HOST THE MARIO SOLINAS QUALITY AWARD IN THE SOUTHERN HEMISPHERE

On Wednesday 7 February, the Uruguayan Ambassador to Spain, H.E. Ms. **Ana Teresa Ayala Barrios**, paid a courtesy visit to the IOC's Executive Director, **Jaime Lillo**, at the Organisation's headquarters in Madrid. The Ambassador congratulated Lillo for his recent appointment and introduced him to **Alison Graña**, Counsellor at the Embassy and Uruguay's new liaison focal point for the IOC. Both representatives had the opportunity to discuss about the preparatory work for the first ever Mario Solinas Quality Award edition in the southern hemisphere, which will be hosted by Uruguay later this year. The competition will reward a host of exceptional extra virgin olive oils from the southern hemisphere's olive-growing regions, putting the hard work of the southern hemisphere's producers, producer associations and packers at the forefront.

Santiago Mastandrea, Uruguayan Counsellor, and **Andoni Olano**, responsible for the IOC's external relations, also participated in the meeting. Uruguay, who is the second southern hemisphere country to join the IOC, back in 2013, has demonstrated an ever-increasing interest in fostering its olive oil sector. In this line of thought, the IOC dedicated the 2021 number of its official journal, *Olivae*, to Uruguay's olive sector. You can read "Uruguay: A roaming blue sky" through this [link](#).





TUNISIA REAFFIRMS ITS SUPPORT TO THE IOC

BILATERAL MEETING BETWEEN THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AND THE TUNISIAN AMBASSADOR

In the bilateral meeting held on Tuesday, February 13, at the IOC's headquarters in Madrid, **Jaime Lillo**, IOC Executive Director, and H.E. Ms. **Fatma Omrani**, Tunisian Ambassador to Spain, convened to discuss Tunisia's continued support for the IOC. They emphasised Tunisia's longstanding significance within the intergovernmental organisation, being this Mediterranean country one of the most historically important players for the olive oil sector worldwide.

In this regard, Ambassador Omrani reaffirmed Tunisia's support and commitment to the IOC. The representatives exchanged views on the international context of the olive sector and the IOC's agenda, including the ongoing revision of the International Agreement on Olive Oil and Table Olives, and explored opportunities to enhance academic cooperation between Tunisian experts and IOC partners, such as the University of Jaén. **Jaime Lillo** took the opportunity to extend an official invitation to the Ambassador for the upcoming presentation of the Olive Oil World Congress (OOWC) at the IOC's headquarters on February 28th. The OOWC, which enjoys the IOC's institutional patronage, is scheduled for 26 to 28 June, 2024, in Madrid.

Nadia Barhoumi, Minister Counsellor at the Embassy, and **Andoni Olano**, Head of the IOC's External Relations Department, were also present at the meeting. Tunisia, one of the IOC's founding member countries, maintains close collaboration with the organisation across various areas, including scientific research and knowledge transfer among experts.





THE AMBASSADOR OF GREECE TO SPAIN VISITS THE IOC'S EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

GREECE HIGHLIGHTS THE IMPORTANCE OF OLIVE OIL FOR ITS DIET

On Wednesday 30 January, IOC Executive Director **Jaime Lillo** greeted Ambassador **Ilias Fotopoulos**, Greece's representative in Spain, and **Pantelis Gassios**, Economic and Commercial Affairs Counsellor, at the intergovernmental organisation's headquarters. Among other topics, the delegations assessed Greece's involvement in IOC activities, evaluated olive oil production trends and prices, and discussed Lillo's vision for the IOC under his new mandate.

The meeting, which also took place in the presence of **Lhassane Sikaoui**, Head of the IOC's Olive Growing, Olive Oil Technology and Environment Unit, was an opportunity for the representatives to take stock of Greece's noteworthy participation in the Organisation's activities, through IOC supported projects, such as Gen4Olive and Elgo-Dimitra, the granting of scholarships to Greek students for a diversity of university programmes, and the contribution of Greek extra virgin olive oils to the IOC Mario Solinas Quality Award. The Ambassador and the Executive Director also analysed the current situation regarding olive oil production trends and prices, highlighting the key role that the product plays in the Greek diet and the importance of addressing the challenge of climate change. Furthermore, **Jaime Lillo** shared some of the IOC's future lines of work under his mandate, particularly the Organisation's intention to drive closer to olive oil consuming countries, in order to further disseminate the IOC trade standard and thus guarantee international quality standards for olive oil and table olives.

Greece, one of the world's most important producers of olive oil, is represented at the IOC through the European Union.





THE IOC AND FUNDACIÓN DEL OLIVAR EXPLORE NEW PATHWAYS FOR COOPERATION

HIGHLIGHTING THE IMPORTANCE OF HARMONISING VIRGIN OLIVE OIL TASTING PANELS

On Tuesday, January 23, **Jaime Lillo**, IOC Executive Director, greeted the Fundación del Olivar's Director General, **Javier Olmedo**, and Chief Marketing Officer, **Paco Jiménez**. The main topic of conversation was the importance of harmonising olive oil tasting panels and how both organisations can collaborate further in this regard. In 2022, Fundación del Olivar and the IOC launched the IOC Panel platform, designed by the Foundation for the management, control, and harmonisation of the IOC's sensory analysis virgin olive oil tasting panels. The discussion also touched on the importance of global data for the sector and how to multiply efforts to further disseminate the value of the olive tree's products, one of the world's healthiest and most sustainable crops.

The Foundation for the Promotion and Development of Olive Groves and Olive Oil was established in 1990 in Andalucía, Spain, with the aim of using data and technology for enhancing the olive oil sector's knowledge and innovation, as well as promoting the product's innumerable benefits.





ALMAZARAS FEDERADAS VISITS THE IOC HEADQUARTERS

COMMUNICATING THE EXTRAORDINARY VALUE OF OLIVE OIL AND ITS CO-PRODUCTS IS CRUCIAL

On Tuesday, January 23, the IOC's Executive Director, **Jaime Lillo**, welcomed representatives from Almazaras Federadas (AF) to the Organisation's headquarters. The delegation included **Antoni March**, President; **Belén Luque**, Vice-President; and **Macarena Sánchez**, Secretary General. A productive discussion ensued on various issues affecting the Spanish and global olive oil and table olive sector.

Both organisations highlighted the importance of disseminating the value of olive oil and its co-products, emphasising their status as the world's healthiest vegetable oil, as well as underscoring the crucial role of the IOC's trade standard. AF representatives also underlined the need to educate consumers about the different trade categories of olive oil and the olive tree's decisive function across all sustainability dimensions, including environmental, social and economic sustainability.

Almazaras Federadas, the Association of Industrial Olive Oil Mills, is a non-profit entity established in 1974. It brings together around 200 Spanish industrial olive oil mills, representing approximately 18% of the country's olive oil production.



THE IOC METS WITH ASEMESA

PUTTING TABLE OLIVES ON THE TABLE

On Wednesday, January 25, IOC Executive Director **Jaime Lillo** welcomed representatives from ASEMESA, the Spanish Association of Exporters and Industrialists of Table Olives. The President of ASEMESA, **José Ignacio Montaña**, and the Secretary General, **Antonio de Mora**, expressed their full support to the new IOC Director and their eagerness to accompany the Organisation in its mission to shed more light on the immense value of the table olive sector. They discussed the importance of further investigating table olives' attributes in terms of nutrition and health, as well as other topics, including product labelling and the need for more international promotion of the olive tree's fruit.

Headquartered in Seville and founded in 1920, ASEMESA represents the manufacturing, marketing and export industry of Spanish table olives. Considered one of the country's oldest associations, ASEMESA aims to defend and represent the Spanish table olive sector and contribute to its development.





PUBLICATIONS AND SOCIAL NETWORKS



THE LATEST OLIVÆ EDITION IS NOW AVAILABLE ONLINE

The IOC has recently published the English version of its official journal Olivæ. The latest number focuses on the Islamic Republic of Iran's olive sector, and the expansion and development of this healthy and sustainable crop across the country.

"Carrying tales of centuries past: Iran's millennial olive tree" will submerge you in Iran's olive trees, taking you on a journey that spans all of its olive growing regions and beyond. You will learn about the opportunities and challenges that lay ahead for cultivating olive orchards in this region, diving deep into analyses regarding, but not limited to, this product's value chain and its comparative advantage, the diversity of planting systems in Iran, and advancements regarding its production. You will also be exposed to the multifaceted role that developing the olive sector can have in facing social challenges, and will even be encouraged to try out delicious traditional Iranian olive-based recipes! This number of Olivæ is presented by the IOC's former Executive Director, **Abdellatif Ghedira**; Iran's Minister for Agriculture, Dr Mohammad **Ali Nikbakht**; and the country's Deputy Minister for Horticultural Affairs, Dr **Mohammad Mehdi Boroumandi**.

[You can download the English edition here.](#)

This edition of Olivæ will also be available soon in Arabic, French, Italian and Spanish.



FOLLOW US THROUGH OUR NETWORKS!

Many of you are already following us on our online networks, through the International Olive Council's press review OLIVE NEWS (<https://www.scoop.it/topic/olive-news>), which gathers and publishes the latest news from the international olive sector and other topics of interest such as the Mediterranean diet, health, etc., in Spanish, English, French and Italian. The main advantage of this press review, which is updated daily, is its swiftness: you can access it at any time if you want to keep up to date with the latest news from the sector. Since its launch in December 2013, more than 12,000 articles in the olive sector's main media have been collected through this press review, which has 8,800 subscribers and has already received almost 369,000 visits. All the 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). Keep up with us!

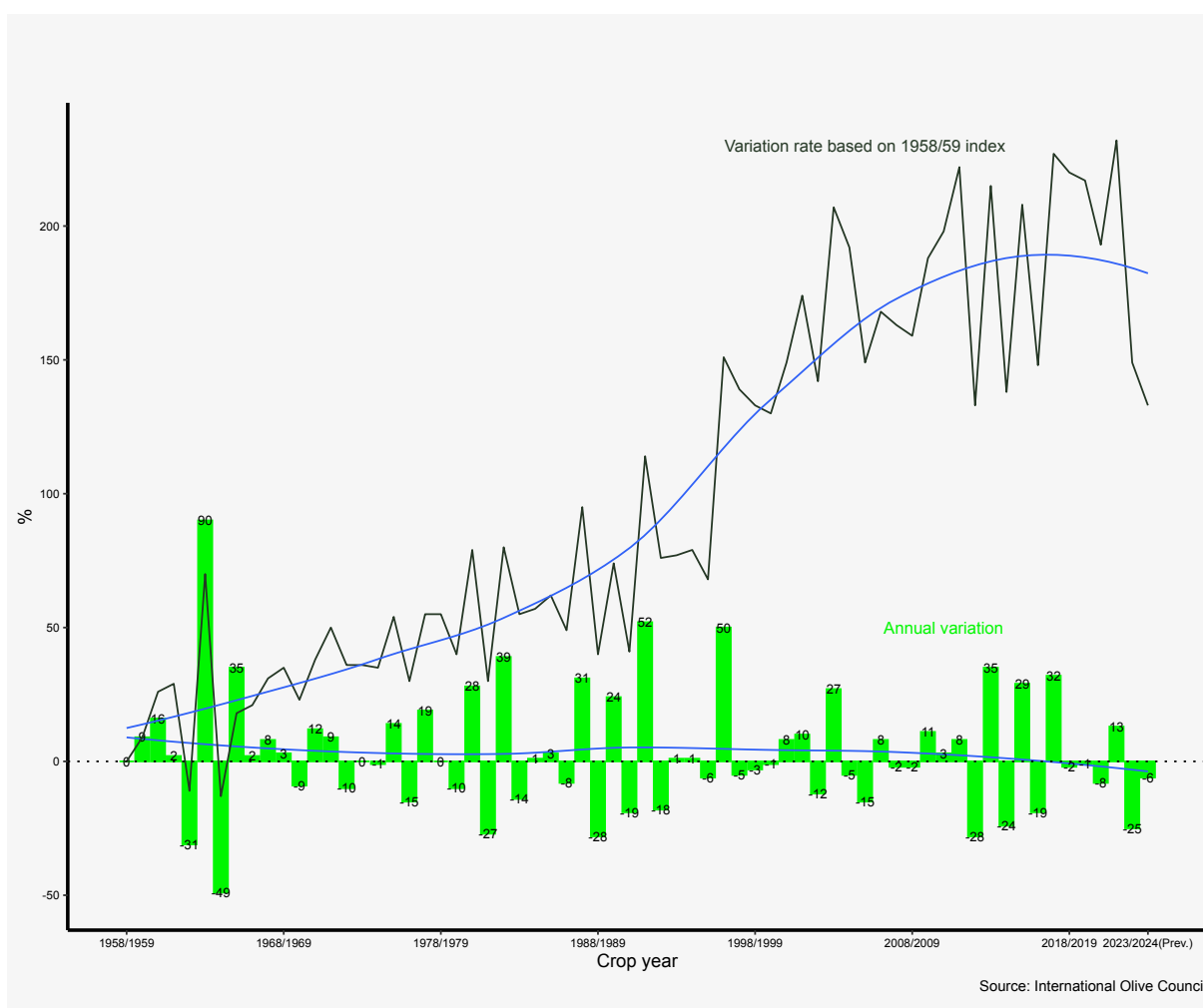


WORLD MARKET OF OLIVE OIL AND TABLE OLIVES



EVOLUTION OF OLIVE OIL AND TABLE OLIVE PRODUCTION

While olive oil production has tripled over the last 60 years, reaching 3,422,500 t in 2021/22, provisional figures for the 2022/23 crop year indicate a 25% drop in production, to 2,569,500 t, and estimates for the 2023/24 crop year point to a production of 2,407,000 t (-6%).



Graph 1 - Evolution of olive oil production. Annual rates of change based on 1958/59.



WORLD MARKET OF OLIVE OIL AND TABLE OLIVES

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1. OLIVE OIL - 2022/23 CROP YEAR (PROVISIONAL DATA)

According to provisional figures, world production is estimated to have reached 2,569,500 t in the 2022/23 crop year, 853,000 t less (-25%) than in the previous crop year. Consumption is estimated to have been 2,834,000 t (-15%), with imports of 1,063,500 t.

Production (×1000tn)	2018/2019	2019/2020	2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023(p.)	Average	2023/2024(e.)	%variation rates
EU, of which:	2 264	1 920	2 051	2 272	1 392	1 980	1 413	↑ 1.5%
SPAIN	1 790	1 125	1 389	1 492	666	1 292	766	↑ 15.1%
GREECE	185	275	275	232	345	262	195	↓ -43.5%
ITALY	174	366	274	329	241	277	289	↑ 19.9%
PORTUGAL	100	140	100	206	126	135	150	↑ 19.0%
Other IOC countries, of which:	811	1 162	738	966	967	929	816	↓ -15.6%
TUNISIA	140	440	140	240	180	228	200	↑ 11.1%
TÜRKIYE	194	230	194	235	380	246	210	↓ -44.7%
MOROCCO	200	145	160	190	107	160	106	↓ -0.9%
ALGERIA	97	126	70	94	76	93	93	↑ 23.2%
EGYPT	41	40	38	48	40	42	40	↓ 0.0%
ARGENTINA	28	30	30	33	31	30	35	↑ 12.9%
Non-IOC producers:	230	188	230	184	210	208	178	↓ -15.4%
TOTAL	3 304	3 269	3 020	3 423	2 569	3 117	2 407	↓ -6.3%

Table 1 - Olive oil production.



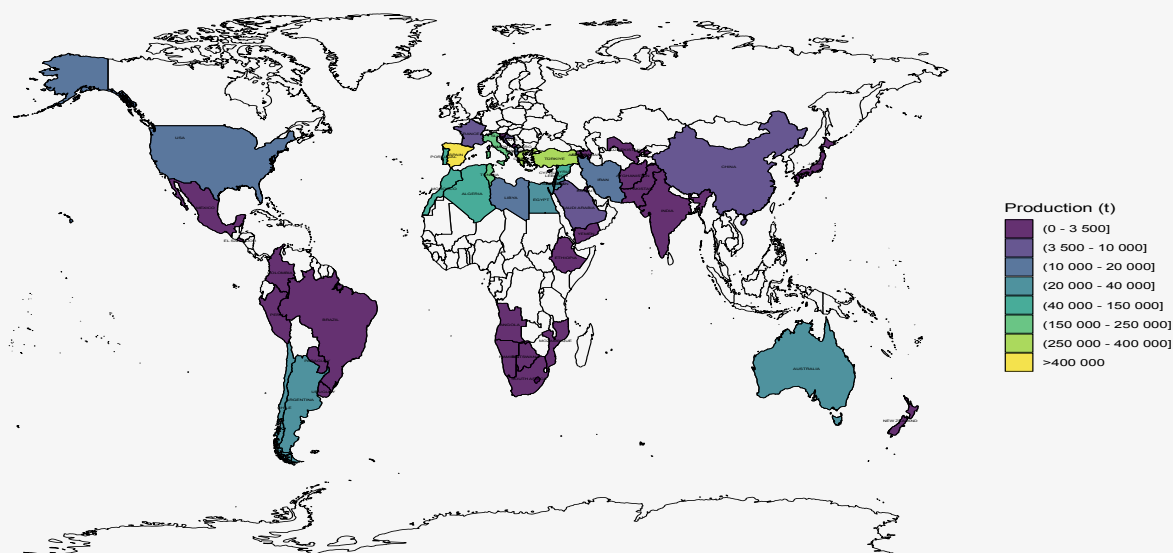
WORLD MARKET OF OLIVE OIL AND TABLE OLIVES

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IOC member countries produced 2,359,000 t during the 2022/23 crop year, or 92% of the world total. Production by the group of European countries reached 1,392,000 t, 39% down on the previous crop year. Spain, with production of 665,800 t, recorded a fall of 55%; Italy, with 240,900 t, saw its production fall by 27%. Portugal's production of 126,000 t was 39% down on the previous crop year. Only Greece saw its production increase (+49%), to 345,000 t.

The other IOC member countries produced 967,000 t. Türkiye's production increased by 62% (380,000 t), while production fell in Tunisia (-25%) and Morocco (-44%).

World olive oil production, 2022/23 crop year



Source: International Olive Council

Map 1 - Olive oil production. 2022/23.

Consumption reached 1,868,000 t in IOC member countries and 966,000 t in non-IOC countries (-12%).



2. OLIVE OIL - ESTIMATES FOR THE 2023/24 CROP YEAR

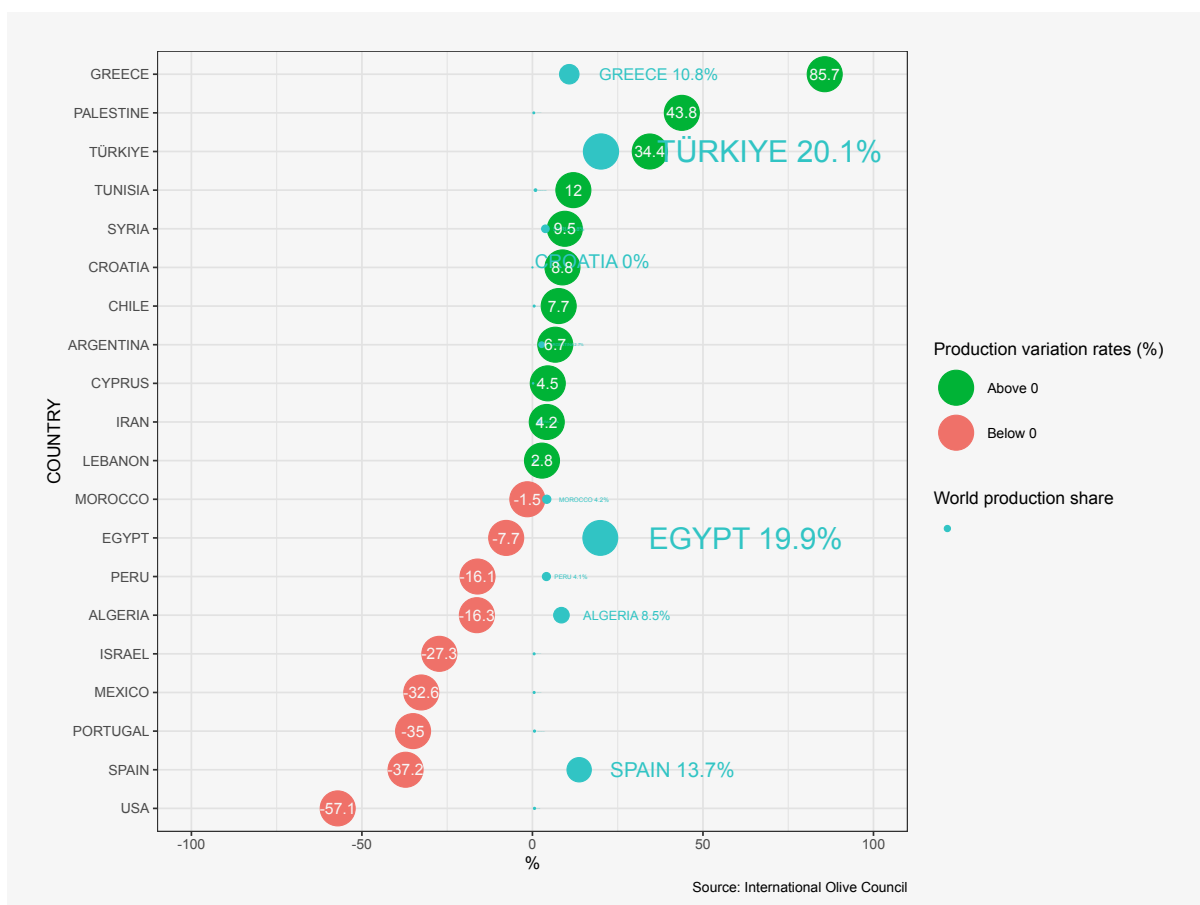
According to official data from countries and estimates from the IOC Executive Secretariat, world production for the 2023/24 crop year should reach 2,407,000 tonnes, down 6% on the previous year. Imports and exports are forecast at 1 million tonnes each.

IOC member countries are forecast to produce a total of 2,229,000t, or 93% of the world total, down 6% on the previous year. The EU producing countries as a whole are forecast to produce 1,413,000t, 2% more than in 2022/23. The other IOC member countries are expected to produce a total of 816,000t (-16%).

World consumption is expected to reach 2,699,000 tonnes, down 5% on the previous crop year.

3. TABLE OLIVES - CROP YEARS 2022/23 (PROVISIONAL DATA) AND 2023/24 (ESTIMATES)

World production of table olives is estimated to have reached 3,014,500 t in the 2022/23 crop year, down 3% on the previous year. Among IOC member countries, Türkiye's production has increased (+34%), and Egypt's production accounts for a significant share of world production (20%), despite an 8% drop in the 2022/23 crop year.



Graph 2 - Development of table olive production (2022/23-2021/22) and production shares (2022/23).



WORLD MARKET OF OLIVE OIL AND TABLE OLIVES

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According to estimates for the 2023/24 crop year, world production of table olives will fall by 12% compared to 2022/23, to 2,653,500 t, while consumption will fall by 3%.

Production (×1000tn)	2018/2019	2019/2020	2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023(p)	Average	2023/2024(e.)	%variation rates
EU, of which:	859	771	881	929	825	853	601	↓ -27.2%
SPAIN	591	458	546	659	414	534	388	↓ -6.4%
GREECE	199	222	230	175	325	230	110	↓ -66.2%
ITALY	40	60	83	62	62	62	75	↑ 20.0%
PORTUGAL	22	25	16	26	17	21	22	↑ 32.6%
Other IOC countries, of which:	1 742	1 836	1 682	1 824	1 885	1 794	1 750	↓ -7.1%
EGYPT	600	650	650	650	600	630	600	↓ 0.0%
TÜRKIYE	423	414	360	450	605	450	445	↓ -26.4%
ALGERIA	300	327	272	306	256	292	286	↑ 11.5%
MOROCCO	130	135	130	130	128	131	120	↓ -6.2%
ARGENTINA	80	80	78	75	80	79	80	↓ 0.0%
IRAN	77	62	62	60	62	64	64	↑ 4.0%
Non-IOC producers:	349	354	275	348	304	326	302	↓ -0.7%
TOTAL	2 950	2 961	2 839	3 101	3 014	2 973	2 654	↓ -12.0%

Table 2 - Table olive production.



I. WORLD TRADE IN OLIVE OIL AND TABLE OLIVES

1. OLIVE OIL - 2023/24 CROP YEAR

Trade in olive oil and olive-pomace oil during the 2023/24 crop year (October 2023 - November 2023) on the 8 markets displayed in the table below recorded a drop of 42% in Australia, 39% in Brazil, 20% in Canada, 64% in China, 26% in Japan and 22% in the United States compared to the same period of the previous crop year.

In the EU, intra-EU purchases fell by 29% in October, while extra-EU imports rose by 15% compared to the same period last year.

No	Importing country	October 22	October 23	November 22	November 23
1	Australia	2687,1	1916,1	3071,9	1429,3
2	Brazil	8488,4	6809,6	12979,1	6225,9
3	Canada	4845,4	4228,9	5634,9	4115,8
4	China	3447,5	1951,0	7032,8	1795,4
5	Japan	5555,5	3323,7	3476,5	3344,9
6	USA	37568,0	24902,3	32131,2	29117,9
7	Extra-EU/27	10879,0	12457,5	9374,4	n.d
	Intra-EU/27	86190,7	61345,7	101980,4	n.d
	Total	159661,6	116934,7	175681,3	46029,3

Olive oil imports (including olive-pomace oils)(t)

2. TABLE OLIVES - 2023/24 CROP YEAR

Trade in table olives¹ during the 2023/24 crop year (September 2023 - November 2023) on the markets listed in the table below fell by 7% in Australia, 1% in Brazil, 8% in Canada and 10% in the United States compared to the same period in the previous crop year.

Within the EU, intra-EU purchases up to October were down by 24%, while extra-EU imports were up by 13% compared to the same period in the previous year.

No	Importing country	September 22	September 23	October 22	October 23	November 22	November 23
1	Australia	2366,1	1921,8	996,5	1401,8	1600,5	1291,5
2	Brazil	11432,5	10309,3	8957,5	10388,9	10838,6	10304,8
3	Canada	3172,0	2384,2	2872,2	3234,3	3459,8	3141,1
4	USA	14272,0	17496,2	13449,3	12640,9	17146,0	10421,3
5	Extra-EU/27	8262,9	9652,4	9177,3	10134,8	8683,8	n.d
	Intra-EU/27	28224,8	26883,3	50645,7	33298,6	31851,5	n.d
	Total	67730,2	68647,2	86098,4	71099,3	73580,1	25158,8

Imports of table olives (t)

¹ According to the 2015 International Agreement on Olive Oil and Table Olives, in force since 1 January 2017, a "table olive crop year" is defined as the twelve-month period from 1 September of any one year to 31 August of the following year.



II. PRODUCER PRICES - OLIVE OILS

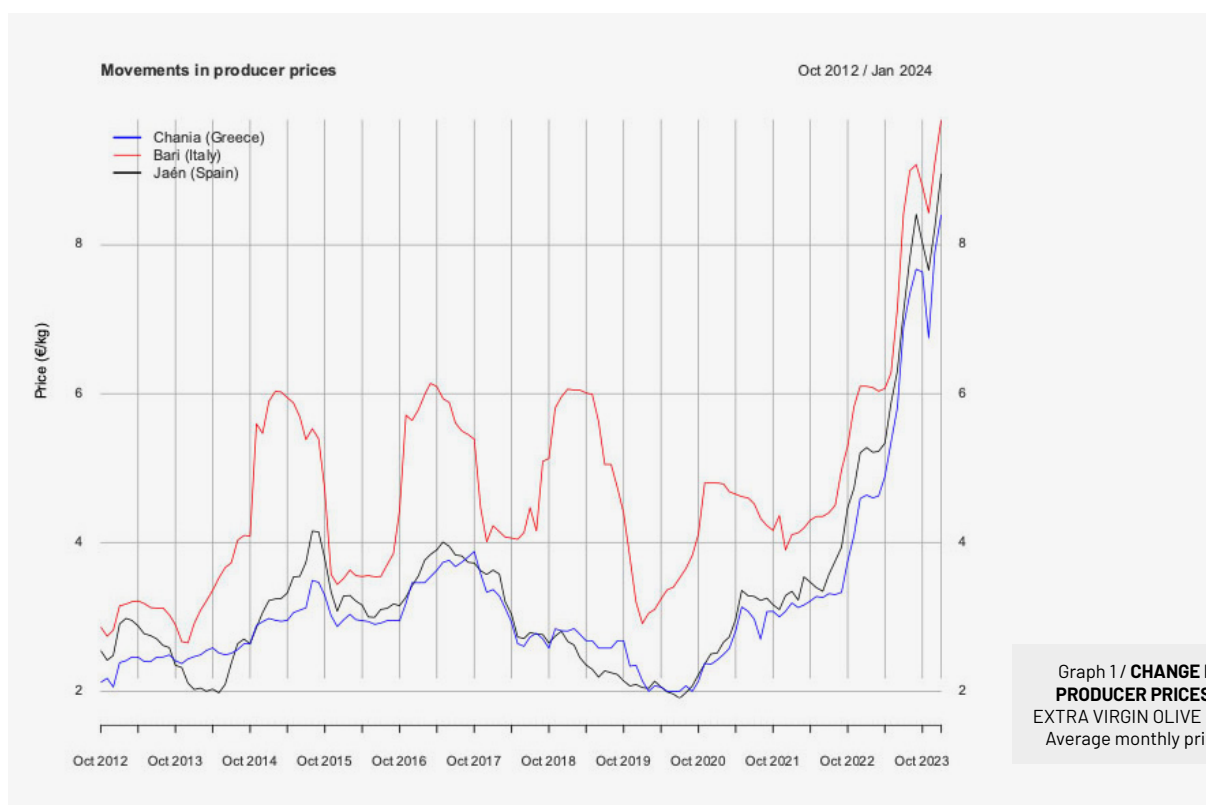
Monthly price trends for extra virgin and refined olive oil are shown in graphs 1 and 2.

Extra virgin olive oil - In Spain, the producer price reached €9.03/kg in the week from 15 to 21 January 2024, an increase of 68.4% compared to the same period in the previous year.

Italy - During the week of 15-21 January 2024, extra virgin olive oil traded at €9.68/kg, an increase of 58.7% compared to the same period in the previous year.

Greece - The price for this category reached €8.4/kg in the week from 15 to 21 January 2024, an increase of 76.8% compared with the same period last year.

Tunisia - The price of extra virgin olive oil reached €7.88/kg in the first week of January 2024.



Refined olive oil: The producer price for this category in Spain was €8.68/kg during the week of 15-21 January 2024, an increase of 77.2% on the same period in the previous crop year.

The difference between the price of extra virgin olive oil (€9.03/kg) and the price of refined olive oil (€8.68/kg) is €0.35/kg in Spain.

<https://www.internationaloliveoil.org/what-we-do/economic-affairs-promotion-unit/#prices>

<https://www.internationaloliveoil.org/what-we-do/economic-affairs-promotion-unit/#exports>



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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