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## **EUROMEDCITRUSNET: SAFE AND HIGH QUALITY SUPPLY CHAINS AND NETWORKS FOR THE CITRUS INDUSTRY BETWEEN MEDITERRANEAN PARTNER COUNTRIES**

The EuroMedCitrusNet project announces the launch of its website -- [www2.spi.pt/euromedcitrusnet](http://www2.spi.pt/euromedcitrusnet). EuroMedCitrusNet is designed to promote stronger research collaboration between the EU and Mediterranean Partner Countries to improve the quality and safety of citrus supply chains. The project, coordinated by Sociedade Portuguesa de Inovação (SPI), began in October 2006 and will run for two years. It is funded by the European Commission's 6<sup>th</sup> Framework Programme under the Food Safety and Quality priority.

The website is the focus point for information about the project and a means of establishing and strengthening EU-Mediterranean Partner Country collaboration in citrus sector research. Involvement in the project is encouraged via the project's message forum and database as well as its networking events. Organizations are encouraged to register in the database as a means to contribute towards the construction of a comprehensive information source on research activity, facilities, training and other relevant information that will assist in the development of collaborative research to improve the quality and safety of citrus supply chains.

In addition to the coordinator SPI, Portugal, the project is being conducted by a number of highly prestigious institutions including:

- University of Catania, Italy; Cukurova University, Turkey;
- National Agricultural Research Foundation, Greece;
- Euroquality, France;
- Asociacion de Investigacion de la Industria Agroalimentaria ainia, Spain;
- Institut Agronomique et Veterinaire Hassan II, Morocco;
- Horticultural Research Institute, Egypt; Institut National Agronomique de Tunisie, Tunisia;
- Conzorcio Euroagrumi O. P., Italy;
- Station D'Emballage D'Agrumes Kabbage Souss, Morocco.

Together the organizations comprising the project consortium will be promoting improved safety and quality of Mediterranean citrus supply chains through:

- A study of current policies, procedures and research related to the Mediterranean citrus sector to improve quality and safety of citrus supply chains;
- A needs assessment survey to focus research and development on improving safety and quality including policy recommendations, an action plan of research agendas and preliminary project proposals;
- Mediterranean Networking initiatives to stimulate international co-operation and support policy development by integrating current related research and providing added value;
- Providing information to facilitate access to knowledge, training and technology, increasing SME participation in research, and, thus, improving the exploitation of results, and accelerating innovation.

Through this project they will bring together scientists and industrialists to create a sustainable Mediterranean network for the citrus sector to support research relevant to safe and high quality cross-border supply chains.

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