

The Sénia Territory Millennium Olive Tree Landscape, Taula del Sénia Mancomunidad

Besides geography, history, language and culture, it is the preservation of some 4 800 millenary olive trees – with trunk circumferences of more than 3.5 metres at 1.30 metres above the ground – that characterises and gives unity to the territory of Sénia. Almost all of these trees are of the Farga variety, probably the oldest cultivated variety in the world, with high quality oil but with a low production capacity. They are part of a traditional olive tree landscape, known as the “sea of olive trees”. This landscape, in which traditional agricultural activities are carried out, consists of terraced fields, dry stone constructions, and unique flora and fauna, and offers an outstanding example of the interaction between natural and human factors. The programmes implemented to strengthen the intrinsic value of ancient olive trees and landscape helped achieve positive results through the collaboration of public and private sectors.



The Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe conferred a special mention of the Landscape Award of the Council of Europe's European Landscape Convention for the 4th Session of the Award 2014-2015 on the organisers of the project. It enabled the conservation of the millennium olive trees and the management of the “sea of olive trees” landscape they created. The know-how, traditional agricultural practices and the natural and cultural heritage for the cultivation of olive trees have thus also been preserved. The concerns expressed by the local population about the fate of some 4 800 ancient olive trees – threatened by economic pressures, speculation and classified as “at risk” – has led the authors of the project to establish a partnership between local and regional administrations, individuals and enterprises. This strong co-operation between the public and private sectors has led, through restoration and sustainable territorial management, to the protection of the olive trees and the preservation of an exceptionally characteristic landscape. Awareness-raising initiatives have helped strengthen the understanding of stakeholders of the inestimable value of these historic trees. Favorable economic prospects have also resulted. This achievement is thus a major source of inspiration for the traditional Mediterranean landscape of olive groves.