

IENA Anglais 2005 - CD 3 - Dialogue 1 - The "slow food" movement**CPGE ECT1 – 14-22/09/20**

A I'm here in the studio today with Petra Johnson, a representative of the Slow Food Movement. Good morning Petra.

B Good morning.

A I'm sure that everyone has heard of fast food and probably tasted it, but what can you tell us about your Slow Food Movement?

B Well, as you can probably guess from the name, we're the antithesis of fast food. Our philosophy is to take time over our food, to appreciate authentic flavours and, as it states in our manifesto, "to protect the right to taste".

A It's an original concept but do you really believe that people have time for this? Surely most people would prefer to simply grab a sandwich or takeaway pizza rather than spend hours in the kitchen?

B This is the attitude we're fighting to change. And it's a real struggle to convince people that eating and drinking should be a pleasure and not just a routine. Our modern lifestyle is playing havoc with our health. Obesity and eating disorders have become normal in our society. It's high time we did something to halt this worrying trend. We believe that it's essential to strike a balance between agriculture and preserving the environment. We've been defined as 'eco-gastronomes' which sums up our commitment to protecting sustainable development.

A So where and when did this movement begin?

B It all started in Italy in 1986. We now have offices all over the world including Switzerland, Germany, New York, Montpellier and Japan. We now have over 80,000 members in five continents. Our beliefs seem to have struck a chord with people from all cultures. My role is to represent and promote our philosophy at a local level.

A How exactly do you promote this "taste philosophy"?

B Well, we organise numerous events to educate the public and make them aware of our movement. Through food and wine fairs, we raise the profile of local producers and wine cellars. We also hold debates, tasting courses and taste workshops with the aim of introducing the public to new and exciting tastes.

A I believe that you are also involved in charity work.

B Yes. We support a wide range of projects and charities that are campaigning for the protection of local producers. For example, we have various projects in war-torn areas such as former Yugoslavia, or in disaster-stricken areas such as parts of Italy which were hit by an earthquake, where we hope to revive the endangered biodiversity.

A What's your position on genetically modified crops, the so called GM foods.

B In view of the positive effects they can lead to, especially in the medical and pharmaceutical fields, we believe it's necessary to have an aware, critical and unprejudiced approach to biotechnologies. At the same time, it's necessary to set clear limits and constraints on biotechnological applications, preventing man's genetic inheritance from being exploited for economic purposes and forbidding ethically unacceptable uses. As for the use of biotechnologies in the agro-industrial sector, priority should be given to the protection of human health and full respect of the consumer's right to information.

A Can you explain to our listeners the concept of the "Ark of Taste"?

B The "Ark of Taste" is a huge project we're involved in which aims to catalogue and save products, dishes and animals in danger of extinction. We provide sponsorship and media support to groups campaigning to save an "Ark" member. We also have a publishing company through which we publish various titles specialising in food, wine and tourism including a magazine called 'Slow' which is translated into five languages. It all helps spread our message to a wider public.

A It sounds like a very worthy cause.

Outline & questions A representative of the Slow Food Movement explains that this movement, the antithesis of modern fast food culture, aims to educate the public in the pleasures of authentic tastes and halt the increase in obesity and eating disorders. The movement supports local producers and has a critical and unprejudiced approach to biotechnologies. It supports sustainable development and keeping a fine balance between agriculture and the ecosystem. Taste workshops and food and wine fairs are organised to help publicise the message and the "Ark of Taste" project aims to catalogue and save products, dishes and animals in danger of extinction.

Q1 : Doesn't the name of this movement seem in total contradiction with contemporary trends? Q2 : Would you be ready to pay for organic food which is far more expensive than mass produced food? Q3 : Why are fruit and vegetables so horribly expensive? Q4 : What are the arguments in favour of GM food? Q5 : Why has sustainable development recently become the watchword? Can you explain what it consists in?