

Press Release

OLIVE OIL, FROM SOL EXPO THE APPEAL TO THE EU: EXTEND THE ITALIAN CONTROL MODEL TO EXTRA-EU IMPORTS

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT MEMBERS NARDELLA AND CAVEDAGNA, LA PIETRA (MASAF) AND OLMEDO (SPAIN): “A EUROPEAN CUSTOMS AGENCY AND A EUROPEAN OLIVE PLAN WITH A DEDICATED CMO ARE NEEDED”

Verona, March 2, 2026. The European Union should adopt Italy’s system for controlling olive oil imports from outside the EU. This emerged during discussions between MEPs Stefano Cavedagna (European Parliament Internal Market Committee), Dario Nardella (European Parliament Agriculture Committee), Masaf Undersecretary Patrizio La Pietra, and Javier Olmedo, Director of the Fundación de Olivar, who spoke today at Veronafiere during SOL Expo at the conference “From the European Market to the Mediterranean up to Mercosur,” moderated by Alberto Grimelli – journalist for Teatro Naturale.

“If fraud is uncovered in Italy, it’s because inspections are carried out,” said Masaf Undersecretary Patrizio La Pietra. “The Italian system is one of the best, and it should become a fully European system. Let’s bring the European Customs Agency to Italy,” he added, “so we can provide added value to this sector.”

“A European agency, a European customs union is needed,” agreed Dario Nardella. “Today, agri-food inspections cover only around 3% of imports: problems such as downgrading, illegal blending, or adulteration often go undetected. This also harms producers who need to import legally. I support extending the Italian model across Europe and ensuring cross-border interoperability. Today it is no longer an opportunity—it is a necessity. The barriers between member states compound the lack of proper controls.”

Stefano Cavedagna shared the same view: “Europe, as an economic entity responsible for protecting us, should act far more decisively to combat these risks. We are heirs to a Northern European mindset that does not fully appreciate the economic value and safety of Mediterranean products. Italy must lead a small revolution in defending our productions, even against those who seek to disrupt the market.”

“I believe the Italian control model would also find support in Spain,” stated Javier Olmedo. “Almost all cooperatives and serious producers would like to see it extended. In some harvests we need imported oil, but it must be high-quality and fully inspected. We should extend the Italian system to all of Europe and all borders, to truly protect this high-quality product that we have in Italy and Spain alike.”

Among the other proposals was a call for Mediterranean countries to unite ahead of the new CAP: “We must work as a team and make olive oil one of the pillars of our agri-food promotion strategy,” concluded Nardella. “We should propose a European Olive Plan and a strong CMO for extra virgin olive oil, as robust as the wine CMO. This product can no longer be the ‘younger sibling’ of wine.”

According to the *Consumer Survey Italy* conducted by Nomisma for SOL Expo 2026, one in three Italian consumers would not even consider buying high-quality extra-EU olive oil, while one in four would be interested, although at a lower price. For Italian EVO oil, half of respondents are willing to pay over €10 per liter, whereas 9 out of 10 would not reach this price for non-EU oil, with 73% lowering the threshold to €7. Spending willingness rises slightly for EU oils, with 45% ready to pay €5–7 per liter and 44% in the €8–10 range. At the top of the scale, Italian DOP/IGP EVO oil commands the highest prices: more than a third (35%) of consumers consider it reasonable to pay over €14 per liter, with an additional 36% in the €10–14 range. In short, Italians assign a price premium of €2–3 from non-EU to EU oil, another €2–3 from EU to Italian, and a further €2–3 from Italian to DOP/IGP.

***SOL Expo** (Veronafiere, March 1–3, Hall 12) is the international showcase dedicated to the olive and olive oil supply chain. With a unique format in Italy, the event serves as a B2B2C platform connecting professionals, companies, restaurants, and informed consumers. It is a hub for business, training, and culture, highlighting Italian olive oil excellence with a strong international focus and dialogue with the public.*

Information and Tickets: <https://www.solexpo.com/>

Dates: March 1–3, 2026

Opening Hours:

- Sunday, March 1: 10:00 – 18:00
- Monday, March 2 and Tuesday, March 3: 9:30 – 18:00

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