The Food-processing Innovation Trajectories and the European construction. Norms, trademarks and communication since World War II.

Tours, 6th and 7th May 2010

Organizers: Tours University/LTI Programme (MSHA)/Padua University

The purpose of this conference is to cross the manifold dynamics at the heart of the research programmes which were at the root of this project: the innovation trajectories, food history and international relations.

Since World War II, one of the effects of the European construction was the production of norms that gradually shape productions, series and the functioning of companies, and also influence the consumers' behavior. In the food processing industry and thus in the food field in general, the impact was even stronger. With the progressive unification concerning food practices and the series standardization, deep changes can be noticed. We will also question the limits of the European construction, which is characterized by either the keeping or the strong opposition towards opposed practices; for example, the southern logic of taste against the northern logic of hygiene.

The European construction was first based on the structuring of markets which aim at creating a balance in the agricultural field. It resulted in supply capacities for consumers' use that made the flux of intra-EU products easier, but it also resulted in the law of competition. The commercial regulation is the outcome of the balance of these stakes: development of the poles of production, quality standards, logistic constraints.

The establishment of a unique market dominated by the growing transit of food products could only develop through communication procedures understandable by most of consumers: the norms, whose complexity generates today the necessity of standardization (gradual transition from multiple European directives to synthetic European regulations), and strategies aiming at getting in touch with the consumer (trademarks references, packaging translated in every language, cultural diffusion). We should particularly retrace the progressive juridic and regulatory shift that leads to the Food Law in 2002 and to the application rules in 2004-2005, establishing the HACCP protocol and traceability.

Of course, the matter is not about studying separately the various dynamics, but about examining them simultaneously to get an historical understanding of these evolutions through multidisciplinary or interdisciplinary approaches.

Thus some transverse subjects can be pointed out (the following list is not exhaustive):

- R&D policy
- Regional, national and international entrepreneurial strategies
- Lobby actions and effects or failures of lobbying
- Mobility and food (transport and usages in movement)
- Articulations with the Common Agricultural Policy

- Regulatory norms and labels
- Check procedures
- European agencies and organisms
- Adoption of extra-European models
- National and international negotiation arenas
- Tastes and esthetics
- Field approaches

This conference lies within the framework of several research programmes running over 4 years: “the Innovation Trajectories” (LTI), driven in Bordeaux by the MSHA with the involvement of Bordeaux III, Bordeaux IV, Paris IV-Sorbonne and Toulouse le Mirail Universities; the chairs on History of International Relations and European Integration of International Studies Department (Padua University); the Food Pillar from the “Euwol” project supported by the ESF; and the programme “Blanc” from the ANR, “Food packaging and conditioning”, coordinated by the Tours University, with the contribution of the Perpignan and Artois Universities, and of the MSHA.

Organized in Tours with the help of the Touraine Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the scientific board is made up of:
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The call for papers will be open until the 1st December 2009.
Please send a title proposition and a summary by email both to:

“ Les Trajectoires de l’Innovation” : lti@msha.fr and lti_tours@univ-tours.fr