



## Newsletter #2 February 2020

### IN THIS NEWSLETTER

- Meetings and Events
- Action Planning
- Good Practices
- Exchange of Experience

### PROJECT GOAL

EUREGA aims to have food, food habits and gastronomy included and recognised in EU, regional and national strategies and policies. Both should be seen as a cultural asset and strong element in regional cultural identity and as a necessary tool to boost sustainable products and services.

Dear recipient,

In the second edition of our newsletter, you can read about the latest activities in the EUREGA project. What did we learn? What are we working on? And how can you help to get local gastronomy on the map and in policies on regional, national and European levels? Read all about it!

## Meetings and Events

### Our heritage and future: gastronomic values in the Hajdú-Bihar county's development goals



During a successful interregional meeting, representatives of the European partner institutions of the EUREGA project learned about the gastronomic heritage of Hajdú-Bihar County while jointly reviewed its current and future role in development supporting small business actors. The international meeting of the EUREGA project was organized by Hajdú-Bihar County Government in Debrecen, Hungary on 17-19 September 2019. The Dutch, Greek, Irish, Finnish, Spanish and Romanian experts also attended a

full-day professional visit to the Derecske Apple Orchard, where they learned about the history and committed work of the owner company BoldAgro Ltd.

The event was also participated by the members of the county's stakeholder platform providing the opportunity for local and international actors to meet and greet each other, to discuss the different practices gained and introduced within the project and to find out the frames of the regional action plans. The meeting was opened by Mr. László Bulcsu, Vice President of Hajdú-Bihar County Government and Mr. Imre Szabó, Managing Director of BoldAgro Ltd.

Over the three days, participants had the chance to taste the product range of many local producers, SMEs including the innovative and environmentally-friendly initiative of a young team of Pallag Spájsz.





## The EUREGA Interregional Exchange visit in Rhodes, Greece from the 29th until the 31st of October 2019



Bee Museum. Photo by Niina Vanttinen / Kuopio

Members from all partner institutions gathered in Rhodes for the EUREGA Interregional Exchange visit at the end of October 2019. On the 29th of October, after a session of Gastronomy and Sustainable Tourism Case Studies presentations and discussion, the participants visited the Bee Museum at

the premises of “Melissokomiki Dodecanesou”, which is the biggest company in the Dodecanese islands producing and packaging beehive products. Its Bee museum is a very good example on how local companies can link their production with Tourism demand by differentiating and offering new products.

The next day, during the morning hours, the participants visited the Regional Plant Nursery, one of the South Aegean Region's most important stakeholders. The “Aegean Seed Bank”, a really important sustainability project on preserving local seeds and varieties of local plants, as well as the “Aegean



Plant Nursery. Photo by Niina Vanttinen / Kuopio

Gardeners” project, under which vegetable gardens are being created in local schools, are both implemented by the Regional Plant Nursery, showcasing the balance between mass Tourism and Sustainability.

After a brief lunch, the participants were headed to the village of Lindos where a discussion on Gastronomy, Tourism and Sustainability was held, summing up the learning points and policy aspects derived from the previous study visits.



Photo by Niina Vanttinen / Kuopio

During the morning hours of the 31st October, the partners visited “DM Natural Farming Rhodes”, the first farm of natural cultivation of aromatic and medicinal herbs in the island of Rhodes, as a case study regarding the difficulties that SMEs face approaching tourists and understanding the market demand.

Next in the schedule was a visit to the village of Apollona and to the first Women's Agrotourism and Agro-Industrial Association in Rhodes, the “Apolloniatisses Association”. The association was founded in June 2005 and it has been a role model for rural development and a vibrant business cell of the local community ever since.

Following a wrap-up discussion on the day's field visits, the partners made their way to the nearby mountainous and remote village of Embona where over the last years local wineries managed to attract tourists by focusing on the niche of “Wine Tourism”. They renovated their wineries and created showrooms where groups of tourists can visit, taste and buy their wines.



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## Action Planning

### The action plans in Brabant

Brabant has recently started working on coming up with 2 action plans. The intention is for the plans in phase 2 of the Eurega project to be implemented after the summer of 2020. Below is a brief description of the ideas:

#### Action plan 1: Brabant DNA matchmaking: connecting "guardians" and "requesters".

Food remains an important factor in Brabant's marketing. We want to base special and Brabant food offerings more on the true Brabant culture. Visitors want to gain authentic experiences and taste and buy special products. This plan therefore focuses on applicable traditions, customs and history of Brabant. Think of stories, dishes, crafts or products. The idea is to create digital or physical places where a match is created between the guardians and the people asking for Brabant DNA. So that parties in the Leisure market can design and promote their own range.

#### Action plan 2: Domestic pride by foreign press.

In 2018, Brabant was the European Gastronomy Region and as part of that, VisitBrabant toured many foreign press and influencers in Brabant. The press visits have yielded a stream of publications in various European countries. In addition to the reputation that we received as a destination, the publications on our range also brought new pride to Brabant entrepreneurs. With this plan we want to give a guided tour to influencers and journalists. Their publications are then used more strongly to show entrepreneurs what the press appreciates. This then generates new offers or packages. The next steps are to work out the ideas in a plan of action and to find partners and financiers with this approach.

#### The best Brabant cocktail board

Following our name as the European region of gastronomy, Brabant started working with this cocktail board. On this shelf you will find the best of Brabant. The aim is to promote Brabant products and vegetable food during drinks, a popular and Burgundian food moment in Brabant.

No meat is needed for these snacks. And they are also 80% Brabant-made.

#### What is on this cocktail board?

Vegetarian sausage rolls, bean balls, falaffel balls, goat cheese with rye bread, sweet and sour mini beets with honey and ginger, vegetable chips, mustard, apple syrup and mustard-honey sauce.

#### What's the next step?

The next step is to make the cocktail board 100% Brabant and fully vegetable, where it is now 80%. In the first instance, the marketing is aimed at getting the cocktail board on the menu in cafe's in the capital of Brabant: Den Bosch.

We also hitch a ride on Week without meat, a national campaign for promoting alternatives for meat.

The best Brabant cocktail board has been developed by Food Up! Brabant (part of the province of Noord-Brabant), and the chefs of Dutch Cuisine

**More info: [www.best brabantseborrelplank.nl](http://www.best brabantseborrelplank.nl).**

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## Good Practices

### Good Practice: the "Sibiu Breakfast" program



"Discover local flavors in breakfast!" is the slogan of the "Sibiu Breakfast" program created out of the desire to promote the gastronomy of the region through local products and recipes, crafts, fresh seasonal products, and local culture among the visitors in the Sibiu region. Through this local initiative, we also want to contribute to strengthening the link between local producers, tour operators, and visitors.

"Sibiu Breakfast" is built on the principle of Slow Food, according to which food should not travel long distances from the place of production to the place of consumption, thus preserving its properties and qualities.

The LOCAL term refers to a maximum distance of 50 km from the place of origin of the products, to the location where they are served to visitors (hotels, restaurants etc.). Also, following the visit to Kuopio of the Sibiu EUREGA team, the program will be improved by following the recommendations of a nutritionist.

The program is initiated by the Sibiu County Tourism Association - one of the most important EUREGA stakeholders and is part of the Sibiu European Region of Gastronomy Program 2019.

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## Exchange of Experience

### EUREGA South Aegean Region Interregional Exchange Visit: the Kuopio experience

The last regional exchange visit was to Rhodes, Greece on October 29-31, 2019. Communication Manager Niina Väänttinen and Project Manager Ilona Sares from ProAgria (Finland, Kuopio Region) participated for gathering this inspirational information.

The main contents of the trip were examples of responsible food tourism presented on the island, which were introduced and evaluated during local field visits as well as case studies from the project countries. South Aegean was the European Region of Gastronomy 2019.

The aim is to use all the acquired information and good practices in the planning and implementation of the Action Plan. The objective is to develop new gastronomy and food related wellness tourism products in the Pohjois-Savo and Kuopio Region area. Kuopio Region is celebrating European Region of Gastronomy 2020-21.

The contents of the trip were presented to the Pohjois-Savo Stakeholder steam at Puijo Tower Restaurant, which gave the team new ideas for their own activities and for the project.

Author: Niina Väänttinen

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ERG 2020-21 Kuopio and Pohjois-Savo  
at Northern Europe's largest travel industry  
event Matka Travel Fair



Puijo Tower restaurant has unique local food  
concept and spectacular Lakeland views.



## Inspirational highlights for the Kuopio Region

**Astro-Gastro tours, Hungary.** Experience combines spa, nature, traditions, culture and gastronomy. Night sky observation: Spending the night in the pusta like real shepherds once. In Pohjois-Savo, the concept could be implemented in such a way that overnight stays are located far away from the "light pollution" of cities, perhaps on a remote island or other special place in the middle of nature. Pondering: Which rural businesses could develop this kind of program in our region? Can it be implemented on multiple sites? Could the be collaborations with local wildfood-chefs?

Local Gourmet Festival, South Aegean. The sold-out food festival combines modern and traditional Greek cuisine. The idea could work in Pohjois-Savo with the concept of "natural luxury". Pondering: Could it be done in some of our local rural tourism destinations? Is it possible to turn this into a luxury foraging experience? What place would it be then?

**Apollonian village & the women.** The women of the village of Apollona have nicely commercialized traditional foods and products, bringing life to the village and new economic opportunities. The same approach could be used in the Pohjois-Savo area, which has several smaller villages and towns. The older population still possesses traditional recipes and techniques. It could create new jobs in the countryside and foster culinary traditions.

**Discussion themes resonated with the challenges and opportunities:** How can local companies combine their services and production with Tourism demands by differentiating and offering new products sustainably? Balance between mass Tourism and Sustainability (protection of the environment, preservation of local gastronomy, local seeds, plants etc.) SMEs and Tourism - (Difficulties of SMEs approaching the Tourists and understanding the market demand, smart ways to get promoted with limited budget etc). How can small remote areas benefit from the Tourism product of nearby Touristic destinations (recommended actions, and good examples, difficulties etc).

According to the vision of the rural programme, Pohjois-Savo will be a nationally and internationally recognised gastronomic region in 2020. Food production and processing will be eco-efficient. This goal rests on the region's strong dairy and meat production, in addition to which a significant proportion of the country's berries, especially strawberries, are produced within the region. Milk production is based on a strong tradition and modern technology; dairy farms have invested in improving production and increasing efficiency. There are major dairy processing plants in the region, such as Valio's plants in Lapinlahti and the Maitomaa Dairy in Suonenjoki. The strength of our food production is purity and safety.

The development of a food cluster in Pohjois-Savo is supported by a diverse education, research and innovation network. The network is activated through product development serving low-threshold businesses. Wide-ranging education is also one of the region's trump cards since actors in the creative sector, dance and music teachers are also trained in Kuopio.

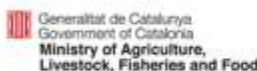
Nature, nature-related products and experiences are generators of tourism growth. Culinary tourism is one of the growing trends in the travel industry and a target of investment in North Savo. One of the top culinary tourism events in Finland, the SATOA Kuopio Food Festival combines local tastes, restaurants and creative sector experts and also increases appreciation of agriculture that produces pure and diverse raw ingredients. Culinary events and festivals, food education events and programmes as well as appreciation of local produce, e.g. through REKO food rings, complement the whole picture.

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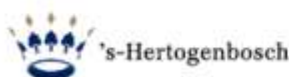
## Project partners



Provincie Noord-Brabant



Hajdú-Bihar Megyei Önkormányzat



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