REPORT OF WESTERN STARA PLANINA LEARNING AREA CROSS-VISIT TO THESSALY LEARNING AREA IN GREECE

13 – 15 June 2018

The cross visit of the Bulgarian team to Thessaly Learning area (LA), Greece, took place between 13 to 15 June 2018. The hosting team of Thessaly Learning area organized a visit in the region where HNV innovation and farmers were visited.

The **reasons for visiting** the region were to see the following innovations, which are of interest for the stakeholders in Western Stara planina (WSP) Learning area (LA):

- ✓ **Terra Thessalia Territorrial cluster** - the cluster includes 7 small dairy territories, approximatively 500 pastoral farms, 7 family artisanal dairies, and significant number of supporting agencies (LAGs, Cooperative Banks, Industry and Commercial Chambers, Public Research Laboratories). A general problem is being addressed (HNVF marginalization and lack of reward of their multi-functional role and of their products' quality), through a localized example at the optimal geographic scale (organizationally on a regional level and productively on level of small territories and HNV holdings). The cluster is implemented on pilot level in 60 herds, 13 000 sheep and goats. The entire marketing policy is based on preserving and promoting the HNV character of the production systems of these collaborating holdings. There is a strict commitment that the production and promotion of dairy products of the cluster concern only pastoral herds of local breeds. A redistribution system was adopted that works in favor of all those involved directly in the HNVF management and reflects the coherence of the cooperation.
- ✓ **Terra Thessalia Participatory Guarantee System (PGS)** - A key objective for Terra Thessalia was to develop a way to continuously enrich and update quality claims related to place-based attributes. For this purpose, Terra Thessalia has undertaken the implementation of a Participatory Guarantee System (PGS) whose goal is to reveal and guarantee the specific characteristics of the dairy resource as well as to foster it. This System is defined as a means of utilizing the dairy resource and the HNVf. Its objective is twofold: a) to observe, support and control the implementation of the obligations that every pastoral holding has and b) to guarantee the consumers the HNV character of pastoral holdings and its sustainable links with their operating place. PGS adopts an integrated methodology that combines consultations, a monitoring system using technological tools whose data are displayed in a database and the Terra Thessalia site that is accessible to consumers. All the actors of the dairy chain and a group of scientific and technical support (interdisciplinary and technical working group) participated in its implementation. The PGS was successfully implemented in 15 herds with 4500 animals;
- ✓ **GPS-Tracking for monitoring and certification of extensive livestock-farming:** The GPS tracking system was developed within the PGS. Initially a monitoring platform (server, softwares, etc) was created in order to record the geographical position of the moving herds on a daily basis. At the same time, the livestock breeders were trained in use and good operation of the GPS on their animals. The aim of this innovation is: (a) to certify the extensive livestock (sheep farming in mountain and semi-mountain areas) adding value to the corresponding dairy products (marketing); (b) to understand and facilitate livestock movement; (c) to prevent conflicts

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between farmers and forestry services using GPS geofences and other functions; (d) to strengthen the active participation of the producers in the management of HNV areas; (e) to collect data for the control of pasture quality (quantity of biomass, biodiversity/plant species) by specialists (range scientists, environmentalists etc.)

- ✓ **Tzoumerka National Park:** A National Park that occupies an area of about 820 km2, stretching across the mountainous regions of Ioannina, Arta and Trikala Prefectures with a lot of HNV grasslands
- ✓ **Visit to livestock holdings in order to exchange ideas**: an important element of the whole crossvist were the on-spot visits at the farms. We visited a goat farmer; cattle breeding farm; apiculture farm, organic sheep breeding farm, a fish farm (trouts) in HNVF area of LA Thessaly, where Bulgarian farmers directly could ask questions and exchange experience with their Greek colleagues.

Participants:

- ✓ Bulgarian group: 15 stakeholders from WSP LA participated in the visit: five farmers, three representatives of Municiapal agricultural offices in Varshets, Godech, Chiprovtzi municipalities; two representatives of Godech municipality; a representative of the NGO "Local initiative for Varshets" , four STEP experts. The full list of the participants is presented in Annex 1;
- ✓ Greek team: Ioannis Faraslis - researcher at the University of Thessaly Greece; associate professor Gerogios Vlachos - University of Athens, Department of Agricultural Economy and Development of Agriculture, Mikis Felekis - President of National Park of Tzoumerka, Liotris, Theofilos Bourziotis - Biologist- Development agency of Karditsa, ANKA
- ✓ Local farmers -Athanasios Papoutsis - Goat Breeder in Ellinopirgos Village; Papoutsis; Dimitris Gergoulas;

Fig.1 Participants in the crossvisit

When selecting the participants in the cross visit we wanted to invite representatives of different stakeholders from all of the five municipalities WSP LA. We invited the stakeholders that actively participated in the Innovation seminar in WSP LA and contributed to the baseline analysis and the development of the HNV vision for the LA.

Expectations of the participants and for the WSP LA:

STEP team has developed a simple feedback form asking the participant for:

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- ✓ their expectations from the cross visit;
- ✓ the HNV innovations that impressed them;
- ✓ which innovations can be applied in WSP and can contribute for the conservation of the HNVF in the LA;

The main expectations of the participants were:

- ✓ To meet with Greek livestock farmers from HNV region and learn about their managing practices;
- ✓ To understand more about the GPS tracking and territorial cluster;
- ✓ To see the practices and innovations related to the development of HNV farming and development of rural areas;
- ✓ To see new technologies and how the HNVF livestock farmers are meeting EU hygiene requirements;
- ✓ To see how direct sales are working for HNV farmers.

Narrative: who, where, when, what?

The cross visit was 3 days and took part between 13 to 15 June 2018. The detailed programme is attached in Annex 2.

Day 1 – 13 June 2018

The cossvist started with a workshop at the conference hall of the Ecological Center in Mouzaki. Mr. Ioannis Faraslis made a presentation of the LA Thessaly. The LA has an area of 4 200 sq. km (420 000 ha) and 33 020 inhabitants in 377 settlements, in 9 municipalities on the territory of two regions - Trikala and Karditza. The landscape is mosaic, predominated with forests and grasslands and some arable land. The agricultural land is 194 500 ha, of which 57 400 ha are pastures, 21 000 ha are arable land and the remaining are permanent and mixed crops. Forests spread on 142 000 ha.

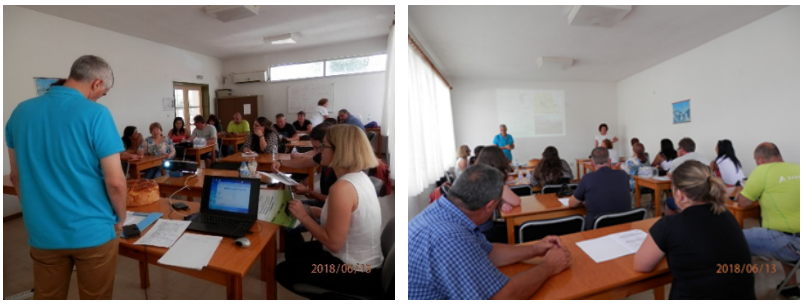

Fig. 2 Presentation of LA Thessaly, Greece

There are two large artificial lakes on the territory that are used for irrigation and power generation. The total number of farms within the LA is 4 000. They are small, with up to 20-30 cows and an average of about 50 sheep and goats. Over 80% of the farmers are over 60 years old. The negative trends in the region are: severe depopulation, abandoned villages with predominantly elderly population, absence of inheritance of farms.

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Key facts about agriculture: extensive farms, pastoral farming, many small farms that preserve traditions and the landscape, have tradition and experience of producing cheese; many small dairies each of which buys milk from 5 to 10 farmers. There are large dairies in the area as well, that purchase the milk at very low prices. The local community decided to invest in knowledge and maintenance of local farm practices and products by creating and developing a local brand. Small farmers cooperate with difficulty. Therefore, they have decided to find another form of association thus showing the benefits and add value to the area by practicing local farming practices through cooperation and collaboration. This creates a cluster to maintain a local brand for the area, the "Terra Thessalia" trademark. The cluster guarantees the production of cheese from local raw materials from small farms in the area practicing extensive livestock farming. It also takes care of finding markets for cheese and products under the "Terra Thessalia" brand.

Until the 1960s, traditional farming was practiced in the area. From the 1960s to the 1980s a strong migration from the mountain settlements to the plain took place. After the 2010 economic crisis that affected all sectors including agriculture, young people retutned to the area and started farming activities. The vision for the future of the LA is: joint work of researchers, farmers, local authorities, environmentalists and experts to support high nature value farms. Promote the area by bringing together stakeholders in a common brand that promotes the knowledge and values of the area.

An important element in achieving the vision is the work with the diaspora. During the 1960s and 1970s of the 20th century more than 80 000 people have moved from this region to the sea side, the big cities and abroad. In the summer, most of them return to the area to rest and maintain inherited properties. They are the consumers of a large part of the local products produced by the farmers under the "Terra Thessalia" brand. Products from farms in the LA are sold directly to residents and diaspora people who appreciate the quality of these products.

Nomadic, pastoral livestock is practiced in the area - during the summer animals are taken up in the mountains where they graze and maintain the landscape. There are 24 596 cows the area in 586 farms and 297 220 sheep and goats in 2 538 farms. They use the pastures paying a municipal fee. There are many free pastures and forests where grazing is practiced - private and public that are offered by the municipality to develop extensive livestock farming. Mostly animals for meat are raised but there many milking livestock as well. It is more profitable to sell meat through direct sales. Slaughtering the animals and preparing the meat for sale is done only in licensed slaughterhouses. A gray market for both milk and meat is present here as well. It is most profitable to produce and sell cheese, but it is very expensive and time consuming to get permits for cheese production. So, milk is processed into chese and packed on the farms and is directly sold from farms to locals and diaspora people on behalf of the "Terra Thessalia" trademark. If all requirements are met, these extensive farmers are not competitive to the intensive producers of raw materials and large processors. And raw material prices are the same regardless of whether the milk is from intensive or extensive farms - 1 euro per liter, for sheep milk. Large processors are looking for large quantities and pay lower prices. The problem of importing dairy breeds is serious. Various French breeds of sheep and cows are imported for intensive rearing. They are not adaptable to local conditions - drought and mountainous terrain. These breeds change the farming systems, the biodiversity and the taste of local products and knowledge of local products and local extensive practices is lost. Maintaining local breeds of sheep and goats leads to the maintenance of landscape and biodiversity, the quality and value of local tastes and products. These breeds are more

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adaptable to the climate changes, terrain and grazing in the area. There are subsidies to maintain local breeds, but it is not enough.

The presentation of the LA Thessaly was followed by a presentation of WSP LA, done by Vyara Stefanova.

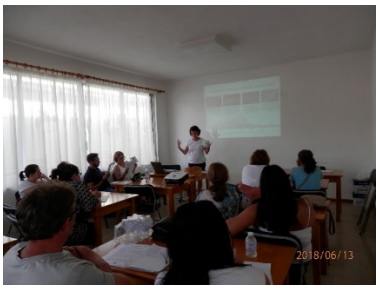

Fig. 3 Presentation of LA WSP, Bulgaria

The President of Tzoumerka National Park, Mr. Makis Felekis, also chairs the "Terra Thessalia" Cluster. He presented the cluster certified to sell the region's products under one brand. Many young people from the diaspora returned to the area following the economic crisis. They engage in farming and are involved in the production and sale of local products. The "Terra Thessalia" cluster is an example of innovation in the area. Up to now, the different units within the food chain did not t cooperate, and everyone worked separately selling products to tourists or locals. It was very difficult to achieve common results at community level and lots of work, time and effort were invested to achieve some results. The "Terra Thessalia" cluster consists of 500 herds with a total of 100 000 sheep and 7 dairies for local produce. The University of Thessaly developed a tracking system for animals. With this system, farmers define where and when the flocks are to be taken up the mountain to pasture. There is a program developed for grazing in the area. The cluster promotes and markets the local products.

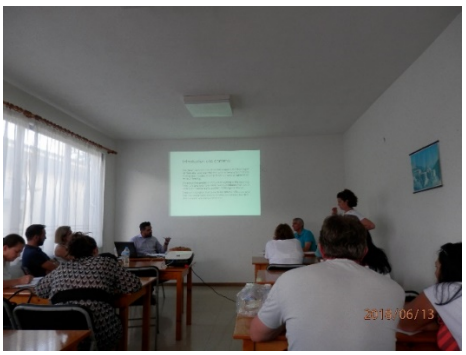

Fig. 4 Presentation of Terra tessalia cluster

<u>Day 2 – 14 June 2018</u>

The second day of the study visit began with a visit to the goat farm of the young farmer Athanasios Papoutsis (Thanasis) near Ellinopirgos village - Gralitsa farm.

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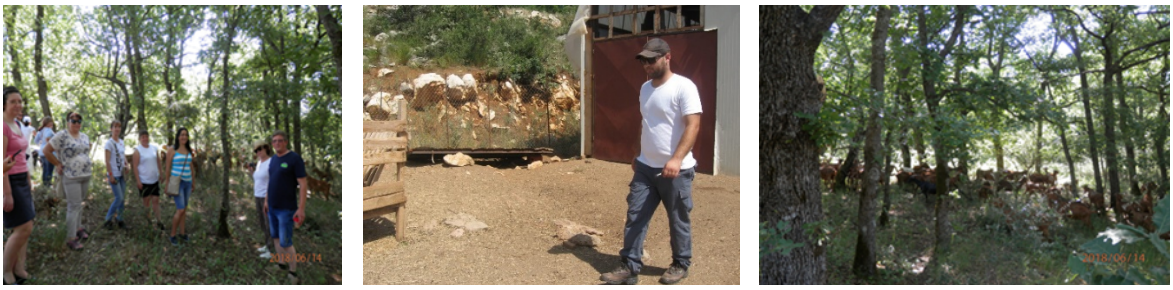

Fig. 4 Visit to Gralitsa farm

The group made a 2-3 km in perimeter tour in the forest around the farm to see one of the two goat flocks that were grazing. We met the goatherds, the goats and the dogs of the flock, and Thanasis made a presentation of a local goat breed from the island of Skopelos. The breed is characterized by a pale short reddish coat. It is a large breed. The goats can reach 87 kg and a height of 81 cm. Their ears are small, their legs are close and strong. Males and females have horns. Thanasis started the farm three years ago and has 150 goats (Skopelos breed). The goats are e divided into two flocks that graze in the forests and pastures around the farm within a 10 km radius with two shepherds. Goats are young, with the oldest being 3 years old. On average, he gets 3 liters of milk a day per goat. Goats are milked by hand. There is no electricity on the farm, because of the high costs for permission to supply electricity to the farm. The milk is processed into cheese which is sold directly to customers. He is registered for direct sale of farm produce. It takes approximately one year to obtain the registration for direct sale. He can process 500 liters of milk per day and sell directly the produce from the farm. But he may only sell on the territory of the Karditsa district. He has a list of customers to whom he sells cheese and eggs from free-range chickens. He sells one egg for 0.5 € and 1 kg cheese for 7.5 €. The price of cheese is 1 € less than in the shops. 200 kg of cheese are prepaid by customers. He is not a member of the cluster but uses the GPS tracking system for the flock. One goat in the herd has a device placed. The tracking software is provided by the cluster and he pays for the sim card and the internet to the cluster service provider. The farm is certified for organic goat farming. He receives a total of 20 000 € as animal subsidies with costs amounting to 12,000 € annually. He pays 5 000 € to the workers a year and 5 000 € remain for himself. His father is a former banker who worked in the city of Larissa and after the retirement returned and investedin setting up the farm. The premisis and the equipment for processing milk, restoration of the house and building the farm costed around € 30 000. Thanasis believes that after the 5th year he will start gaining from his activity.

Fig.5. Visit to Gralitsa farm

He uses public forests and annually he pays 20 € to the municipality of Mouzaki for use of the whole area around the farm. Within the municipality there are 3 goat farms with 50 goats each and 1 cow farm and large area for breeding. Farmers cooperate and help each other. Thanasis worked as an accountant in Larissa for 300 € and made a bold change to start farming.

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He has put all his savings to date in this activity, but he feels good and free. He wishes more people visit him to show them the nature and the area. He also pdiversifies in agritourism. Gralista farm is included in the five-day tours for the tourists that come to Meteora and Plastira Lake and they pass through his farm as well.

We trailed the daily movement of the goat flock also on the computer and were shown and explained the information that is being viewed and stored for each farm by the tracking system. To support the GPS system, farmers pay € 8 per month to the University of Thessaly

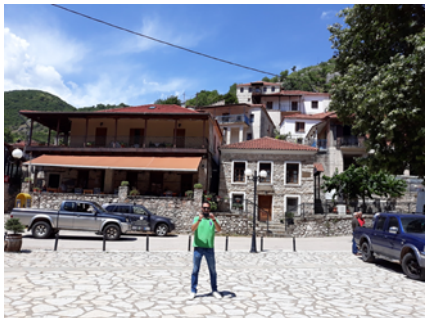
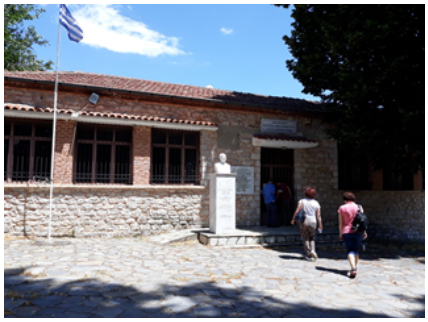
Fig. 6. Flock movement

The next young farmer we visited in this village was Dimitris Gergoulas. He returned from Athens to his father's estate, who had inherited vineyards and a house. Dimitris has 120 beehives in two places. One group of hives is in the vineyards and the other is on a pasture in the woods around the village. He yields 1 ton of honey a year which he sells directly for 10 €/kg. In supermarkets, 1 kg of honey is sold for 11 €. Large honey producers and processors buy at 3 €/ kg. His father helps him and teaches him to foster bees. They also produce ziporu and wine.



Fig. 7 Visit to Dimitris Gergoulas beehives and vineyards

The local community invited us to visit the village of Ellinopirgos. In the cultural center of the village we were met by Mr. Yannis, the President of the community and mayor's deputy. There are 100 permanent residents in the village, but for the summer a lot of tourists and former residents come to the village. The architecture is remarkable, the buildings are made of stone, the church, the history and the large planner trees in the center of the village are preserved.

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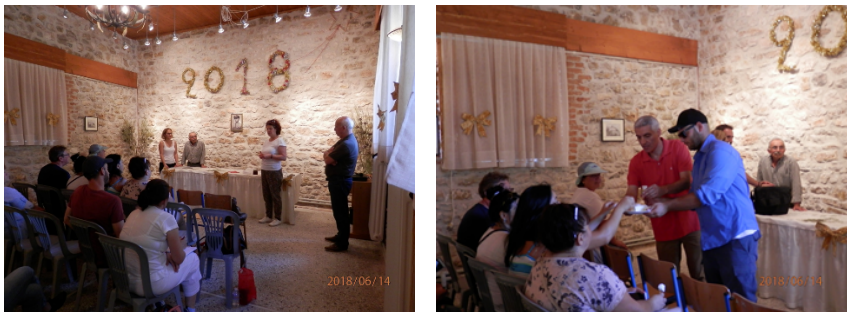

Fig. 8 Cultural centre of Ellinopirgos village

The local community is actively working for the return of young diaspora people to the region. The representative of the diaspora in the village lives in Larissa, but was born in the village. Around 300 people born in the village live in Larissa now. The second generation is around 1 000 people. Ioannis, our host is the second generation and lives in Volos. Those who left the region are organized in two cultural associations, one in the region of Volos and Larissa and the other in the Athens area. Associations gather and connect people from Mouzaki villages to work on promoting the area and help local producers. The associations support the publication of an electronic and paper newspaper of the community that are send to each member of the diaspora, so they can get information about the life in the villages of Mouzaki. Pensioners here are quite active. The economy is being moved and developed by retirees. They support the return of young people that want to engage in farming. Before the 1960s, there were 800 people and 25 000 sheep. Now there are 100 people in the winter. During the summer they become 700. The houses are being renovated and used for summer houses by the people of the diaspora from Larisa and other places. Scientists at the University of Thessaly in the city of Volos also encourage students to go back.

The mayor believes that here is the place where the most delicious meat in Greece is produced. The secret lies in the animal feed, the feed is mixed with salt and herbs. Livestock is grazed during the summer, being taken to 900 meters in the mountain where there the grasslands are. "We believe the young people will come back here. We already have 4 young farmers breeding goats, sheep, cows and bees."

The farmers we visited offered their products for tasting - cheese and honey. Thanasis made a presentation of the activity on the farm, which has a trademark and is called Gralista farm for organic products and agritourism. Annually, one goat yields 320 kg of milk. Goats are milked from 200 days to 9 months per year. The milk has very fat content - 5.6%, and the growth is 1.5 goatlings per goat a year.

Thanasis also presented the tracking system for animal tracking and the animal pathway for 1 day. The entire LA is traced by a drone, monitoring the pastures and calculating the amount of biomass, assessing the quality of the grassland in order to take measures for better maintenance. There are only around 50 ha of grasslands, officially declared as grasslands. A comparatative advantage of the area is that it is very easy and cheap to hire pastures.

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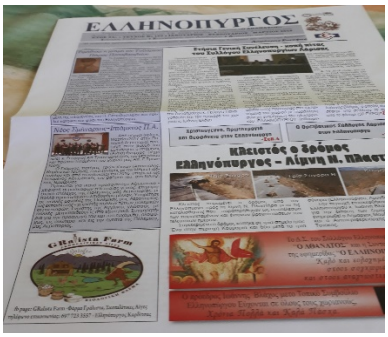

Fig.9 Local newspaper publication where Thanasis farm is advertised

The next visit for the day was to Lake Plastira. It was artificially created from 1929 to 1959 at an altitude of 800 meters. It was built for production of electricity and for irrigation of agricultural arable land on the whole municipal territory. The lake has a length of 10 km and an area of 35 sq. km. with capacity of 400 million cubic meters.

During the 1980s people from the mountain area massively moved to the fields and engaged in growing cotton that was irrigated from the lake.

During the 1990s many people returned to the region to establish bases and practice agritourism.

Fig. 10 Lake Plastira

The group visited the Ecological center which was once a primary school. Currently used for biodiversity research of the area and national park. The building is 100 years old and houses laboratories, training rooms, museum part. It is used as a LIFE project training center. There is a hydrobiological station for the study of water quality, information is collected and analyzed, and the state of water and the biodiversity on the territory are being monitored. The collected information, the amphibian and aquatic ecosystem are classified. Since 1996 the collected environmental information is used for training activities. Scientific and applied research is provided, reports and analyses of the situation are prepared. The collected information is also used to train students, adults, experts.

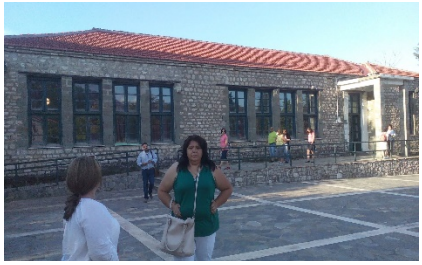

Fig. 11 Ecological centre of Lake Plastira

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On the way back from Lake Plastira and the Mouzaki ecological center, on the through the mountain we visited a freshwater trout breeding farm.

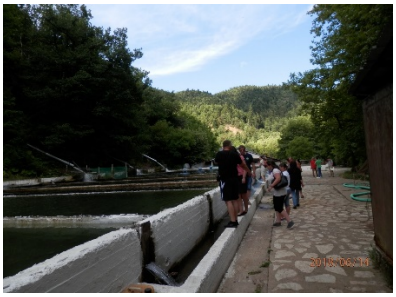
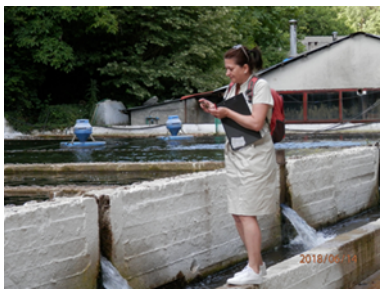
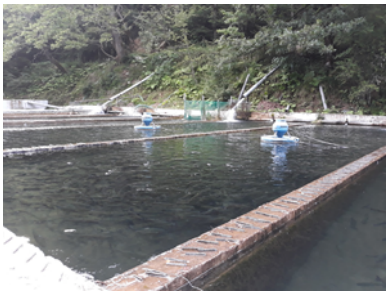

Fig.12 Fresh water trout farm

Day 3 – 15 June 2018

The agenda of the 3rd day of the cross visit was modified - due to the rain we couldn't visit the mountain sheep farm. Instead we went to farm for finishing calves and a sheep farm in the plain area. The farm is owned by Vasilis, a young 33-year-old farmer with knowledge on nutrition and rearing calves for meat. He has knowledge and experience because he worked on large farms and is trained at the University of Thessaly in Volos. His parents created the farm in 1997 and were selling meat to Crete. They stopped working with livestock in 2002. Vasilis restored the activity in 2010. The farm is relatively new for the area. He buys and fattens calves for meat, mainly of the Limosin breed. For a year now, the farm is certified as an organic farm and is buying calves from organic farms. Calves are bought at the age of 3 months and are fed and fattened for 6 months. He also cultivates around 85 ha fodder crops - corn - 45 ha and wheat for fodder - 40 ha. The farm has a capacity of 40 animals for fattening. The farmer believes that the most important things for good animal health and quality meat production are the living conditions, food composition and proper nutrition. Therefore, within the building very good hygiene conditionsand animal breeding environment are maintained. The building is massive, well-lit and ventilated, with natural light from large windows, a system for maintaining the necessary temperature and ventilation. There is a manure cleaning system. The building is raised, as the floor beneath the animals is made of concrete slabs with manure drainage apertures when washing with water. At a certain period, a scraper is used pushing the collected liquid manure fraction under the floor and the transferred quantity is collected in a manure storage pit at the rear of the building. With a pump the liquid fraction is is used to fertilize the corn around the farm.



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Fig. 13 Fattening calves farm

The farmer feeds the animals with dried and compound fodder - a mixture of ground corn, soy, wheat, concentrated additives of vitamins and minerals, salt and a large amount of dry oregano. On 1 ton of ground grains he adds 45 kg of dry oregano to maintain good microflora in the intestines and stomach of the animals and to remove harmful germs. Also, he adds sake and magnesium soda to collect moisture and bad smells. Feeding is done twice a day - in the morning and in the evening. The intensive feeding for fattening takes place for about two months when substantial mass is to accumulate behind the tail. This confirms that the calf is ready for meat production. The animals are fattened to 290-300 kg, not aiming at weight only, but also for meat quality. Meat is harvested in a licensed slaughterhouse with a veterinarian, samples are taken, and meat tests are carried out. He sells meat directly at a price of 5.00 € /kg. He does not receive direct payments for the animal, but only for the area of corn and forage crops. Direct payments are calculated on a historical basis; such as farm use rights. Different payments are received for different land use - for arable, pasture and perennial crops. He signs a declaration that he will not disclose the amount and type of annual subsidies, both to other farmers or to parties external to the sector. He defined his farm as small scale but well maintained. He achieves a very good quality of the meat because he takes good care of animals, both for nutrition and against stress. First, he plans to work on increasing the area, the arable land for fodder, and then may think to increase the number of animals for fattening.

Historical payment rights in Greece are calculated on a three-period basis - from 1999 to 2001, then up to 2015 and are now in the third period. The payments are calculated for each area as no more than 75% of the average farm payment for the previous period and no less than 30% of the average farm payment in the area for the previous period is allowed. The new farms start with an average farm payment for the area. The average price of agricultural land in Greece is 10 000 euros/ha.

Each year, farmers submit applications for direct payments electronically, declaring the land and what they grow. They can use consultants, but only licensed ones to do this. State offices check them only before or after payment.

Regardless of the rain, Bulgarian farmers and agricultural experts were very impressed by the young farmer and his knowledge, experience and willingness to share his experience.

The next farm visited was the inherited sheep farm of the young farmer Kiriyakos

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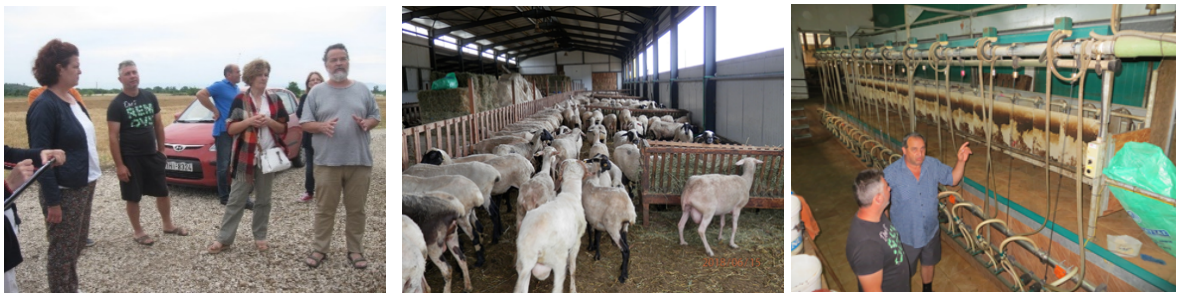

Fig.14 Kiriyakos sheep farm

He rears 1 000 sheep of a local Greek breed for milk and also the French dairy breed Lakon, as well as crossbreed between the two. The farm is certified for breeding animals for organic production.
He built the farm with the help of a rural development program project. He also has 20 ha pastures on the farm. He hires shepherds and helpers. It's very hard to find workers for the farm. Shepherds are sought after from the refugees /emigrants who settle in Greece.
The farm has a milking system for sheep. The farmer tries to have lambing through the whole year, so he can milk almost all year round. He collects around 250-300 liters of milk annually. Milk is sold between 1.05-1.15 €/liter to organic cheese processor. He is also selling the wool between 0.10-0.20 €/kg.

The last meeting of the group was with the mayor and experts on agriculture and local development held at the Mouzaki municipality - http://www.mouzaki.gr/;
http://www.mouzaki.gr/index.php/dimos/o-dimarxos;

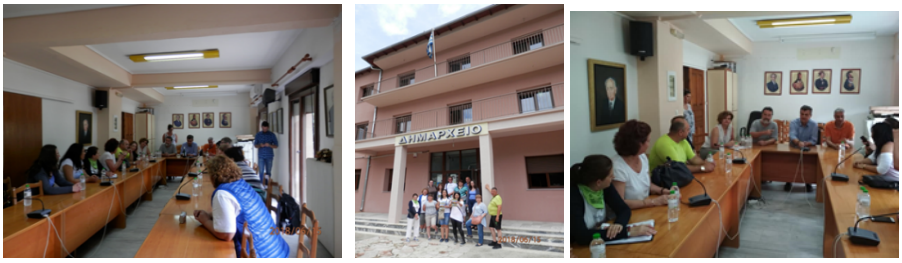

Fig.15 Meeting at the Mouzaki municipality

The mayor, Mr. Georgios Kotsos presented the development priorities of the municipality and expressed willingness for cooperation and twinning with towns from Bulgaria. There are 27 settlements and 15 000 inhabitants in the municipality. It is located in central Greece and is a bit more isolated. The municipality is a member of the "Terra Thessalia" cluster. It is very important for the local community to work with people from other countries. Collaboration provides a lot of knowledge, exchange of experience and good practices, including livestock development and local products.

The municipality has a strategic plan for development with five priorities:

- ✓ Developing services for the population - social, education, healthcare, consultancy;
- ✓ Agricultural production - there is potential and resources for the development of animal husbandry, raw materials are produced - cotton, vegetables, grapes.etc. The production of local products - meat and milk is an important economic sector for the region.

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- ✓ Forests - there are many small and medium-sized farmers and processors, craftsmen who are supported by Leader projects.
- ✓ Tourism - there are 5 types of tourist products: cultural: Meteora, Lake Plastira; ecotourism; dining places - restaurants, hotels; farms for local products – cheese
- ✓ Renewable energy sources - photovoltaic parks, water power station, wind power.

The role of the Terra Thessalia Cluster for the development of the area is very important. The cluster has a knowledge of local resources and it supports the production and direct sale of local quality products. A registered local trademark exixts and cheese from local breeds of sheep, goats that graze in the mountains of Mouzaki and maintain local biodiversity is sold. Scientists at the University of Thessaly in Volos ply an important role for the development of the cluster. They help farmers to improve the technologies, the knowledge of the area, the farm management, especially helping young and start-up farms. Members of the cluster are also local manufacturers of furniture and doors.

The municipality has a system of advisory services to farmers with private investments. They are open and accept new and young farmers and help them to rent the grasslands. They encourage farmers to cooperate with people from other countries - farmers, farmers' organizations and projects funded by EU programs.

At municipal level, there is also interest in twinning with locations from different countries. The budget of the municipality is 10 million € per year. The main revenues come from the provision of services - the sale of water, energy from small hydropower plants, etc. and then a subsidy from the state. The investments in the municipality are mainly coming through EU programs. The municipality participates in the Regional Development Agency for the Karditsa region - ANKA - http://www.anka.gr/portal/. Representative is Mr. Georgios Gogulos, manager of Lake Plastira management company.

On the way to Bulgaria, the group visited the cultural landmark of the region – the Meteora monasteries and enjoyed the seaside as well.

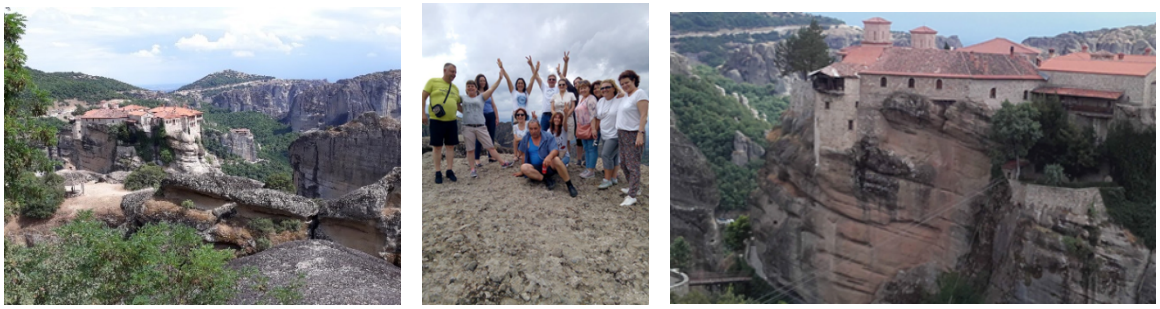

Fig.16 Meteora monasteries

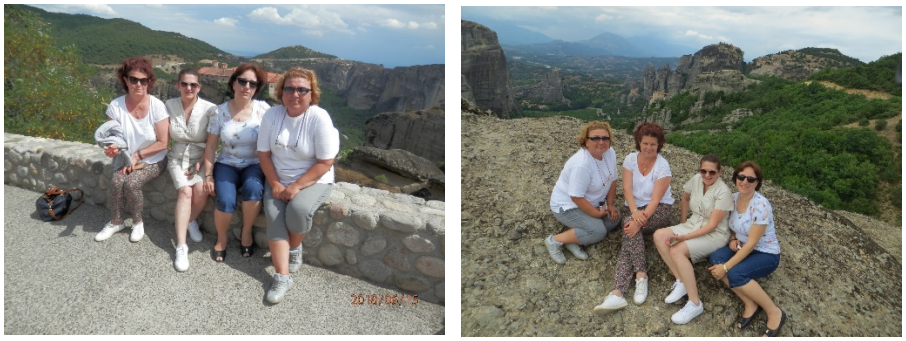

Fig. 17 STEP experts that participated in the crossvist

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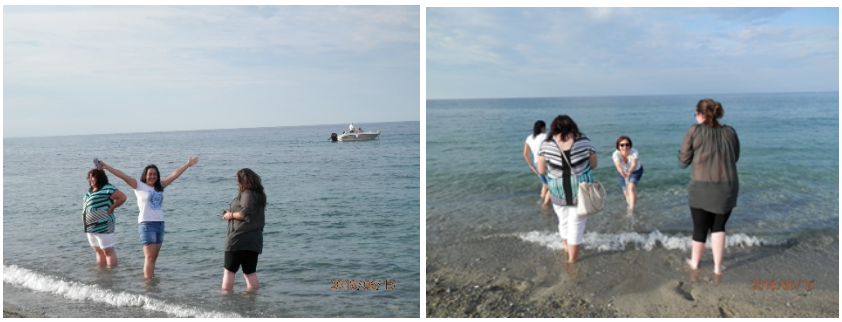

Fig.18. At the seaside

Lessons learnt and possible replications in WSP LA

All participants in the crossvisit appreciated very much the practical value of the visits and the possibility to meet Greek farmers with similar activities.

The majority of the participants (63%) think that the most interesting and useful visit for them was the calves fattening farm. They were very impressed by the cleaness and the hygiene of the farm. The young farmer shared his knowledge and experience with enthusiasm and answered to all the questions regarding the food and the nutrition of the calves. One of the interesting things in the farm is also the optimization and the combination of livestock breeding and plant growing.

A very interesting approach/innovation that was discussed between the BG participants is the way the diaspora is used for marketing and adding values to the products from the region. Since Western Stara Planina Learning area is also suffering form migration and depopulation of the area it was discussed that the approach of creating a certifying a local brand from the region could be interesting for the WSP diaspora in the bg cities in Bulgaria.

The participants think that the HNV innovation that can be replicated in Bulgaria is the GPS tracking and monitoring system for sheep and goats. However, some of the farmers expressed concerns tha if every one can see where the flock are grazing – this may increase the tefts of the anumals.

The cooperation between farmers, processors, municipality and other relevant stakeholders and the local community in Terra Tessalia Cluster is also a very important HNVF innovation example. However, a lot of efforts are needed to achieve this and our experience shows that without a long-term project this cannot happen on the territoty of WSP

Other

We would like to express our special thanks to Ioannis Faraslis and the Greek team for their hospitality and organization of the cross vist, including all logistic details.

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Annex 1

HNV-Link CROSS-Visits (Mouzaki, Trikala, Greece)

13-15 June 2018

Cross-visits participation list from Bulgaria

Period: *13-15 June 2018 .*
Place : *Mouzaki, Trikala - Greece*

№	Name and occupation
1.	Vyara Konstantinova Stefanova - STEP
2.	Mariya Marinova Yunakova -STEP
3.	Evdokiya Vasileva Georgieva - STEP
4.	Iva Georgieva Haramliyska – Tsenkova -STEP
5.	Neli Bozhidarova Nikolova, Municipal agricultural office – Godech
6.	Emilya Radkova Nikolova – Godech municipality
7.	Nadya Asenova Todorova - Godech municipality
8.	Borislav Kirilov Borisov – farmer, Godech municipality
9.	Hristo Dimitrov Boyadzhiev, - farmer, Godech municipality
10.	Tatyana Hristova Petrova – NGO, Varshetz municipality
11.	Silviya Dimitrova Nikolova, Municipal Agricultural office – Berkovitza/ Varshetz
12.	Biser Kostov Dimitrov, Municipal Agricultural office – Chiprovtzi
13.	Ivayla Venelinova Ivanova, farmer, Chiproctzi municipality
14.	Diyana Ivanova Aleksandrova, farmer, Chiproctzi municipality
15.	Yuliya Dimitrova Stoyanova – farmer, Godech municipality
16.	Bus driver

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Annex 2

HNV-Link CROSS-Visits ((Mouzaki, Trikala, Greece)
13-15 June 2018
AGENDA

Date	Time	Place	Activity
13/06/2018	17:30	Arrival at Environmental Centre of Mouzaki	Arrival
13/06/2018	18:30	Conference room of environmental Centre	Welcome! - Presentation of LA Thessaly to the visitors - Presentation of LA WSP Presentation of Innovations: - Terra Thessalia - Participatory Guarantee System
13/06/2018	20.30	Environmental Centre of Mouzaki	Dinner
14/06/2018	8.00	Environmental Centre of Mouzaki	Breakfast
14/06/2018	8.30	Gralista Farm, Ellinopirgos Village (LA Thessaly). Goat farmer Thanasis Papoutsis Beekeeping Farm, Ellinopirgos Village (Georgoulas – Dimitris)	Goat-Farm visit - Innovation: Gps- tracking in practice - Homemade cheese in practice Beekeeping visit – HNV sites
14/06/2018	10.30	Coffee Break	
14/06/2018	11.00	Ellinopirgos Village – Cultural centre	– Brief information about a goat farmer activities – Introduction to 3D-Mapping GIS, 3-D visualisation GIS, technical aspects
14/06/2018	14:00	Environmental centre of Mouzaki	Lunch
14/06/2018	17:00	HNV site: Lake Plastira Plastira's lake Environmental Cente	Visit HNV sites around Lake Plastira: Villages Ag. Akakios – Neoxori. Presentation of local Flora and Fauna and biodiversity Presentation of National Park of Tzoumerka. Touristic label case Discussion about the

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			Greek – Bulgarian Rural Development Program
14/06/2018	20:00	Environmental centre of Mouzaki	Debriefing
14/06/2018	20:00	Environmental centre of Mouzaki	Dinner
15/06/2018	8:00	Environmental centre of Mouzaki	Breakfast
15/06/2018	9:00	Sheep Farm, Magoulitsa Trifonas	Visit to Sheep farm. Extensive livestock holding. Pastures' improvements HNV-pasture walk UAV mapping demonstration
15/06/2018	11:00	Conference room at the Environmental centre of Mouzaki	Dissemination meeting: What are the main HNV-challenges in Bulgaria/ Greece? Which innovations from Greece/ Bulgaria could be of use? Next steps and follow up activities
15/06/2018	14:00	Environmental centre of Mouzaki	Lunch
15/06/2018	15:00		Departure

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