

REPORT ON REGIONAL MEETING IN LA-THESSALY

LEARNING AREA, GREECE

9 December 2018

At Mouzaki Karditsa, Thessaly

The regional meeting in LA-THESSALY was held on 9 December 2018, at Mouzaki municipaliy.

Participants: The meeting was attended by 22 participants (fig.1). The profile of the participants was: Local public authorities, regional authorities, Decelopment Agencies, National Parks representatives, agricultural experts, local farmers and the rescsearch team from the University of Thessaly (Annex 1).



Figure 1 Regional meeting at Mouzaki Palace venue

The target of the meeting was: Configuration and operational planning of a framework in order to support new producers.

The meeting had the following **Concept note:**

Increasing evidence of young people who have got involved in agriculture and the difficulties they are facing due to the lack of a support system throughout their establishment in the sector.

The promising creation of PINDOS network that aims at rationally managing its area of activity in order to support its development.

The wide range of innovative support tools-mainly the organizational ones- that were promoted through the implementation of the HORIZON programme.

The following questions are raised for consultation:

- What will be the operational implementation of the desire that PINDOS network has expressed to support its young citizens in order to make an attempt locally at the primary sector capitalizing on innovative tools (technological and mainly organizational)?
- What different kinds of cooperation can be developed and what are the financial instruments that are possible to utilize?

The Agenda of the meeting:

| | | |
|-------------|--|--|
| 11.00-11.30 | Registration – Welcome. Presentation all the participants Presentation of the objectives and expectations of the meeting | University of Thessaly team Participants |
| 11.30-11.50 | An overview about the actions were held in LA-Thessaly. The accomplishments that have been achieved. The Vision. | University of Thessaly team |
| 11.50-12.30 | The Center for the Support of Extensive Production Systems. Information, Consultation about its structure and the services that it could provide. | Public bodies of the LA-Thessaly (mayors, vice-mayors, etc) University of Thessaly team |
| 12.30-13.00 | Presentation about the lessons learnt from the cross-visits to Sweden and France (HNV innovations...). Slide-shows and Videos about the cross-visits. | Thanassis Papoutsis, Farmer Serafeim Felekis, Presintent of National Park of Tzoumerka, Peristeri and Arachthos Gorge |
| 13.00-13.30 | Discussion about the incorporation of HNV innovations from the other LA areas (mobile arbatoire, etc). | University of Thessaly team Participants in the cross visits |
| 13.30-15.00 | Partnerships and financial tools for the operation of the Center for the Support of Extensive Prooduction Systems. How to support new local farmers. Next Steps. Proposals | Development Agency of Karditsa (AN.KA), Trikala Development Agency (KENAKAP S.A.) University of Thessaly team |

Presentations and discussions:

The discussion was organised around three basic axes: (a) the organisation and operation of the extensive farming Coordination Support Centre and the search of funding for its operation, (b) the experiences acquired from the cross visits and (c) the utilization of partnerships through the HNV-Link network for the promotion and resolution of issues that extensive farming in Pindos faces nowadays.

The team of the project made a short presentation to the attendants with the course of the project up to now focusing on:

(a) the vision that has been shaped for the area: the sustainable reconquest of the region: building our horizontal governance to better manage and promote the HNVf heritage.

(b) the priorities for its implementation: building a multi-partnership form of governance and b) organizing the new farmers and their collaboration with the small already organized entrepreneurs of agrotourism

(c) the actions that have been up to now implemented by the research team (organisation of events in local and regional level) to diffuse, inform, raise awareness among the farmers, public bodies, development agencies etc. on issues concerning the technical, technological and organisational innovations that have been developed within the HNV network. Those are:

- ✓ Innovations developed by the research team in Thessaly, in HNV areas



✓ Innovations developed by partners of the HNV-Link network

contributing meaningfully to the support of extensive farming, the extensive production systems generally and the promotion of their quality products more specifically. The participants were informed through a presentation about the innovations of the HNV-LINK network applied in the other LAs and can be easily replicated in Pindos. Special emphasis was given in innovations that offer solutions to everyday problems and are linked to space management and the increase of the added value of their products in the market (GR-RM_innovations_thessaly.pfd, at Annex I).

Afterwards there was a presentation of the importance of the Coordination Support Centre for the extensive production systems, the way that it can function as well as its main action axes such as:

- Support to the conservation of the extensive character of the production systems and the area,
- Reinforcement of the research partnerships to enrich the traditional knowledge, know-how and practices in the organizational part of the extensive production systems,
- Promotion of the area, the production systems and their products in the consumers' society,
- Support of the active participation of the directly and indirectly involved actors and bodies in the management and valorisation of the local natural and other resources

Within the context of the support provided to the Centre, the Laboratory of Rural Space contributed - with the help of the local authorities- to the organisation of seminars, under the auspices of the Agricultural University of Athens on: livestock breeding, aromatic plants and beekeeping. The main purpose of the seminars was for the trainees to acquire skills on technical and organisational issues.

The next subject area focused on the **cross-visits** that took place and their benefits. Two Greek teams were sent to Sweden and France while the Bulgarian team visited LA-Thessaly. There was a presentation of the lessons learnt and the accumulated ideas from the cross-visits to Sweden and France and the possible approaches for implementing the HNV innovations in LA Thessaly were also defined. The farmers who participated were very positive in adopting innovations that can be developed either in individual or collective level. The majority of the producers were of young age and even though they have faced and are still facing numerous problems during their settlement in the farming sector, mainly due to bureaucracy, they are keen to explore the introduction and implementation of technical and technological innovations related to the operation of their holding.

The producers of the meeting expressed the opinion that extensive farming is neither promoted nor supported. They believe that their holdings contribute to the conservation and the increase of biodiversity in the area without however this being acknowledged through the subsidies or the increased price in their high quality products (meat, milk, etc).

They expressed a strong willingness to cooperate, even in an informal way at first, in order to promote their extensive holdings and products. In fact, they mentioned that they received positive impressions, through interviews that they gave to the local and national press concerning their cooperation with the University and the use of technological tracking tools for the products they produce.



The local Development Agencies and the Laboratory of Rural Space committed to support the informal network of the new producers, starting with frequent meetings on an agenda that they themselves will plan shortly after.

The first issue that was discussed and examined was the detailed provision of information on cottage industry. It was deemed necessary to inform on the necessary procedures for the organisation of cottage production in the holding in order to produce dairy products and aromatic plants. Furthermore, all producers (livestock breeders, beekeepers and aromatic plants producers) are seeking support to develop agri-tourism activities in their holdings. A lot of them are already welcoming visitors to their farms who participate in the activities of the stock or are planning to develop training services especially designed for children in the framework of multifunctional farm.

On the one hand the willingness of the young producers to participate in informal cooperation groups and on the other hand the willingness of the local agencies and the research institutions to support them, will first of all contribute to the provision of information and solutions to their problems and then they will create:

- (a) a supportive framework that will attract a sufficient number of producers who work with extensive holdings and
- (b) strong cooperation schemes aiming at the promotion of their products.

The third part of the discussion was dedicated to the **presentation of the suggested partnerships** from the partners of the HNV-Link network. The team of the Laboratory of Rural Space received suggestions for cooperation on issues concerning: (a) the support of the extensive farming activity, (b) the development of actions for the management of land use and (c) the production of quality and identity-specific products.

More specifically, the suggestions were codified and presented as follows:

1. LEADER programme-transnationality. The participants were presented with the proposal of development bodies from:

- ✓ France that refers to the issue of managing grasslands that have been rescued from abandonment. This proposal comes to address the very important issue, in the entire Mediterranean, of the "closed" wooded areas and their accessibility in extensive farming. The French LAG (Local Action Group) cooperates with similar LAGs from Italy and Spain.
- ✓ Roumania that refers to the issue of the development of local identity- specific and quality products as extensive farming products from mountainous areas.

The discussion that followed, with the representatives of the Development Agencies and the local Government, resulted to the following: the issue that will be developed within the transnational part of the LEADER programmes should review an issue regarding the area and create multiplier effects. They await the developments by the Ministry of Rural Development concerning the project LEADER to join in discussions with partners.



2°. Erasmus+ programme: The University of Thessaly will provide special information to the producers for their inclusion or utilization of the Erasmus+ programme so that they can subsequently form the respective suitable proposal. At the same time, a group of farmers expressed the wish that the area should be included in the proposal of the HNV-Link network for the organisation of summer schools and exchanges of farmers. The producers that participated in cross visits talked about the experiences they gained (see detailed texts for the meetings in Sweden and France of the Greek teams) highlighting how important it is for the farmers to be updated and aware of the innovations that exist in European level. They further argued that they have gained significant experience that they can either develop individually on their own exploitation or as a whole as an informal or formal group and have an economic benefit.

3°. HORIZON-LIFE programme: the issue of grassland management is very important and concerns all the attendants: producers, local Government and National Park of Tzoumerka. The Agricultural University of Athens, even through pilot applications that has applied in the area, pointed out the importance of grassland management both for the biodiversity of the area and the development of extensive livestock farming. A proposal (LIFE) has been submitted and pre-approved for the management of habitats and biodiversity on a significant part of the study area. This proposal will also develop issues that concern the facilitation techniques of extensive farming and transhumance.

The Laboratory of Rural Space, in cooperation with the Department of Environment and Forests of the Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Development and Environment of the Republic of Cyprus will form an Agri-environmental Scheme for the Single management of protected areas (forests, Natura areas, agricultural areas) in the mountainous region of Troodos. The Development Agencies expressed their willingness to participate in order to contribute, through the transfer of know-how in cooperation with the rest of the Cypriot bodies, to the sustainable management of the environment.

4°. The Green Fund: the National Park of Tzoumerka, Peristeri & Arachthos Gorge, as a new body in the management of habitats and biodiversity in the LA, given the latest extension of its limits, suggested the submission of proposals to the Green Fund on the following issues: (a) raise awareness-inform the producers with integrated tools of participatory procedures for the inclusion of biodiversity in the management of the livestock resource and (b) raise awareness-inform the producers on technical, technological and organizational innovations. After all, a proposal has already been submitted to the Regional Operational Programme of Epirus (ROP Epirus) and the Operational Programme Transport Infrastructure, Environment and Sustainable Development for the creation of a farmers network to protect the protected griffon vulture (*Gyps Fulvus*).

The new national legislation (4486/2018) contributes to the promotion of the certification for the produced agricultural products in areas protected by the management bodies of the National Parks. Within this context, funding from Leader in cooperation with the other partners and stakeholders contributes decisively towards this direction.

The National Park administration, in accordance with the new Law on National Parks, is expanding and is incorporating production bodies also, apart from the local Government and environmental NGOs. Producers' participation is considered important because in this way their position in the



decision-making process on the management of biodiversity in the areas and the support of extensive livestock farming is reinforced.

Recognizing the National Park of Tzoumerka as a member of Europark as a Certification body for sustainable tourism, is an important distinction that can effectively contribute to the production of distinctive and identity-specific products, supported by the innovation "Participatory Guarantee System" and "Terra Thessalia".

5°. LEADER programme- inter-territorial cooperation. The local Development Agencies in cooperation with the Laboratory of Rural Space have submitted a proposal at the inter-territorial part of the Leader programme for the development of a **Participatory Guarantee System** (PGS) on the quality and identity of commodities and services. The main purpose of this proposal was to create a **methodological guideline** and a **tool** for the implementation of the PGS on the commodities and services of Pindos. Another purpose of this proposal was the creation of an **innovative laboratory** for the executives of the Development Agencies of Thessaly as well as for other territorial bodies (Municipalities, associations etc.) through which they will **develop skills and acquire the ability** to adjust, enrich and implement the above methodology in every agri-food chain, locally or regionally. According to the briefing form the Development Agencies they are waiting to see the progress of the project (transnational and inter-territorial) from the Ministry of Agricultural Development to begin the proposal.

The representatives of the Local Government informed the attendants about some discussions that they had with officers from the Ministry of Agricultural Development. The basic information they obtained was that: (a) the measures 7.1 and 7.6, with main subject the recognition of HNV areas and the promotion of terroir, are not expected to be activated soon (not even for 2019) (b) the implementation of the Grazing Management Plans is expected to begin in 2019, (c) the Ministry has developed a pre-assessment tool for grazing lands at municipal level that will help significantly estimate the cost of the Grazing Management Plans at municipal level and (d) the Region of Thessaly has directly responded to the initial actions for the Grazing Management Plans. The final assignments by the Ministry are expected.

Conclusions and next steps:

The participants in the regional meeting agreed on the following actions for reaching the HNV vision for the region:

- Develop a long-term project and look for funding for strengthening the cooperation between the different stakeholders: local community, farmers, municipalities, local authorities, etc., for supporting the development of extensive farming in Pindus
- Continue Continue with organization of targeted and thematic workshops with farmers' participation, in order to (a) to develop and establish a producers' network and (b) looking for financial tools (all stakeholders) that will contribute for knowledge transfer and constructive dialogue between different actors for adaptation of the existing legislation to the regional needs of the HNV farmers and promotion of innovative solutions;



Exploite all the existing networks (the research networks of the Laboratory of Rural Areas, University of Thessaly, the network of Development Agency of Karditsa and Trikala, the network of the Tzoumerka Park National Parks as well as the networks and collaborations of the local authorities) in order to:

- raise public awareness and changing the current perception for the HNV farmers and their activity and live
- organise exchanges of experience between producers on issues of spatial management and diversification of their activity (linking with other sectors: processing, agro-tourism, education).



Local media press releases:

In order to aware the local population about the regional meeting, a press release was published to the local and national media (fig.2):

- Local Authorities portal, <https://villagevoice.gr/> : Saturday 1/12/2018
- Newspaper ΕΛΕΥΘΕΡΙΑ, <http://www.ele.gr/> : Wednesday 5/12/2018
- Electronic magazine <http://greenagenda.gr/> : Tuesday 4/12/2018
- Blog <http://epirusin.blogspot.com> : Thursday 6/12/2018
- Newspaper ΠΡΩΙΝΟΣ ΛΟΓΟΣ, www.proinoslogos.gr : Wednesday 5/12/2018
- Newspaper ΗΧΩ της ΑΡΤΑΣ, www.ixotisartas.gr : Wednesday 5/12/2018
- Electronic newspaper www.lfarsala.gr : Sunday 2/12/2018 & Monday 10/12/2018
- Electronic newspaper www.larisanet.gr : Sunday 2/12/2018 & Monday 10/12/2018
- Electronic newspaper www.trikalaola.gr : Monday 10/12/2018
- Electronic newspaper www.karditsalive.net : Tuesday 11/12/2018

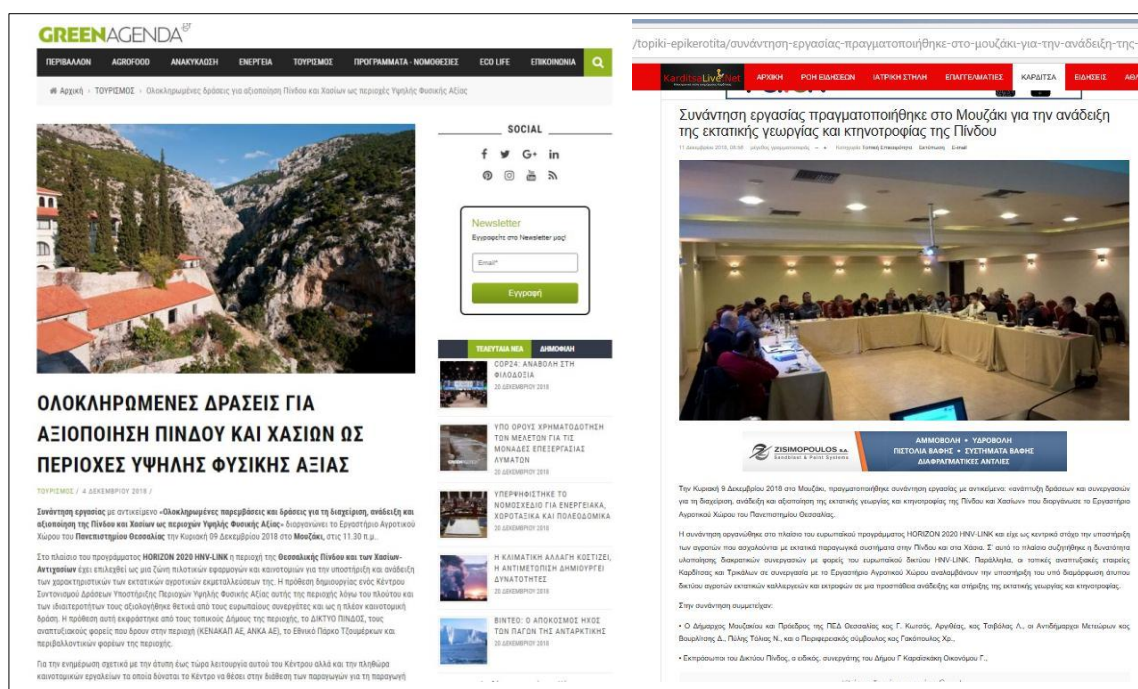


Figure 2 Press releases to media



Annex 1**List of participants in the regional meeting**

| No. | Name and surname | Organisation |
|------------|-------------------------|--|
| 1 | Xristos Grekos | PINDOS network |
| 2 | Dimitris Fragkopoulos | Mouzaki Municipality |
| 3 | Vasilis Bellis | Development Agency of Karditsa (AN.KA) |
| 4 | Xristos Katsikaras | farmer |
| 5 | Euaggelia Nikolaou | farmer |
| 6 | Athanassios Papoutsis | farmer |
| 7 | Andreas Mpourdouvalos | farmer |
| 8 | Nikos Tolia | Municipality of Pili |
| 9 | Lampros Tsiolas | Mayor of Argithea Municipality |
| 10 | George Kotsos | Mayor of Mouzaki |
| 11 | Dimitris Vourlitis | Vice-Mayor of Meteora |
| 12 | Xristos Gakopoulos | Vice gouverneur régional |
| 13 | Zoi Karra | farmer |
| 14 | Ioanna Karra | farmer |
| 15 | Stefanos Tsiakas | Trikala Development Agency (KENAKAP S.A.) |
| 16 | Vaios Koutis | Trikala Development Agency (KENAKAP S.A.) |
| 17 | Dimitris Michalakis | Operator Karla-Montenegro-Spring Velestinou-Pinios Delta |
| 18 | Serafim Felekis | President of National Park of Tzoumerka |
| 19 | George Oikonomou | Municipality of Karaiskakis |
| 20 | Ioannis Kazoglou | Agricultural expert - farmer |
| 21 | Ioannis Faraslis | University of Thessaly |
| 22 | Dimitra Gaki | University of Thessaly |



Annex 2**Presentations in the Regional Meeting**Supporting files:

1. HNV-Link LA Thessaly: progress of the project
2. innovations that have developed the 10 areas of the Network HNV-Link
3. HNV-Link, Pinde: *that we continue*;
4. Selected innovations in brochures

Forms preparing the meeting

1. Invitation
2. Programme

