

**PRESS RELEASE – 22 MAY 2019**

## **STRING accelerates agrifood clusters in Europe**

**The provision of smart, healthy and safe food is a top priority in Europe. Seven European regions renowned of their strong and vibrant agrifood clusters accumulated their powers in project STRING. The regions share the persuasion that agrifood clusters are challenging drivers for regional innovation and growth. During a final event in Brasov (Romania) they shared some wise lessons. There is no silver bullet to success. All regions stress the importance of this engine for succes: facilitate and fund integral services for shared activities between small and medium sized agrifood enterprises and other industries.**

Knowledge ambassadors from seven European regions visited and augmented testbeds, fieldlabs and experimental farms within agrifood clusters across Europe. As Silvio Manole (President Regional Agrofood Cluster Romania) stated: *“Europe is the ultimate open and competitive economical garden of the world. Not surprisingly here are the strongest and most vibrant agrifood clusters rooted many years ago. Those clusters really contribute to regional economies. By sharing wise lessons across leading agrifood clusters across Europe we should be able to develop new agrifood clusters and spin-offs using (regional) policy instruments as kickstart tools”.*

Exactly that’s also what Miklos Levente Bagoly (President Association of Small and Medium Sized Enterprises Covasna County Romania) highlighted in his speech at the final event: *“All European regions really need new agrifood businesses, start-ups, cross-overs and spin-offs. In a large part of Eastern Europe the current competitiveness index shows that entire regions and countries are dependent on imports of agrifood products. That’s not a strong and livable basis of everyday life in Europe. We really need new engines for change. Starting with building stronger regional agrifood clusters across Europe.”*

That’s what politicians, policy makers and policy advisors have to facilitate. As Garbiela Tarau (Programme Expert Regional Development Agency Centru Region Romania) quoted: *“More and more European regions choose for specialization strategies that fit their tradition and identity. Cooperation between leading European regions in agrifood clusters seeds and sows new regional specialization initiatives. Those initiatives embrace regional social partners, universities, food factories, farmers and more. That’s the way to go!”*

STRING focuses on the strength of regional development strategies, value chain promotion campaigns and cross-sector hybrid clusterisation as the engines for success. To optimize the management of the measures oriented to the innovation in agri-food competitive cooperation is key. That urges partners across Europe to work together on solutions adaptable to one and another regional context.

Do you want the capacity of a agrifood cluster?

[www.interregeurope.eu/string](http://www.interregeurope.eu/string)

[STRING Interreg Europe](#) (LinkedIN group)

<https://vimeo.com/336583482> (Video The Making Of... STRING)



(Source: project STRING Interreg Europe, Downloadable photo in high resolution – see mail attachment press release)

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## What's going on in STRING?

**InnovationCamps (Central Denmark Region):** Cooperation between SME's, business academies and university colleges Innovation Camps is a way of establishing value added for education institutions, students and SME's with innovation- ideas and/or ambitions. Creating a public-private triple helix partnership approach on building one coherent innovation ecosystem in Central Denmark Region (and Denmark).

**Enjoy the taste of Alsace (Aria Alsace, France):** Savourez l'Alsace® is a territorial brand of more than 2500 products from 50 different food companies, in accordance with specifications. The aim of creating a collective brand is to improve business for food industries. As a matter of fact, promoting a collective brand is more efficient and powerful than promoting several different brands even if they are strong in Alsace. This

brand is available for every food business having their head office and production site located in Alsace.

The Pharmapolis Innovative Food Cluster (North Plain, Hungary): This food cluster operates the so-called 'I-Bolt' store. The aim of 'I-Bolt' is to develop and sell new products (bread, special cheese, pizza with sorghum, traditional ice creams, purple corn, frozen wine, LactoMicroSel® new form of selenium, etc.), which are developed in cooperation with the university and SMEs. In order to sell these new products, they created a shop and participate in exhibitions to meet consumers.

Regional Network of Technopoles (Emilia Romagna Regione, Italy): the CRPA LAB research unit in Reggio Emilia (Italy) operates in the agri-food sector, with activities to support the technological development in the areas of processing and transformation of food, and in the management of effluents and organic waste with the aim of producing renewable energy from biomass.

The Castilla y León Entrepreneurship and Innovation Network (Castilla y Leon, Spain) is a new way to stimulate and promote a more competitive regional economic model through smart specialization, relating all key actors of innovation: administrations, universities and business-technology centers.

Food Tech Brainpoint (Province Noord-Brabant, the Netherlands) helps SMEs and larger SMEs to turn technology into money: technology used in the processing of plant waste, the extension of shelf life, and the separation of raw materials and/or waste streams. By doing so, we bring the best in food and technology (from the High Tech and Chemical industries, for instance) together.

Agrofood cluster Covasna (Centru Region, Romania) is going to produce Europe's first gluten-free fibres enriched natural mineral water developed by cooperation.

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