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Second interregional workshop in Stara Zagora (Bulgaria)
for the INNOGROW project.

**”Interregional workshop on stimulating innovation
products development”**

The interregional workshop took place on the 7th and 8th of June (Wednesday and Thursday) in the Stara Zagora in the local co-working space and tech hub “Zaralab”, located in the business building City Cener Stara Zagora. The workshop was attended by 29 people on the 7th of June, including project partners, stakeholders and local stakeholders from the region of Stara Zagora. The second day - 8th of June the workshop was attended 21 project partners and their stakeholders. The two-day interregional workshop was divided into two different approaches – the first day (the 7th of June) was focused around presentations and round table discussions on the subject of stimulating innovative product development. This day the meeting began with a presentation from Mathew Gorton from UNEW about “Overview of Innovative Production Technologies”. He introduced the results from the report of A1.1 and one good practice of stimulating the adoption and development of innovation and new product development in rural areas in the United Kingdom. After the presentation panel there was discussion and the speakers were available for comments and questions.

The second presentations was given by the stakeholder of Chamber of Commerce of Molice - Dionysios Solomos who introduced the challenges, barriers and drivers to adopting innovation and stimulation of new product development in rural SMEs across Europe shown in the report based on the survey of A1.4. After the presentation there was a discussion about the specific challenges every country faces and the enablers that there are on a local and national level.

The third presentation was a good practice from Italy, that was presented by Giovanni Gianola, who as well presented it in the workshop in Lecco, Italy. This presentation was more directed to the local stakeholders and the external experts since the policy recommendation that the team of SZREDA (Bulgaria) made in the second semester was focused on factors that stimulate rural SMEs to work together and form partnerships to increase their competitiveness and the adoption of innovation. The presentation was based around the subject of recommendations for the creation of an enabling environment for new products development. Mr. Giannola presented the

creation of the Premana brand that combined the efforts of the SMEs in this rural region in Italy in creating one brand with quality standards for the products of all SMEs. This caused very good marketing of the brand and has led to the increase of economic development and very high export rate of the manufactured products in the region. This good example could be adopted by rural SMEs in Bulgaria and the team of SZREDA will work to promote this good practice among rural SMEs in Bulgaria.

The second day - 8th of June was a study visit to a local SME (located in a rural area of the region of Stara Zagora) that produces Bulgarian Rose Oil cosmetics and was mentioned as one of the good practice both in the surveys for implementation of innovative technologies and innovative business model. The topic of the whole event was about innovative product development – the presentations, the discussions and the study visit. The project partners and their stakeholders made the study visit. There in the factory the representatives of the SME the company and the types of innovation they have adopted over the years and the development of their own R&D facility. As well they presented their newest products that have been developed to be presented to new markets worldwide.