



## PRESS RELEASE

### FRiDGE Project

22-23 Sep 2021

#### **«Partnership workshop, technical meetings and study visits of FRiDGE project partners to local food SMEs in Velvento and Lefkara»**

As part of the FRiDGE project, which aims to promote the competitiveness of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the food and beverage sector by improving instruments, a two-day partnership workshop took place on 22-23 / 09/2021 including study visits to local food SMEs, a Joint Workshop and Technical and Steering Committee Meetings. Being the first physical meeting of FRiDGE since visiting Ghent, Belgium in February 2020, it was a long-awaited event and provided valuable insight into the local characteristics of the region.

The workshop was organized by the University of Western Macedonia and was hosted in Velvento (Hotel "Agnanti") with the aim of promoting decentralization from the largest urban centers and acquaintance of the partners with the people of the countryside.

At the beginning of the workshop, the first speakers were the representatives of ANKO Western Macedonia S.A., Mrs Liana Papaterpou, head of Entrepreneurship- Enterprise Europe Network, ANKO and Mr. Spyros Kellidis, Enterprise Europe Network (EEN) expert, ANKO. They presented the 'Enterprise Europe Network Western Macedonia' which is the largest network of integrated business support in Greece, as well as its contribution in the field of promoting cooperation and synergy of SMEs in the food sector at national and European level. Then, the very interesting long-term action of EEN in cooperation with the compulsory cooperative Krokos Kozani and its promotion in the world market was presented.



Afterwards, Mr. Lazaros Lazaridis, representative of the Regional Development Fund of Western Macedonia, presented the experiences of his organization from its participation in EU projects, especially in the food sector. The workshop ended with the presentations of good practices from the regions of each partner and the discussion on each of them about the possibility of their application in Western Macedonia.

*Meeting of the project partners at the hotel  
"Agnanti"*



### Study visits around Velvento area

The partners then had the opportunity to visit four business and cooperative facilities. The first visit was to ASEPOP VELVENTOU cooperative, which is a healthy cooperative and an important economic development lever for the Velvento region. Its main products are peach and nectarine, but it also seasonally promotes other fruits such as apples and kiwis. Its products are located throughout Greece, while it also carries out significant exports to Central and Eastern European countries, mainly in Russia ([www.asepop.gr](http://www.asepop.gr)).



*ASEPOP VELVENTOU  
Cooperative*

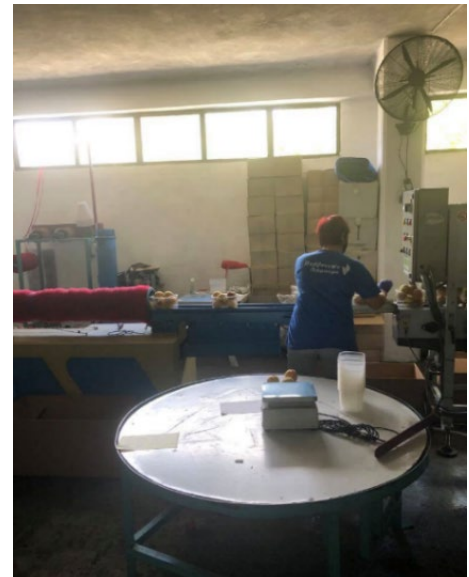


The second visit of the partners was to the 'Vogiatzis Estate', which is located between the mountain range of Pieria and the port of Polyphytos, at an altitude of 340 meters. They were informed about the specialty of the wines produced due to the geographical location of the estate next to the water that almost touches the vineyard and is the powerful element, which makes the wines of the estate different. ([www.ktimavoyatzi.gr](http://www.ktimavoyatzi.gr)).



*'Vogiatzis Estate'*

The third study visit took place in the agricultural cooperative 'Dimitra' which hosted the partners in its modern facilities and presented its products. Today the cooperative distributes fresh fruits, mainly peaches and nectarines, evenly shared between foreign and domestic markets. The cooperative collects, packs, standardizes and markets the fresh fruits produced by its member producers, mainly peaches and nectarines, but also apples, plums, cherries, apricots and quinces. ([www.dimitracoop.gr](http://www.dimitracoop.gr)).



*Agricultural cooperative  
A.S.O.P.. Velventou 'Dimitra'*





The last visit took place in Lefkara, Kozani in "LEFKARA FARM" which is a cheese factory with standard facilities, with the most ideal conditions of hygiene and quality control, and one of the most modern cheese dairies in Western Macedonia producing a wide range of products including PDO products such as Feta. The partners toured the premises of the company and were informed about the production and storage of cheese products where they had the opportunity to taste them. ([www.lefkarafarm.gr](http://www.lefkarafarm.gr)).



*Cheese factory 'LEFKARA FARM'*

The first day ended with a networking lunch at the restaurant 'Remvi' in Velvento with the presence of the mayor of Velvento Mr. Stergiou, who had extensive discussions with the project partners, but also with the University executives about the development prospects of the place, especially in the era of the lignite transition for Kozani.

On the second day, a technical meeting was held between the partners where issues related to the promotion of the project and the drafting of regional action plans for each partner were discussed.



*Group picture of FRIDGE project partners.*



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