

FRIDGE project seeks to increase food industry SME competitiveness by providing relevant actors with information about productivity, market reach and capacity building.

Dear reader,

We are happy to present you the 4th FRIDGE project newsletter. In this newsletter we have gathered news about the project progress during the past six months. We hope You enjoy the reading!

1. Past events and activities

It has been wonderful, full of events, six months since the last newsletter in June 2021. Majority of events still took place online, however we had a chance to finally meet face-to-face, as the pandemic restrictions eased off during the summer. Richer in these experiences we continued working on the development of our action plans.

Partner meeting and Study Visit in Kozani

In September 2021, we met in the beautiful and sunny Kozani, Greece, for a Joint Workshop and Technical and Steering Committee Meetings. The workshop has been organised by the University of Western Macedonia, our Greek project partner. 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.

In addition to meeting and discussions, we had a chance to visit four local businesses and cooperative facilities and learn about the practical implementations of good practices from this region, that were discussed during the meeting.



Read the article: [Study visit in Greece](#)

Speciality Group 2 Study on Productivity and Investments



This autumn our partners prepared a questionnaire and collected answers from companies in each of the six regions involved in the FRIDGE project to give us a unique look at the perception of and approach to investment priorities, investment tools and opportunities that companies face. The study investigates how SMEs increase productivity through thoughtful investments, training, and HR policies. Given that almost two years have passed since the outbreak COVID-19, some aspects of the effects of the pandemic were raised.

Read the article: [Speciality Group Study on Investments & Productivity](#)

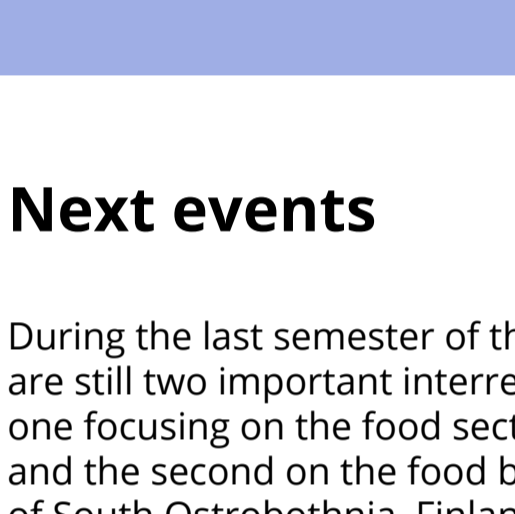
Policy Brief on Regional Branding - FRIDGE GP's included

September 2021 was also a month when The Interreg Europe Policy Learning Platform on SME Competitiveness published an interesting Policy Brief on Regional Branding for SME Success report. The Policy Brief has links to the FRIDGE project as it covers topics such as regional identity, product quality labels, cooperation between SMEs in rural areas, agritourism and co-creation for promoting cultural heritage. Two of the Good Practices identified in FRIDGE project were included in the paper:

1. Tasteful East-Flanders: Promotion of local gastronomy
2. Food Province Label of South Ostrobothnia.

Read the article: [Policy Brief on Regional Branding](#)

Tasteful East-Flanders presentation for Finnish and Hungarian partners



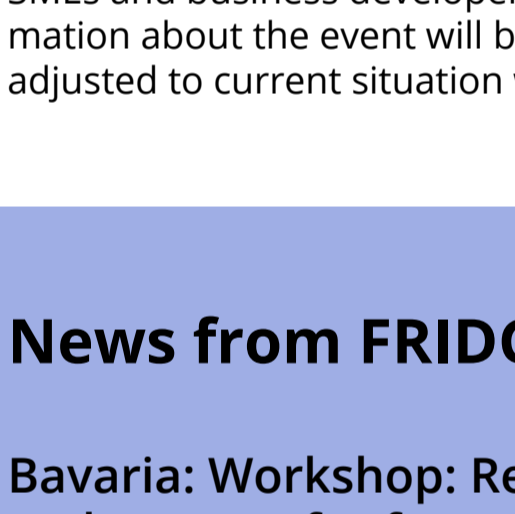
On the 15th of November, we had a chance to participate in a two-hour meeting organised by the Economic Council of East-Flanders where the Tasteful East-Flanders was presented. This Good Practice from Belgium sparked a lot of attention among the partner regions. In our article you can also find three promotional videos prepared by the ECEF where members of the Tasteful East-Flanders network were interviewed about their experiences being a part of the network.

Read the article: [Exchanging experiences - Tasteful East-Flanders](#)

2. Next events

During the last semester of the first phase of our project there are still two important interregional events taking place. The first one focusing on the food sector development in Bavaria Germany and the second on the food business development in the region of South Ostrobothnia, Finland.

Virtual Study Visit to Bavaria, Germany in February



On February 1st we will have an online study visit to Bavaria, Germany, to learn more about the good practices from that region. It is a one-day, intensive study visit where you will be able to both listen and ask questions to better understand how our partners

from Bavaria have been able to develop their regional food sector and the competitiveness of Food SMEs.

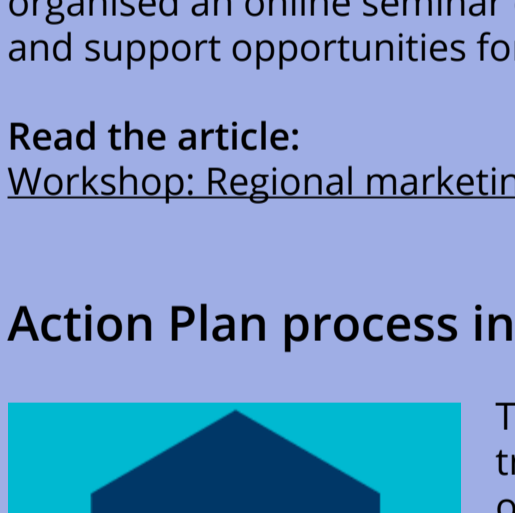
Find more information on how to join, agenda and registration link [on our website](#).

Partner meeting and Study Visit in Finland - 23.-24.3.2022

Soon after the virtual study visit to Germany, we would like to invite all interested partners and stakeholders for a study visit in Seinäjoki, Finland, where we would familiarise you with the Food Business Development in South Ostrobothnia. For the moment, we plan to organise this meeting physically at the same time with the Food Business Summit that brings together Finnish Food SMEs and business developers around the country. More information about the event will be provided later and actions will be adjusted to current situation with the pandemic.

3. News from FRIDGE regions

Bavaria: Workshop: Regional marketing and support for farmers



Even the best product will not sell if customers simply do not know that it exists. For many local producers, becoming visible and winning a place in customers' minds is a case of surviving or going bankrupt. That is why the Food Startup Incubator Weihenstephan

Triesdorf (FSIWS), together with the FRIDGE project partner Competence Center for Nutrition (KErn) and the Food Cluster at KErn organised an online seminar on the topic of regional marketing and support opportunities for farmers.

Read the article: [Workshop: Regional marketing & support for farmers](#)

Action Plan process in South Ostrobothnia



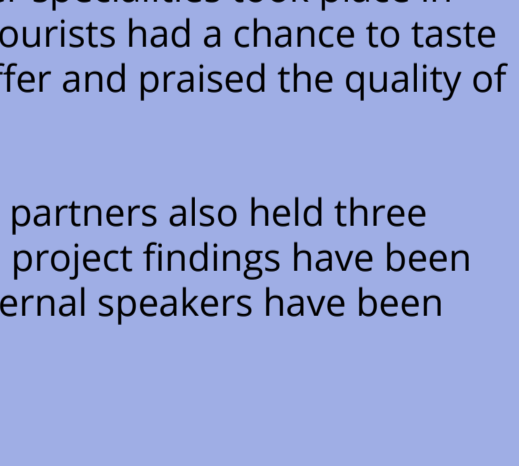
The FRIDGE year of 2021 in South Ostrobothnia was definitely about developing the regional Action Plan, learning from other Regions and engaging local stakeholders into the process. During the year the project partner at RCSO together with the external expert team from Seinäjoki University of Applied Sciences organised several

workshops and online meetings where the action plan was discussed with our local stakeholders.

Read the article: [Action Plan process South Ostrobothnia](#).

Western Macedonia: One of FRIDGE stakeholders, awarded the gold medal in an international wine competition.

As our partners from the region of Western Macedonia, Greece, inform us, one of our stakeholders, a famous regional winery Alpha Estate has been awarded a gold medal in the prestigious TOP21 Syrachs of 2021 competition organised each year by prestigious media outlet thedrinksbusiness.com.



We would like to congratulate Alpha Estate on this truly astounding achievement!

Tolna County local products Christmas Fair in Szekszárd, and a series of stakeholder meetings

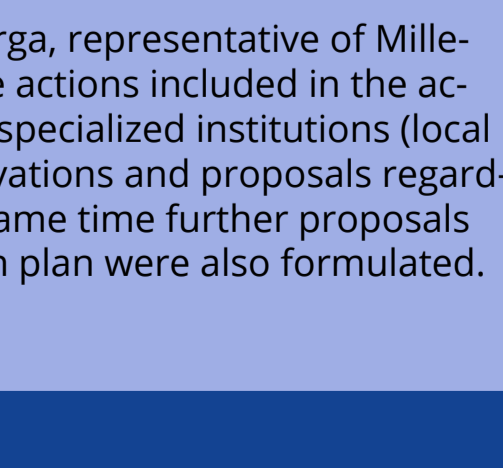
Poltna has happened in Hungary, where our partners from Tolna County have been working hard to develop and promote regional food products and brands. First of all, a Christmas Fair with locally produced food and other specialities took place in Szekszárd. Hundreds of locals and tourists had a chance to taste the best that Tolna County has to offer and praised the quality of local delicatessen.

During October and November, our partners also held three stakeholder meetings, during which project findings have been discussed. As well as interesting external speakers have been invited.

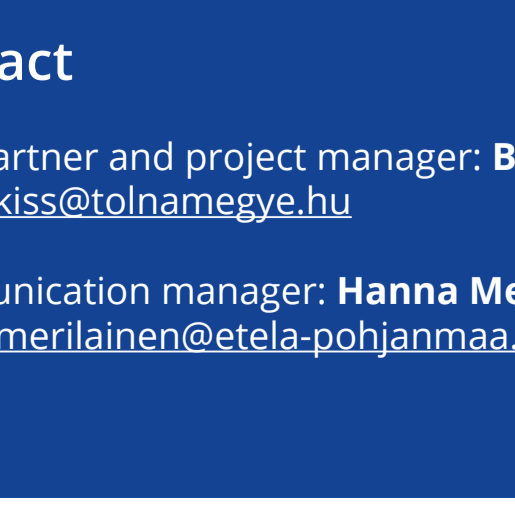
East Flanders: Local digital stakeholder meeting

On December 16, 2021, the Economic Council of East Flanders organized a local digital stakeholder meeting. We started with an overview of the meeting in Kozani (Greece), the good practices and study visits. We also talked about the presentation of Tasteful East Flanders for some of the Fridge's partners. We took a closer look at the start of Tasteful East Flanders, the approach and the advantages and disadvantages.

The meeting was followed by a discussion of the action plan. The stakeholders looked at some options and gave us useful feedback to prepare our action plan. In a next stakeholder meeting we will discuss the action plan again.



Local stakeholder meeting in Harghita county



On December 20, 2021, Harghita County Council organized an online meeting with local stakeholders in order to present the draft version of the action plan within the Fridge project. The online event was attended by members of the project implementation unit, representative of the company responsible for elaborating the action plan, local stakeholders: representatives of Harghita County Development Agency, Rural Development Association of the Harghita County Council and Organization of Szeklerland Farmers.

Within the online event Mr. Péter Varga, representative of Millepontem Consulting Srl presented the actions included in the action plan, the representatives of the specialized institutions (local stakeholders) expressed their observations and proposals regarding the included actions and at the same time further proposals to be included in the project's action plan were also formulated.

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