

# THE EUREGA COOKBOOK

Lessons for building  
resilience and creating  
economic growth  
through gastronomy



© Elisa Manninen & Harri Tarvainen



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

01	INTRODUCTION
04	OVERVIEW OF GOOD PRACTICES
06	SUMMARY OF GOOD PRACTICES
07	GROUP 1: WELL-BEING
09	GROUP 2: EDUCATION
11	GROUP 3: HERITAGE/TRADITION
13	GROUP 4: SME SUPPORT
15	GROUP 5: SUSTAINABILITY
17	GROUP 6: LINKING URBAN AND RURAL
19	ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS & CHALLENGES
23	CONCLUSION
25	REFERENCES

# INTRODUCTION

This Cookbook is one of the main deliverables of the first phase of the Interreg Europe Eureka project. The project brings together partners from multiple European countries – the Netherlands, Finland, Spain, Ireland, Greece, Romania and Hungary. The partners all have the same overarching aim to support and influence regional policies for SME's working in the gastronomy sector. This Cookbook can be seen as a summary of what has been discussed and learned during the implementation of the project. It also serves as a source of inspiration for the partners to continue the useful cooperation they have built up with their regional stakeholders. Finally, the document includes recommendations which could be useful for other regions in Europe with similar challenges and objectives.

The project was inspired by the fact that despite the food sector's economic potential, and food and gastronomy's potential of creating distinction and attraction in the global arena, and the ability of impacting multiple aspects of social life by creating collaboration between different sectors, European food and gastronomy are underestimated as cultural heritage and regional economic development driver and are not utilized effectively as public diplomacy instruments. The following section gives an outline of how food and gastronomy are potential drivers of regional development and of how the EUREGA project contributes to this recognition.

As competition between regions keeps increasing in the global arena, local culture is becoming an increasingly valuable asset in creating attraction and driving economic growth. Gastronomy and food being social and cultural heritage, being central to identity formation (Hjalager, Richards 2002), as well a major contributor to Europe's economy, play an essential role in this process.

Food has a multifaceted connecting role in society and sustainable food systems are supportive of sustainable communities. It impacts people's lifestyles, habits, health and



© Elisa Manninen & Harri Tarvainen



is central to planning for land, water, energy, transport and eco-system services. Food related business activities stimulate collaboration with multiple other sectors – such as tourism, agriculture, hospitality, education, well-being, handcraft, etc. (Cavicchi, Stancova; 2016)

Regarding its economic potential, food and drink industry is the biggest manufacturing sector in the European Union in terms of jobs and value added. According to Eurostat data published in 2019 the industry generated a yearly turnover of €1,192 billion and a value added of €230 billion. It maintains the characteristic of a stable, resilient and robust sector by maintaining stable growth over the past 10 years and it is a key job provider and relatively stable employer by employing 4.72 million persons. The food industry accounts for 290,000 SMEs that generate 50% of the industry's turnover and provide two-third of the jobs within the sector. Therefore, their contribution to growth is crucial. (Food & Drink Industry Europe; 2019).

Although the EU food and drink industry is generally competitive on a global scale as European specialties are well appreciated overseas, products are of high quality, healthy and safe, the relative competitiveness of the sector compared to other world food producers has experienced a decrease. It has seen a slower growth in labour productivity and added value. The European Commission has taken multiple initiatives in order to improve the competitiveness of the regions food industry and thereby it's contribution to the region's attractiveness and economic growth.

As quality is a main distinctive feature of European food and drink industry, European initiatives have strongly focused on the quality aspects of European food policy. Food quality is being monitored in terms of food safety, health standards and sustainability through annual reports and analyses – such as the Food and issued by the DG Health and Food Safety – in order to support the development of food-related policies and contribute to the Commission's priorities for growth, jobs and investments. (DG Health & Food Safety; 2020) The FOOD 2030 policy framework is a response to the international policy developments (the Sustainable Development Goals and the COP 21 commitments – that target environmental, climate-related and societal issues) and builds on key Food and Nutrition Security priorities. It enforces measures that helps the region becoming a bioeconomy by 2030 – such as establishing climate smart and environmentally sustainable food systems while conserving natural resources, establishing circularity within food systems and establishing a broad innovation ecosystem that leads to new business models and value-added products while meeting the expectations of society in a responsible and ethical way (European Commission; 2019).

Although there have been initiatives taken to highlight the cultural and educational aspects of the European gastronomic heritage – such as the incorporation of the Mediterranean diet in the UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in 2013, or encouraging awareness-raising campaigns of healthy-eating targeting children (Ayxela; 2014) – European gastronomy is not

utilized effectively as a regional cultural asset. Within the EU's regional development strategy, food has been treated under agricultural policies, mainly in terms of food safety, and have been covered and utilized targeted under European Agricultural Fund for Rural Developed. However, there are no separate policies or development programs targeting or building on food and gastronomy. Regional agro-food policies or food and gastronomy related development plans are either non-existent or inefficient.

The aim of the EUREGA project, therefore, is to fill these gaps in the existing EU strategies and policies regarding food and gastronomy - to enforce the recognition of gastronomy as important regional cultural asset of Europe and the incorporation thereof into the set of regional (and national) strategies, policies and economic development drivers of the region. This happens through acquiring the appropriate public support for regional gastronomy, that can later be translated into such measures.

The EUREGA partnership collects good practices on the incorporation of gastronomy into their regional development agenda that were previously carried out. The practices are presented to and discussed with the partnership in the form of an interregional learning exchange in phase 1 of the EUREGA project. Strengths and hardships of the good practices are identified, the best good practices are collected, and based on the partnership's experience recommendations are presented in the form of this Cookbook. The recommendations are transferable to other

regions within the EU and applicable on EU level in the form of this Cookbook. Thus, the Cookbook serves as an inspiration for other regions on how to drive regional development through gastronomy by collecting the partnerships best good practices as "ingredients", highlighting the strengths and difficulties encountered by partners while implementing the practices and offering recommendations based on the partnerships experience and gaps identified in existing food related EU strategies.

The good practices collected by partners are aimed at contributing to their regions' economic development and to the creation of economic resilience by supporting their local SMEs. The practices are in line with the EU's broader development goals. They seek to establish sustainability in the partners' regions - both environmental, economic and social - by creating sustainable systems and short supply chains - to impact multiple aspects of social life such as health and education, and highlight the importance of food as cultural heritage in creating attraction. For a better understanding, good practices are clustered according to these abovementioned themes identified within them and the clusters are considered as areas within gastronomy driven development to be improved. (Due to these themes being interconnected, a good practice might fit in multiple clusters.) Policy recommendations that are created based on the strengths and weaknesses identified by partners in their existing practices and the gaps identified in existing food-related EU policies, target these clustered areas.

# OVERVIEW OF GOOD PRACTICES

A total of 24 case study examples illustrating specific examples of good practices were submitted by the project partners. The best good practices selected by the project partnership are presented in the following section. These report on a wide range of initiatives largely based on the utilization and development of the regions' local resources and are led by the entrepreneurial vision of key actors of the local community and civic administration. These range in size from family businesses to large-scale multi-partner strategic initiatives.

**PP2**

## **Noord Brabant**

- Gezond dorp
- From Brabant grounds

**PP3**

## **Pro Agria**

- REKO, Local Foods Sales and Distribution model
- SATOA Festivals

**PP4**

## **PRODECA**

- TAS program – You and Alícia for Health
- Welcome to the Farm

**PP5**

## **North West Region**

- Food Academy Programme
- Food Works Programmes

**PP6**

## **South Aegean Region**

- Kos Wine House
- Rodion Pedia School of Rhodes
- Local Gourmet Festival

**PP7**

## **Sibiu County**

- The Transylvanian Brunch
- Mic Dejun Sibian – Local Breakfast
- The Country Fair in ASTRA Museum

**PP8**

## **HBMG**

- Cabbage Festival of Hajdúhadház
- Apple Orchard in Derecske
- Debrecen Double Sausage

A total of 24 case study examples illustrating specific examples of good practices were submitted by the project partners. The best good practices selected by the project partnership are presented in the following section. These report on a wide range of initiatives largely based on the utilization and development of the regions' local resources and are led by the entrepreneurial vision of key actors of the local community and civic administration. These range in size from family businesses to large-scale multi-partner strategic initiatives.

The following sections present a synthesis of the good practice case studies. In section 2, the most salient points from each case study are described.

In order to get a better understanding of the strengths and difficulties previously met by partners and targeted through the good practice, the good practices were clustered according to their main themes. Although the themes are interconnected each submitted good practice features one of the themes as its key approach to their region's difficulties. The following main themes were identified in the good practices:

- Well-being
- Education
- Heritage / Tradition
- SME Support
- Sustainability
- Linking Urban and Rural



# SUMMARY OF GOOD PRACTICES



© Elisa Manninen & Harri Tarvainen

All the Good Practices collected in the Eureka project contribute to the overall goal of supporting SMEs and stimulating economic growth through the development of gastronomy. This happens through the practices utilizing a variety of tools and themes outlined in this section.



## GROUP 1: WELL-BEING

The Good Practice case studies in the first grouping – Well-being – illustrate how introducing a health aspect to the development of local gastronomy and tourism can enhance the participating region's efforts. Partners utilize this aspect as a selling point for local products and for attracting visitors – to make their regions' food more attractive to visitors and consumers – which also supports other aspects (e.g. sustainability, community building, branding) that are present in the same efforts. Others apply the theme in educating locals (both children and adults) for a health-conscious life-style while also letting them discover sources available for this lifestyle in their regions.

### Gezond Dorp

Two doctors in Leende developed a life-style concept based on more activity and food based on a Low Carb High Fat principle. The Gezond Dorp initiative goes beyond developing a life-style concept that is aimed at tackling the relatively high rate of obesity present in the community of Leende. Besides providing a concept based on more physical activity and a change in food habits, the initiative takes a community approach. The two general practitioners that had developed the concept shared it with the town's inhabitants through meetings, thereby contributing to building a health-conscious community. Inhabitants were also informed about the availability of the right products and the initiative was extended with the Low Carb High Fat experience market, which provides visibility to local enterprises that offer products for this lifestyle. Thereby, establishing a sustainable business model and contributing to the overall project aim of supporting SMEs and creating growth through gastronomy. Today Gezond Dorp is a flourishing project that lead to sensational results in the village community, such as weight loss, decrease of medicine use and more daily activity

among the participants.



### Satoa

The SATOA food festivals are effective tools of place branding, targeting Kuopio region and placing general well-being in the focus of the effort in order to highlight what the region has to offer.

The festivals, by promoting a healthy Nordic-diet, the use of fresh produces Finnish nature has to offer in gastronomy and the use of bio-degradable packaging create a unique selling point for local products and attract health-conscious visitors. The promotion of the already existing resources, local ingredients, services and products support local producers and encourage restaurants to use local over global as well. Thereby establishing a short supply chain and supporting local producers and food SMEs.

## Lessons Learnt

Project partners have found different ways to utilize the theme of well-being and health presented in these two good practices. One remarkable example was Sibiu county (PP7) that inspired by Noord-Brabants “Gezond Dorp” initiative prepared a healthy lifestyle guide for their own region with the aim of educating the public and regional authorities about the importance of a healthy diet based on fresh local produces. Thereby the theme is also mobilized in Sibiu’s action plan for a policy change promoting the wider use of local food resources, supporting local SMEs and the establishment of sustainable supply chains. Others – ProAgria (PP3) and Noord-Brabant (PP2) – utilized the theme of health and well-being in a more general way, incorporated in their marketing strategies in order to target health-conscious consumers in their regions. ProAgria aimed it’s action plan on developing food related well-being products through food sector SMEs’ cooperation with SMEs from multiple other sectors, thereby opening up new opportunities for SMEs in their region. Noord-Brabant’s action plan resulting from the Eurega project targeted health-conscious consumers by promoting its food offer as sustainable and healthy, thereby creating a unique selling point for its food.

## Policy recommendations

Health counselling and advice provided by health professionals is an effective way of overcoming food-related health issues, therefore access to these services should not be determined by one’s circumstances, but should be provided in a form of a social service in schools and workplaces.

Access provided to seasonal fruits and vegetables for children in school should also be introduced in all European schools as a standard practice in order to ensure their healthy development.

The establishment of local food banks would also contribute to making nutritious food available for all, and to avoiding food waste.



## GROUP 2: EDUCATION

The second cluster has a strong focus on education as a means to inform and raise awareness of local food resources, rural production, heritage and health conscious living thereby attempting to make a positive impact on public health, contributing to the region's sustainable growth by supporting local producers that supply health conscious customers with fresh local products and to preserving local and regional traditions.

### From Brabant Grounds

From Brabant grounds is a program developed by seven branches of culinary schools in Brabant with the aim of getting a better exposure to the food of the region and increase the use of local ingredients in restaurants and among locals. Thereby establishing short supply chain and bettering the region's economy through gastronomy.

The program informs about farm products, the origins of those and ways to apply them in the kitchen. Through the program cooking students and restaurant owners are equipped with knowledge on the origin of and traditions around fresh food of their region which allows them to consciously use more local ingredients in their menus, tell the story behind their foods and thereby also encourage guests to use local ingredients as well as make local food a unique product for guests.

The project has become permanent part of the school curricula and collected the new knowledge in a form of a cookbook to - of which over a 1,500 were sold - in order to make it transferable.

### TAS Programme

TAS is an innovative and unique online program developed by 12 members of the Alícia foundation, sponsored by the

Mondelez International Foundation. It targets educational centres and seeks to improve the well-being of teenagers by providing with the knowledge, skills and motivation necessary to avoid future illnesses caused by unhealthy eating habits through new technologies and a wide variety of contents and materials. It promotes gastronomy and physical activity as tools for improving the quality of life and actively engages students in improving their own eating habits. Currently the program is adapted into school curricula in Spain in different forms (express, trimestral, optative and tutoring), resulting increasing intake of fresh food - fruits, vegetables and fish - and all forms of physical activity. The program is easily transferable to other regions and adjustable due to the wide variety of content it offers.



## Cooking Club at the School of Rhodes

Cooking at school is an informal programme educating school children about cooking, local produces and gastronomic traditions of the region and help them putting the know acquired into practices. The aim is to raise a health-conscious next generation and responsible consumers while stimulating children's creativity through cooking and keep the gastronomic traditions of the region alive by passing on knowledge to children. By educating about local produces, the project also supports the use of local over global, thereby encouraging the establishment of short supply chains.



## Lessons Learnt

As the good practices of this clusters demonstrate it, education is an effective instrument for keeping traditions alive, for raising responsible consumers and a health-conscious next generation. The South-Aegean region (PP6) took its major source of inspiration from this fact. Besides using education for drawing attention to the importance of healthy eating that is based on local seasonal products and thereby encouraging the next generation for consuming local, the "Food Steps" action also used school children as a channel for keeping regional gastronomic traditions alive and for promoting those by making them ambassadors of a healthy "Aegean diet". The South Aegean region took the element of developing and promoting concepts about local food in a school together with the youth from Noord-Brabant's "From Brabant Grounds" practice.

## Policy recommendations

The incorporation of food related health education into school curricula would strongly contribute to raising a health-conscious next generation, responsible consumer society and would help tackling health issues – both physical and mental – stemming from a poor diet.

International health organizations hold the knowledge, prestige, and the right tools for helping the integration of food related health education into school programs. Therefore, platforms should be created for the cooperation of health organizations and schools.

## GROUP 3: HERITAGE/TRADITION

The third cluster utilizes Heritage and Tradition – telling the story behind a region’s food or production process – not only to highlight the specialty of the region, but also to make food for visitors more valuable, to promote a particular region through traditional food. This also supports the use of local products, thereby also supporting local SMEs and the establishment of sustainable models within a particular region.

### The Transylvanian Brunch

The Transylvanian Brunch is a multi-partner project organized by Sibiu county and local organizations with the aim of utilizing the region’s heritage and traditions for supporting food local producers and small enterprises, thereby establishing a self-sustainable community.

The brunch events target local community through three different dimensions – a culinary part that provides meals made of local seasonal ingredients while telling about the traditions behind food, a “slow travel” that guides locals through the village and its built heritage and a workshops that educate about the specifics, crafts, products and arts of each place. These help inhabitants establish a better connection with their regions offerings and local producers thereby establishing a sustainable community and contributing to economic growth through gastronomy. The growth in the number of visitors and participants are indicative of the events’ success.

### Local Gourmet Festival

The Local Gourmet Festival is an innovation of hotel gastronomy – the common effort of hotel Elysium Resort & Spa in Rhodes

and awarded chefs of Greece – aimed at promoting local cuisine, strengthening local businesses and supporting local producers on both a regional and national level. This happens through delivering food for visitors that is the unique creation of Greek chefs who were inspired by the traditional meals and ingredients of their regions, using local products therefore.

The festival ended with a positive income, helped gaining good publicity for the hotel, resulted in the hotel being fully booked for the rest of the season – which also enhanced the locals appreciation of the hotel and their pride for their traditional local cuisine.

### Debrecen Double sausage as national culinary heritage

“Debrecen Double Sausage as a national culinary heritage” is an initiative aimed at rebuilding the image of the Debrecen double sausage that is regarded to be a specialty meal of the region and national culinary heritage, and of which the quality and popularity has decreased due to mass production. Besides highlighting the importance of preserving regional gastronomic heritage and providing an example for placebranding through

regional gastronomy, the initiative also draws attention to the importance of quality, slow production and the increase of health-conscious consumers, thereby encouraging the use of local traditionally produced ingredients.

## Cabbage Festival of Hajdúhadház

The Cabbage Festival of Hajdúhadház is a culinary event aimed at preserving the region's cultural heritage, targeting the local society's socio-economic issues – such as outmigration and high unemployment rate – and strengthening the identity of locals, financed and organized by the local government every year since 2004. This happens through the festival organizing its programs around its traditional specialty meal, providing jobs and programs to locals and attracting tourists and domestic visitors as well, thereby placing the town of Hadház in the highlight and enhancing local's identity.



## Lessons Learnt

The Eurega partners demonstrated well through their good practices that their regional food is a crucial element of their cultural heritage and that it can be effectively mobilized for gaining visibility to their regions or for supporting local food producers. Hajdú-Bihar County Government (PP7), inspired by the “Transylvanian Brunch” and by the concept of treating food as crucial part of regional culture, promotes the county among both domestic and foreign visitors with its action “Hajdú Brunch event” that is pilot breakfast events aimed at the popularization of the county cuisine. Noord-Brabant similarly utilizes regional culinary tradition and typically regional products as central part of its branding strategy through planning culinary events similar to the Cabbage Festival practice presented by Hajdú County Government.

## Policy recommendations

As traditional foods and dishes prove to be effective ways of gaining visibility to regions, labelling local products produced by local SMEs more effectively could contribute to promoting a particular region. Besides, it would help locals in being able to support their local suppliers and thereby contributing to their region's growth even better.

As children and the youth are channels for passing on traditions and local food heritage through generations, expanding the set of available youth programs (Erasmus exchanges) with ones on gastronomy as cultural heritage, and making those easily available for students would effectively contribute to preserving European gastronomic heritage.

## GROUP 4: SME SUPPORT

The fourth cluster focuses on economic development brought about by local gastronomy and on supporting local SMEs in order to further enhance this development with the tools of tailoring existing local businesses to a modern competitive business model, focusing on extraversion / attracting non-local clientele and involving local suppliers into the development of local tourism.

### Food Works Programme

Food Works is a government-supported accelerator programme aimed at supporting SMEs designed to help export oriented-entrepreneurs in becoming part of Ireland's food and drink Industry. It is run by three government agencies and has helped over 70 Irish food entrepreneurs scale up their business by giving invaluable range of practical business support through a series of workshop and one to one mentoring. This support entails developing an initial business concept into a winning food product with international appeal and global export potential, doing market research, business plan development, technical advice and commercial viability testing.

### Food Academy

Food Academy is a multi-partner national program aimed at supporting and nurturing start-up food businesses by providing a consistent level of food marketing knowledge to new and early-stage food business owners. The training is carried out through workshops and includes individual mentoring. All participants of the program are given the opportunity to pitch their product to a panel of the SuperValu supermarket chain's

representatives that mentor the businesses, share their expertise and advise to allow the participants to make any changes they deem necessary to improve their offer. After the completion of the program they are offered the opportunity to trial their product in the local stores for a period of 12 weeks, thereby also providing the chance for small businesses to gain feedback direct from the retailer in order to further improve their product, marketing approach, packaging and distribution. By now there are over 300 businesses participating in Food Academy supporting over 1,130 jobs.

### Mic Dejun Sibian

Mic Dejun Sibian is a project that is aimed at promoting the region's cuisine for every visitors that overnight in the tourism destination. By offering local seasonal fresh products, prepared in a traditional way, the project also promotes the region's local culture and artisanship. This promotion happens through a number of accommodation providers both in the urban and rural areas of the region, providing breakfasts based on a quality chart prepared by the local Tourism Association that informs on the structure of a local breakfasts and requires participants to justify the local origin of their ingredients. Participating accommodation providers then gain

visibility by being featured on the Tourism Association's webpage and social media channels. This practice, besides gaining visibility, helps local food producers through a new sales channel by providing the local ingredients for the. Therefore, the local breakfast contributes to the establishment of short supply chains and the support of local producers and SMEs.

## Kos Winehouse

Triantafyllopoulos winery demonstrates a dynamic presence in the wine tourism of Greece as it keeps its doors open for its visitors who get the chance to gain an insight into the production process – landscape-environment-crop-processing-gastronomy-culture-tourism chain – throughout the whole year. The business also strongly focuses on extraversion by taking part in different gastronomic events – both national and international – and ensures great quality by cooperating with various institutions on developing viticulture and winemaking.

This practice promotes a sustainable production model and an effective marketing strategy by focusing on quality and establishing direct relation with visitors through letting them see the production process behind the wine. Therefore, the practice contributes to the support of local SMEs in the first place.

## Lessons Learnt

The support of local food SMEs is a widely used concept for driving economic growth through gastronomy by the Eurega partnership. Multiple partners – Noord-Brabant (PP2), ProAgria (PP3), Hajdú-Bihar County Government (PP7) – used the concept presented in “Food Academy” and providing marketing assistance through a mentor program or workshops provided by experts within their actions in order to help their regional food SMEs in developing a marketing strategy that would result in regional economic growth.

“Mic Dejun Sibian”, a breakfast program aimed at promoting the region's gastronomy through traditional dishes based on local fresh products and strengthening the link between local producers, tour operators and visitors was also adopted by Eurega partners. Noord-Brabant (PP2) and Hajdú-Bihar (PP7) and PRODECA (PP4) utilize this concept for increasing the rate of local products in their region's restaurants and tourism facilities and thereby supporting their regional food suppliers and SMEs.

## Policy recommendations

As indicated by the good practices provided by partners local and regional SMEs can be strengthened through making assistance for establishing competitive business models available for SMEs, therefore, this should be a much more widely used practice. Assistance provided in marketing for local SMEs would be a way to gain visibility for those businesses, and thereby provide them with a chance to increase their sales. Networking, knowledge exchange and sharing inspiration for discovering new effective ways for supplying that would support local and regional food SMEs could happen through the establishment of a platform – these could be yearly special events for fisheries, agro-producers.

## GROUP 5: SUSTAINABILITY

This cluster of good practices focuses on sustainability within development through gastronomy – supports short supply chains, good quality local production and thereby also on supporting local producers and small businesses, establishing an environmental friendly and economically resilient model while preserving heritage and traditional ways of production.

### Derecske Apple Orchard

The Apple Orchard in Derecske a complex tourism product development initiative aimed at promoting sustainable fruit production, the benefits of local produces and inspiring locals to opt for sustainable produces over the mass-produced ones by highlighting the importance of quality, environmental consciousness and humans' connection to nature. This happens through letting visitors get an insight into the orchard's production processes through educational activities and getting them involved through interactive programs.

This process connects the values of past traditions with present production and consumption patterns, thereby establishing a sustainable business models while also paying attention to consumer needs. The initiative managed to turn its economic life into attraction and it resulted in over 6,000 visitors per year and the opening of a new restaurant at the property.

### REKO Model

The REKO Local Foods and Distribution Model is aimed supporting local businesses, establishing short supply chains and promoting the consumption of

fresh produces by helping end-consumers in reaching local producers directly. This happens through building up an online communication platform where consumer can place their orders for fresh produces that are then delivered to them.

The turnover has significantly increased every year and the model has spread to multiple countries including Sweden, Norway, Italy, Iceland and South-Africa. The final goal is to create a B2B REKO model which allows the exchange of goods between businesses, in order to increase the use of local produce in gastronomic businesses.

### Three Farmer's Market

The Three Farmers Market is a market that works on a rotational basis at three venues and is organized by Sibiu Council weekly, provides a platform for local producers to sell their fresh products and establish a personal relationship with consumers. Besides food local handcrafts and artisans are present every week, thereby the market is also encourages the use of local products, supports local producers and the establishment of short supply chains and it also highlights how local food is part of the region's cultural heritage. Although initially the target audience of the market was local consumers, it grew into a tourist attraction and gains visibility for the regions through its unique gastronomic culture.

## Lessons Learnt

Good practices organized around the theme of sustainability were popular inspirations for the Eureka partnership in developing their actions plans as the establishment of sustainable food supply chains strongly relates to the support of SMEs – the overall goal of the EUREGA project. The creation of online communication platforms for local producers aimed at connecting producers with consumers and at stimulating the use of local produces (featured in the REKO Model) is incorporated into multiple Eureka action plans – including the Northern & Western Regional Assembly (PP5), Hajdú-Bihar County Government (PP7) , South-Aegean Region (PP6) , Noord-Brabant (PP2) – in order to help the regions establishing short and sustainable supply chains.

The promotion of local produces central to the “Three Farmers’ Market” practice supported by regulations actively promoting local producers is adopted in Northern & Western Regional Assembly’s action aimed at developing a well-structured supply chain management.

## Policy recommendations

In order to successfully face and tackle present and future environmental and social challenges and building economic resilience through self-reliance the development of short supply chains is crucial. Therefore, local, regional and national strategies should put local producers into the foreground by regulations favourable to them.

Decreasing the environmental impact of food supply chain could be achieved through better waste management and the support of sustainable packaging.



## GROUP 6: LINKING URBAN AND RURAL

The last cluster's key approach is to link urban and rural areas of particular regions through consuming locally produced foods throughout a whole region. This theme is utilized by partners for creating short supply chains and establish rural-food tourism, thereby not only contributing to the use of local, but promoting their regions through a new type of tourism opportunity.

### The Country Fair in ASTRA Museum

The Country Fair organized in the openair ASTRA museum is a culinary culture project aimed at identity- and community building by showcasing the values of intangible cultural heritage of entire communities through local food. This happens by inviting local producers and by setting up a main stage that is centred around an open kitchen which adds value to the local ingredients and supports better transmitting the cultural context by interpreted live cooking. The producers are actively involved in interaction with the visitors and guided by the museum's staff to present themselves in a new manner. This way, the fair does not only link the urban and rural areas of the region, but also encourages the consumption of locally produced food, thereby supporting local suppliers and contributing to the establishment of short supply chains.

### Welcome to the Farm

Through "Welcome to the Farm" project farms all over Catalonia open their doors to visitors – which means farms holding the right accreditation offer free visits to guests in order to show the public what they do and present the products they make. In the same time, restaurants offer a special Welcom to the Farm menu, based on local

ingredients supplied by farmers throughout the weekend. The practice responds to the growing interest towards the origin of the food that is being consumed and is aimed at connect locals with their authentic roots. Besides connecting urban and rural areas through food the practice also encourages the use of local foods and supports local produces and the establishment of short supply chain.



## Lessons Learnt

Linking urban and rural areas through food is strongly related to themes of sustainability and health as it involves the use of locally produced foods throughout whole regions and thereby contributing to the establishment of short supply chains and the consumption of fresh foods. Noord-Brabant (PP2) utilized this theme – inspired by the "Welcome to the Farm practice" – to gain more visibility to its local farmers and food producers by letting them open their doors to visitors. Thereby not only increasing the use of local fresh products, but also establishing a unique type of rural food tourism that serves as unique selling point within its place branding strategy.

## Policy Recommendations

Urban policies for urban development usually take into account their linkages with surrounding rural areas. Regional Urban and rural food supply chains are becoming increasingly important in the future. The gastronomy sector and SME's relevant for this sector are benefitting substantially from an improved cooperation between urban and rural areas not only related to food supply but vice versa also from attracting visitors and clients for their businesses. This means that future branding and marketing of the gastronomy sector should be much more focussed on these mutual cooperations and influences.



# ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS AND CHALLENGES



The good practice case studies identified a number of ways in which policy could stimulate regional growth through the development of the food and gastronomy sector. The focus areas that are present in partners' case studies as main themes and are utilized to boost their efforts to stimulate growth through gastronomy – well-being, sustainability, education, linking urban and rural, SME support and economic development and heritage – are considered as target areas for the policy recommendations that stem from partners' experience.

Many of the project's participating partners have actively pursued strategies based on greater participation and collaboration of a variety of private and public sector actors, local businesses, institutions and individuals in order to create sustainable regional economic growth. The diverse range of cooperating actors and several new themes incorporated into strategies allowed for creating new points of attractions for regional gastronomies as well as for impacting multiple aspect of social life – such as general well-being, education or local and regional cultural heritage.

Such collaborations can be encouraged or further diversified by additional policies that provide financial support by governmental or regional bodies through providing tax benefits & subsidies to local food SMEs and startups from local governments and by providing better access to local institutions and businesses to relevant European funding programs.

The social impact of driving development through gastronomy could be further improved by policies incorporating social aspects of the EU's Sustainable Development Goals into the development strategies. Such as the creation of productive and decent work for all through local gastronomy events, through increasing capacity within the sector or increasing gender equality through informing school children about gastronomy, food and agriculture related study fields.

Improved European governance on gastronomy and the incorporation of and

the incorporation of European Gastronomic Heritage into the broader EU agenda – such as the European Cultural Heritage program and the European Agenda for Culture – or the incorporation of European gastronomic heritage as a theme into EU cultural diplomacy tools could further enhance gastronomy's role as a regional development driver and would help better increasing the region's visibility in the global arena through its gastronomy.

The examination of the case study materials provided by the project partners revealed also key challenges faced by both gastronomy related businesses and those institutions committed to promote economic growth through the development of the food and gastronomy sectors. Some challenges, such as finding the right funding and resources (both material and non-material) having access to specialist skills, risk management in case of open air events or those dependent on seasonal produces, barriers posed by local regulations or the lack of necessary infrastructure – are more generic and met by multiple partners within the project. Solutions to these problems faced by partners may seem straightforward – for instance relaxing planning policies for those who struggle with local regulations in order to allow for development – but are often difficult without a strong civic support or require a more practical approach.

The main challenges faced by partners are represented in the visualisation on the following two pages.

## PARTNERSHIP

Creating a strong partnership with the right organizations and individuals from both the public and the private sector that successfully cooperates on further improving the original initiative, or collaborating with local authorities and stakeholders across different sectors was named as difficulty by multiple partners. (e.g. Gezond Dorp – including local businesses – nutrition providers)

Increasing the availability of capital – e.g. through public or private funding

## FUNDING

## COMMUNICATION AND MEDIA

Partners faced difficulties in both their external and internal communication processes – advertising and branding often did not have a wide enough reach (Gourmet Festival, SATOA Festivals) and some partners have struggled with communication across their participating institutions (TAS)

Hardships in community engagement and participation was met by many as well as in winning support for public event financed by local governments (Cabbage Festival)

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

## IMPACT

Many of the partners have reported a lack a significant impact achieved through their practice – in some cases due to insufficient advertising or institutional communication (Gourmet Festival, TAS)

## REGULATION

Ensuring regulation is not an unnecessary barrier to innovation and development, ensuring the legal aspects for events (Transylvanian Brunch)

Increasing the skills and knowledge of local actors in order to improve the capacity to support and implement innovation (TAS, REKO)

## CAPACITY BUILDING

## RESOURCE USE

Partners reported to have difficulties with good resource use – both regarding material and non-material resources. E.g. some struggled with the acquisition of highly skilled human resources for education programs (TAS) or business development (REKO) or with having the right expertise for project development and implementation.

Risk management was a difficulty for those that had to face with the challenge of strong competition, unhelpful local regulations or weather and seasonality of ingredients.

## RISK MANAGEMENT



# CONCLUSION



The interregional exchange activities in Eurega have resulted in improved and innovative cooperation at the regional level between public bodies and private stakeholders. Stakeholders in the gastronomy sector have been inspired by the ideas and suggestions of other partners and in many cases they were a real inspiration for the definition of future policy changes in the regional action plans of all partners. This has been indicated in the lessons learned paragraphs but it goes further and deeper than that. By bringing in experiences from one region to another, all relevant players demonstrated that good and structured cooperation between public and private sector actors and also knowledge institutes are crucial for the steps forward. Establishing multiple instances of high-quality triple helix cooperation, with ongoing influencing inputs from consumers, is the key to ensuring future growth in the gastronomy sector

The project has revealed commonalities between participating regions such as lack of entrepreneurial culture and skills, lack of resources and barriers posed by insufficient governmental support or governmental regulations. But project partners also had in common a variety of natural and cultural assets and managed to turn those into points of attractions for their regions as well as innovative ideas on how to develop their regions' gastronomy and thereby contribute to regional economic growth and impact multiple aspects of social life.

The Good Practices reveal a number of approaches to improving their regional gastronomy in order to enhance regional economic growth.

- Utilizing local natural and cultural assets both on the level of individual businesses (Local Gourmet Festival) or at a strategic level (SATO A Festivals)
- Establishing sustainable models with short supply chains in order to support local producers and SMEs and thereby creating self-sufficiency and economic resilience.
- Providing direct support for local SMEs to help scale up their businesses and thereby increase both self-sufficiency and exports of the regions (Food Academy, Food Works)
- Bringing new elements and themes – well-being, education preserving heritage and tradition – into or combined those with their efforts to improve regional gastronomy in order to attract a broader target group and to diversify the impacts of their programs on social life (TAS, Gezond Dorp, SATOA, Cabbage Festival).
- Coordinated marketing of the areas, highlighting the specifics in order to raise their profiles and increase the impact of businesses while establishing a common identity and developing a brand that increases the pride of locals and helps preserving unique traditions of the regions (Gourmet Festival, SATOA, Transylvanian Brunch).

While not all the good practice cases reported by partners provide examples of how policy can help to promote innovation within the gastronomy sector, but they draw attention to the ways and to the

areas that linked with gastronomy could further enhance regions economic growth, sustainability and social development by creating the right conditions therefore. In some cases, the measure that would enable innovation and development already exist, in others the need for such new policies is expressed.

The approaches identified in the good practices, and the lessons for policy discussed above should be considered by the regions' local stakeholders. This is in order to help inform the development of their Action Plans for improving policy instruments and develop innovation support for SMEs of their regions. The partnerships and collaborations established during the knowledge exchange phase of the Eureka project are designed for creating conditions that are favourable for innovation and growth. However, participants need to consider how policy can be developed to inspire new and strengthen already existing partnerships, and create a supportive environment for encouraging both individual entrepreneurs and groups of entrepreneurs in the implementation of new ideas for regional development through gastronomy.

## REFERENCES

Ayxela, Santiago Fisas (2014) *REPORT on the European gastronomic heritage: cultural and educational aspects*. The European Parliament – Committee on Culture and Education. [Retrieved from: <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//NONGML+REPORT+A7-2014-0127+0+DOC+PDF+V0//EN>]

Cavicchi, Alessio & Stancova, Katerina Ciampi. (2016) *Food and gastronomy as elements of regional innovation strategies*. JRC SCIENCE FOR POLICY REPORT. [Retrieved from: [https://publications.jrc.ec.europa.eu/repository/bitstream/JRC99987/ac\\_kcs\\_food%20pb\\_final.pdf](https://publications.jrc.ec.europa.eu/repository/bitstream/JRC99987/ac_kcs_food%20pb_final.pdf)]

DG Health and Food Safety. (2020) *Health and Food Audits and Analysis Programme 2020*. [Retrieved from: [https://ec.europa.eu/food/sites/food/files/hfaa\\_prog\\_en\\_2020.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/food/sites/food/files/hfaa_prog_en_2020.pdf)]

European Commission. (2019) *FOOD 2030. Bioeconomy policy*. [Retrieved from: <https://ec.europa.eu/research/bioeconomy/index.cfm?pg=policy&lib=food2030>]

Food & Drink Industry Europe. (2019) *Data & Trends. EU Food and Drink Industry*. [Retrieved from: [https://www.fooddrinkeurope.eu/uploads/publications\\_documents/FoodDrinkEurope\\_-\\_Data\\_Trends\\_2019.pdf](https://www.fooddrinkeurope.eu/uploads/publications_documents/FoodDrinkEurope_-_Data_Trends_2019.pdf)]

Hjalager, Anne-Mette & Richards. (2003) *Tourism & Gastronomy*. Routledge

