



“Regenerative food supply chains in hospitality services” The first TUI Field to Fork Greece Kick-off event was a success!

On **Saturday 23 September 2023**, at Creta Maris Resort in Hersonissos, Crete, the official kick-off event of the TUI Field to Fork Greece project of TUI Care Foundation in collaboration with **SFDO, Futouris** and **Local Food Experts**, took place.

TUI Field to Fork Greece is the first project of its kind in Greece. Its design was based on the deliverables of the previous TUI Care Foundation 3 Years project Taste Crete | First steps towards Sustainable Food Destination 2017-19. It attempts to introduce & incentivize regenerative practices by leveraging hospitality services. The aim of TUI Field to Fork Greece is to **support food producers** on the island of Crete in their transition to **Regenerative Agriculture practices** (with an emphasis on understanding and reducing their carbon footprint) - to stimulate existing relationships and create new ones between farmers, Food Production Units, hotels and the local Chalkiadakis supermarket chain in Crete - to increase sales and supply of regenerative agricultural products to the tourism sector and beyond.

With around **200 participants** from diverse sectors such as **farmers, hoteliers, food production units, educational institutes, organizations, municipalities, ministry, and press**, the event received impressive traction in the local community of Crete and Greece.

The event started with the opening speeches by **Lefteris Avgenakis Minister of Agriculture, Maria Gatsou, Director SETE and Andreas Metaxas, CEO Metaxa Hospitality Group** who hosted the event presenting the current situation of the food system and hospitality sector, and how this project can support the region of Greece to regenerate. Lefteris Avgenakis clearly stated the need for such initiatives, especially considering the recent flood incidents in Thessalia and fires in Evros.

Some of the highlights of the event included:

Marta Cortegano from Terra Syntropica & **ESDIME** from Portugal inspired the audience with the regeneration story of the deserted and depopulated town Mertola. **Yasmine Cathell**, the so-called ‘soil sommelier’ captured everyone’s attention with the soil ‘tasting’ demonstration, showcasing the importance of soil health, and its impact on human health. **Melissa Comellas**, referred to the various EU policies and how they affect the move to regenerative agriculture, whilst presenting the various funding EIT Food opportunities. **Ilektra Kouloumpi**, revived the audience with great examples around the globe implementing circular solutions, minimizing waste, and ameliorating the food processes. **Dimitris Dimitriadis**, presented the first Greek-specific Regenerative Organic Certification scheme, ready to be implemented by producers by the beginning of 2024. Piraeus bank representatives **Dimitris Verelis and Ioannis Chaniotakis** presented the financial tools that can support the agricultural sector transition. **Christina Chalkiadaki**, referred to the abundance of the Greek and specifically Cretan local produce that can play a pivotal role in promoting Greek hospitality and offering a high-quality experience for the guest and for the local citizen.





During the three panels, a discussion took place on certain topics. The first panel consisted of leading agronomists, who talked about the challenges and opportunities of regenerative agriculture in practice by bringing examples from the field. The second panel brought the expertise from the food production units, such as **Melissa/Terra Creta, Lyarakis Winery, Creta Vinifera, Dourakis Winery, Ta Meraklidika, Kassakis cured meat** and more, on consumer's understanding and education as well as the need for collaboration between the different stakeholders of the system. The third and last panel focused on the role of hotels in the transition and discussed it with some of the project's participants and leading players in the sector, like **The Tanneries, Minoa Palace, Phaea resorts, Metaxa Hospitality Group**.

To summarize, one of the main messages as a basic perception of designing such a program, emphasized by Andreas Metaxas, CEO of Metaxa Hospitality Group, and shared by the participants of the event is:

'Think Global and Act local'

The event closed with a tribute to **Kostas Bouyiouris and Dietmar Roth**, two important partners and developers of the project, which evoked great emotion and gratitude.



More information about the organisation and the project

SFDO: <https://sfdo.ngo/>

TUI Field To Fork: <https://www.tuicarefoundation.com/en/programmes/Lively-Landscapes/tui-field-to-fork>

SFDO LinkedIn: https://gr.linkedin.com/company/sfdo?trk=public_post_main-feed-card-text

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