



SUMMER ACADEMY REPORT

EURACADEMY ASSOCIATION'S 22ND SUMMER ACADEMY

**“GOODFOOD: RESPONSIBLE FOOD PRODUCTION AND CONSUMPTION
FOR A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE”**

INCLUDING THE FINAL CONFERENCE OF THE GOODFOOD PROJECT (FUNDED BY
ERASMUS+)

NEA MAKRI, GREECE

16TH TO 20TH JUNE 2024



Erasmus+

Introduction

The 22nd Summer Academy of Euracademy Association was held in Nea Makri, Greece, from 16th to 20th June 2024, and included the Final Conference of the GOODFOOD Project ("*Education to become responsible food consumers*" Erasmus+ Cooperation Partnership). This comprehensive report provides an overview of the program, learning methods, outcomes, and evaluation of the event.

Over the course of three days, 44 participants from eight different countries, including experts, academics, students, and practitioners, engaged in discussions and activities focused on sustainable food consumption and production. Their collective expertise enriched the understanding of key topics related to the event's theme.

The primary focus of the Summer Academy and Final Conference was organized into three main topics:

- *Understanding Sustainable Food Consumption*: This included consumer education and defining "good food" to promote responsible food choices.
- *Fostering Sustainable Food Systems*: Participants explored strategies for agricultural sustainability and the implementation of sustainable practices within food systems.
- *Empowering Communities through Education*: The results of the GOODFOOD project were showcased, emphasizing the role of education in shaping responsible food consumers and producers.

Participants engaged in study trips, visiting various sites related to sustainable food production. These trips included interactions with local stakeholders and practical analyses of green transition efforts. Reports and presentations from these visits provided insights into the integration of sustainable practices in food production, distribution, and consumption, and highlighted the critical role of education in promoting sustainability.

Overall, the event facilitated a deep dive into sustainable food systems, fostering a collaborative environment where knowledge and best practices were shared to advance the cause of responsible food consumption and production for a sustainable future.

The Programme

The event commenced with the arrival and registration of participants at the Nireus Hotel in Nea Makri on Sunday, 16th June. The evening featured an **International Dinner**, a traditional gathering where participants contributed dishes from their respective countries, fostering a sense of community and cultural exchange. This event gave nice opportunities for the participants to meet and discuss in a relaxed environment, as well as to warm up for the upcoming programme.



Lectures and Workshops (17th June)

The next day was devoted to the **lectures and workshops**, as well as project presentations and the Award Ceremony of the GOODFOOD Competition. On Monday, 17th June 2024, altogether 10 presentations were held, organised in 3 main panels. The morning session started with the welcoming speech and open space, where participants in small groups shared their experiences and expectations of the event. This gave a nice opportunity to warm up for the lectures that followed.

The lectures overall focused on the general understanding of consumer education and sustainable food production and consumption links. The keynote speeches and panel presentations were delivered by people with long experience and expertise in the field.

PLENARY SESSION: Consumer education and definition of Good Food

Keynote speakers included *Wojciech Kniec* and *Pantelis Zoiopoulos*. Being a sociologist, the main goal of Kniec (professor of rural sociology at the Nicolaus Copernicus University in Poland) was to give an insight into social changes that shape consumers' habits related with food. The definition of "good food" was presented in order to understand the variety of meanings of what it means for different cultures and social statuses. On the other hand the lecture also highlighted unsustainable practices of "healthy people making unhealthy choices". Zoiopoulos (former Professor in Dept. of Administration of Agricultural Products and Food Enterprises, University of Ioannina, Greece) discussed the ongoing struggle within the EU between food

safety and market functionality, highlighting significant regulatory milestones and challenges in food production.



Following the two keynote speeches, participants gathered in smaller groups, and discussed the topics raised by the speakers. The main issues of arguments included the remodelling of food market (how it is possible to reconnect producers, retailers and consumers), the rethinking of food systems, the difficult case of food safety, as well as the mutual exchange of farmers and consumers. After the discussions, groups presented their findings in panel presentations. Some ideas included the better food labelling, striking a balance between green farm policy and the ability to still be profitable, as well as better care on the impact of intensive agriculture on biodiversity.



Workshop I: Panel on Food and Agricultural Sustainability

The day followed with workshops and panel presentations. Within the first panel, *Francesca Neonato* (Chair of the Working Group “Agricultural Landscapes” of IFLA Europe, visiting professor at the Polytechnic of Milan) highlighted the impact of sustainable agriculture on high-quality landscapes, emphasizing the role of landscape architects. *Johannes Eisenbach* (Managing Director of BVL Ltd.) presented Biocyclic Vegan Agriculture as a method to regenerate soils and produce high-nutritional food sustainably. Through Biocyclic Humus Soil, it would be possible to permanently transform large parts of the globe back into nutrient-rich fertile soils. *Irén Szörényiné Kukorelli* (professor emeritus at CERS Hungarian Research Network) discussed permaculture in Hungary, presenting it as a sustainable alternative to conventional

farming, beneficial for both rural and urban areas, also offering a good opportunity to play a community-building role.



Workshop II: Panel presenting the results of the GOODFOOD Project

The last panel of the day focused on the GOODFOOD Erasmus+ Project, introducing the main findings and results of the consortium. This panel gave opportunity to the dissemination of the project activities, and the exciting school activities. *María Teresa García Conesa* (project coordinator, CEBAS-CSIC, Spain) provided an overview of the GOODFOOD project, emphasizing its goals and methodologies. *Francesca Ugolini* (IBE-CNR, Italy) and *Demetris Mylonas* (PRISMA, Greece) elaborated on the project's learning units and methodologies, stressing the importance of integrating sustainable food education into school curriculums. *Alfonso Guillén Ayala*, *Paula Ruiz-Erans Lorca*, *Antonis Lazaris*, *Eleni Nikolaou*, and *Kantia Varela* shared insights from pilot testing the project in schools in Spain (IES Monte Miravete) and Greece (1st General Lyceum), highlighting successful implementation and student engagement. *Serena Di Grazia* (Maieutiké Association, Italy) presented a cookbook, prepared by students, aimed at promoting responsible consumer behaviour.



The day concluded with the announcement of the winners of the *GOODFOOD International Video-Slogan Competition*. The competition centered on the theme “sustainable and healthy food for a better future” invited secondary school students to participate by preparing a 1-

minute video that includes a message or slogan created by their team. Followed by the pre-evaluation of the jury, the winners were announced by *Fouli Papageorgiou* (president of Euracademy Association). The results are also available at the project website (together with the videos of the students): <https://goodfoodeplus.cebas.csic.es/announcements/>

Study Trips (18th June)

Participants embarked on study trips to explore various examples of sustainable food production and consumption. These trips, involving groups of 8-10 participants each, facilitated direct engagement with local stakeholders to analyse examples of sustainable practices in the wider area of Nea Makri and Rafina. The trips culminated in presentations by the participants on the following day, where they shared their insights and lessons learned.

Study Group 1. Marathonas

The first stop was at *Tzevelekos Greenhouse*, where participants learned about local agriculture's significance and the challenges commercial farmers face, such as weather fluctuations and pest control. Discussions included methods for pest control without heavy reliance on chemical pesticides and the benefits of consuming seasonal produce to support local farmers and reduce environmental impact. Additionally, the importance of promoting "ugly" fruits and vegetables, which are safe and delicious despite not meeting cosmetic standards, was emphasized.

At *Ef-ZEIN Organic Farm*, participants explored strategies to minimize food waste through proper harvesting, storage techniques, and creative use of surplus produce. The discussion highlighted the importance of consuming seasonal produce to support local agriculture, reduce transportation emissions, and enjoy peak flavors. The farm also presented opportunities for collaboration in educating consumers on sustainable food choices and reducing food waste through meal planning and proper storage techniques. A buffet lunch was served, featuring recipes from Jenny Dontá, who organizes various artistic seminars and alternative therapies at the farm.

The final stop was *Dafni Dairy Products*, a family-owned enterprise specializing in traditional dairy products. Participants explored the challenges and opportunities faced by small family businesses in promoting sustainable quality and maintaining competitiveness. The discussion focused on balancing traditional methods with technological advancements to ensure sustainability and economic viability.



Study Group 2. Rafina and Marathonas

Participants first boarded the fishing boat *Yannos* in Rafina Port to discuss responsible fishery management with *Captain Stavros Asbestaris* and the president of the Fisherman Association of Rafina. The focus was on minimizing bycatch through improved fishing methods, maintaining healthy ocean ecosystems, and the importance of buying seasonal, local fish. The discussion also covered how consumers can make informed choices to support sustainable fishing practices.

As with the first group, the second group also visited *Ef-ZEIN Organic Farm* to discuss minimizing food waste and the benefits of consuming seasonal produce. The farm's role in educating consumers about sustainable food choices and organizing workshops was emphasized. Participants enjoyed a buffet lunch and discussed recipes with *Jenny Dontá*.

The final visit was to *Zeginis Winery*, where participants experienced the blend of ancient Greek winemaking traditions with modern techniques. Discussions centered on how the winery's wines pair with local, seasonal foods and opportunities to collaborate with local farmers to promote sustainable food systems.



As for the historical and cultural exploration, during the study trips, participants visited the site of the *Battle of Marathon*, a significant historical location. They explored the Marathon Tomb, the Trophy of Victory at Mesosporitissa, and the small church of Panagia Mesosporitissa, which

blend ancient and Byzantine history. The day concluded with a visit to Moraitis Beach in Schinias, allowing participants to relax and reflect on their experiences.

Conclusion and Evaluation (19th June)

On Wednesday, 19th June, participants worked in groups to analyse and report on their study trips. They presented their findings on key components of sustainable food consumption systems, strategies to integrate sustainable practices into food production and distribution, and the role of education in shaping responsible food consumers and producers. These presentations provided a platform to share insights and propose strategies to enhance sustainable food systems based on the examples and experiences from the study trips.



Study Group 1. Presentation and main findings

The study tour for Group 1 (as described above) included three main stops: Tzevelekos Greenhouse, Ef Zin Organic Farm, and Dafni Dairy Products.

At *Tzevelekos Greenhouse*, the group observed a 4.5-hectare organic farm producing tomatoes, peppers, watermelons, and zucchini, among other crops. The greenhouse employs only three workers, despite needing six, due to the physically demanding nature of the work. The farm utilizes organic fertilizers like cow and chicken manure and sells its produce at organic markets and shops. However, they face challenges such as the resilience of their products, limited market reach, consumer education on the value of organic produce, workforce issues involving immigrant labor, and financial viability concerns due to market limitations.

The second stop was at *Ef Zin Organic Farm*, a 2.5-hectare farm established in 2020 that employs sustainable farming methods like agroforestry and biodynamics. The farm directly connects with consumers via a website and social media, offering home delivery of seasonal produce. Despite the high nutritional value of its products, the farm is not yet economically viable, with more financial input than output. Challenges include reliance on proximity to urban centers like Athens, climate change impacts, building trust with consumers, and restrictions on constructing permanent facilities due to planning regulations.

The final visit was to *Dafni Dairy Products*, a second-generation family business producing traditional dairy items such as yogurt, ice cream, kefir, and rice pudding from fresh local sheep and goat milk. The production site is in Nea Makri, with shops in Nea Makri and Pallini, supplying the Attica region and Aegean islands. The dairy faces issues related to the short shelf life of its products, dependence on local farms threatened by urbanization, and limited flexibility to adapt to new dietary trends despite a supportive customer base interested in healthy diets.

The group's report highlighted several *suggestions* for improving the sustainability and market reach of these operations. Networking between organic farms to promote competitive pricing, consumer education on the benefits of organic production, and the importance of short food supply chains were emphasized. Educating farmers on sustainable practices, dealing with climate change, and effective marketing were also suggested. Additionally, enhancing digital presence, experimenting with new solutions, diversifying products, creating community-supported agriculture schemes, and fostering partnerships with schools and businesses were recommended to support the local organic food movement.

Study Group 2. Presentation and main findings

The second study tour included three primary visits: the fishing port of Rafina, the Ef Zin Organic Farm, and a family medium-scale winery in Ramnous.

At the *fishing port of Rafina*, the group was welcomed by fishermen Tassos and Stavros, who also serves as the president of the local fishermen. The discussions revealed significant challenges such as the depletion of fish stocks, pollution from biodegradable bags, and issues with sea farms, including the use of antibiotics and disease outbreaks. The fishermen were hospitable, knowledgeable, and generous with information, though they exhibited a conservative approach and a fear of diversification. Proposals for improvement included enhancing the quality of fishing nets, organizing international competitions for sustainable materials, labeling sustainably caught fish, and leveraging tourism for activities like fishing, snorkeling, and bird watching.

The visit to the *Ef Zin Organic Farm*, a family business run by agriculturalist Spiros Tsagkaratos, showcased their certified organic fruit and vegetable production. The farm spans 23 acres, producing a variety of fruits and vegetables using sustainable planting methods. The group was impressed by the hospitality, the agronomist's knowledge and innovation, and the emphasis on seasonal product quality. Suggestions for enhancing the farm's appeal included self-picking activities, bird watching, guided tours to the nearby Marathon lake and archaeological site, and educational courses on organic farming and food preservation.

The final stop was a family *medium-scale winery* in Ramnous, producing around 40,000 bottles per year. The winery featured a spacious and clean interior with a professional display of bottles. However, the group noted the lack of welcoming signs, inadequate rest areas, and poor hospitality, as there was no one to greet them upon arrival. The presenter lacked marketing skills and was inflexible. Recommendations for the winery included conducting market research, offering food and wine tours, networking with the local market, and developing

educational tours and internships for students. Additionally, branding strategies such as promoting "Marathon: a secret paradise" could attract eco-tourism and agrotourism by highlighting the area's history, landscape, biodiversity, and healthy food options.

Conclusion Panel and Evaluation

The day (and the event) concluded with a panel discussing the overall conclusions of the Summer Academy. This open discussion provided a comprehensive overview of the participants' experiences and insights from the three-day event focused on responsible food production and consumption for a sustainable future. The panel also marked the conclusion of the GoodFood project.

The thorough evaluation highlighted several key themes and insights that emerged from the discussions and activities. Organizing study trips in the Rafina region presented challenges due to the lack of community engagement among local businesses and the crucial role of personal relationships in facilitating these trips. Participants highly valued the networking opportunities and the exchange of ideas, which provided them with new information and perspectives to apply in their professional work.

The importance of regional marketing and cooperative competition (co-opetition) was emphasized as essential for promoting good food practices and sustainable agriculture. Understanding the local landscape and ecosystems, such as the nearby wetlands in Rafina, was identified as crucial for better planning and implementation of activities.

Integrating the stories and examples from the academy into secondary and university education was seen as beneficial, highlighting the need for educational materials to support sustainable practices. The issue of food safety and consumer protection was raised, underlining the need for better communication between farmers and consumers about agricultural practices. The presentation on Generation Z's awareness of sustainability was particularly engaging and pointed to the necessity for further research on this topic.

Strategies for mainstreaming GoodFood education materials were discussed, including incorporating health and food-related subjects into school curricula. The significance of hands-on learning experiences in schools was highlighted, though it was noted that there are currently no directives from educational ministries to support this approach, especially in Greece. The panel recognized the urgent need for schools to adapt to the realities of climate change, emphasizing that education must evolve to address this critical issue.

Based on the panel-discussion, the drawn conclusions include the enhanced local engagement, the necessary integration of sustainable education, the promotion of experiential learning, as well as addressing climate change in education. It would be important to develop strategies to better engage local businesses and communities in sustainable practices and educational initiatives. The insights and materials from the Summer Academy and the GoodFood project could be well incorporated into school and university curricula to promote sustainable food

practices. Furthermore, directives would be needed from educational ministries to support hands-on learning experiences in schools. That should also indicate to update school curricula to include content on climate change adaptation and resilience, ensuring students are well prepared for future challenges.

The 22nd Summer Academy in Nea Makri was deemed a successful event, providing valuable networking opportunities, new knowledge, and practical examples for participants to apply in their professional and educational environments. The closing remarks highlighted the importance of continued discussion on these topics and the need for concrete actions to promote sustainable practices in food production and consumption. The event concluded with the awarding of diplomas to the participants.