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PRESS RELEASE

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International Business Conference focused on the Internet Connectivity in Agriculture in the BSB took place in Thessaloniki, Greece on the 28th of July 2022 within the GREEN project

The latest event under the AGREEN project (Cross-Border Alliance for Climate-Smart and Green Agriculture in the Black Sea Basin, BSB-1135) was successfully carried out on Tuesday, June 28, 2022 in Thessaloniki, Greece.

The event took the form of an **International Business Conference "Internet Connectivity in Agriculture in the BSB"**, it was organized by Anatoliki S.A. - Organization for Local Development in collaboration with the Agricultural Cooperative of Vassilika and took place in Makedonia Palace Hotel, on the imposing Thessaloniki New Waterfront.

The main objective of the conference was to present the innovative networking tools for the support of climate-smart agriculture and its products, with the contribution of experts who added to the knowledge and the experiences acquired in the last meeting. Violeta Dimitrova-Naydenova, project coordinator on behalf of the Bulgarian partner's team, opened the meeting presenting the AGREEN Internet platform and its multiple features.

Notis Argiriou, PhD collaborating member of CERTH-Center for Research and Technology Hellas, took the stand to present the Digital Innovation Hub in agriculture-food sector and the rice value chain, a pilot project of the Region of Central Macedonia in the frame of INTERREG EUROPE RUMORE Programme. Mr. Argiriou described the rice tracking platform through the blockchain technology that is scheduled to start working soon and is ready for use by the rice producers in Chalastra region. A simple QR code will include all the information available about the product, in this case the rice (production, storage, packaging, trading), helping the consumers decide on the purchase.

After an insightful Q&A session, Vicky Crystalidou, PhD in Agronomy and animal specialist in the American Farm School, informed the audience about the activities of the School using IT technology as a tool for calculating the footprint in agri-food sector, i.e. the innovative cluster INOFA - Internet of Food Alliance. Through this action, several digital transformation technologies in agriculture and livestock have been implemented aiming towards climate-smart agriculture, tracking and calculation of carbon footprint.

At this point, experts in agriculture and climate change appeared on screen to refer to the potential and the strategies used to reduce the carbon footprint of food products. Farmers from Metaxochori village by the town of Kilkis and livestock breeders from Echinis village by the city of Xanthi, also appeared online to describe their experience of participating in the INOFA network and of implementing the digital tools in their crops and livestock.

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Last speech was held by Violeta Dimitrova, the project coordinator on behalf of DABS (Bulgaria), who made a detailed reference to a good practice in Dobrich region, northeast Bulgaria. A vertically integrated livestock unit that farms the feed for its own animals, whereas its dairy and meat products are available in 50 small markets, supermarket chains excluded, to help build trust with the consumers. The whole production is automated and every step of the production process and the post-production operations are constantly monitored and controlled by computerized system. The farm closes the production cycle by producing own electricity using a specialized facility that turns the waste from the animals' breeding into fuel for a small power plant.

The conference was moderated by Vasso Papadopoulou, Msc. Chemical Engineer and director of Programming and Sustainable Development in Anatoliki S.A. The AGREEN project partners from Armenia, Bulgaria, Georgia, Romania and Turkey attended the meeting, together with representatives from the municipality of Thermi, the agricultural cooperative of Vassilika, ANETH Organization for Local Development, OECON Consultants Group, researchers, agronomists and other local entrepreneurs.

End.

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