



MUNICIPALITY OF PROSOTSANI

## PRESS RELEASE

**Municipality of Prosotsani organized the 2<sup>nd</sup> project meeting within the approved project "Fauna Assessment and management to safeguard Biodiversity in cross - border mountainous areas of Bulgaria and Greece: Innovative approaches to estimate monitor and protect biodiversity in local ecosystems – BIO-INNOVATE", supported by Cooperation Programme "INTERREG V-A Greece-Bulgaria" 2014 - 2020.**

The 2<sup>nd</sup> project meeting was held via **web-platform «ZOOM» on Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> of July 2020, between 11:00 and 14:30.**

Starting the project meeting, Mr. Theodoridis, project manager on behalf of Department of Veterinary of Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (LB) presented the topics of the meeting. After that, project beneficiaries discussed in detail the actions of WP2 (Communication and Dissemination activities) and as concerns the organization of the open conference by PB2, it was agreed to be organized via web-platform as well.

Subsequently, LB and PB3 referred to their progress in the implementation of scientific work and deliverables. LB's scientific staff visited the study area four times, collected samples (plants and horses' feces) and started processing environmental data in order to analyze population size, food habits, characteristics and demography of wild horses. PB3 done the main part of desk research work on existing field methodologies and techniques for survey of distribution, population parameters and habitat feature of Red Deer and Chamois and analyzed literature sources related to study of the species-habitat relations study. In addition, PB3 finished the desk research on grassland habitat types within target area and initiated field surveys on the reasons for the extinction of the species from the target area.

Finally, all project partners' representatives discussed and planned the time framework for the actions that need to be implemented until the organization of 3<sup>rd</sup> project meeting.

**BIO-INNOVATE** project ascertains that the role of large herbivores is crucial for biodiversity and sustainability of local ecosystems. Prosotsani (on the foothills of mountain Falakro and Menikio) and Gotse Deltsev (part of the territory of Pirin National Park) municipalities have unique natural ecosystems that require conservation programs to ensure their viability. Wild grazers such as deer and wild

horses can play this role as they maintain open natural rangelands which are key habitat for a variety of species.

So, the overall objective of **BIO-INNOVATE** is to maintain the balance between biodiversity and agriculture activities through the development and pilot implementation of models regarding management of cross border mountainous areas. Also, both Prosotsani and Gotse Deltsev will setup Biodiversity Promoters Motivation Centers (BPMC), which will educate young people on the importance of biodiversity and improve the attractiveness of the cross-border area.

The Project Beneficiaries are:

- Aristotle University of Thessaloniki - Special Account for Research Funds –School of Veterinary Medicine (Lead Beneficiary)
- Municipality of Prosotsani
- Bulgarian Biodiversity Foundation - Branch Eastern Rhodopes
- Municipality of GotseDelchev

*More Information:*

*Aristotle University of Thessaloniki - Special Account for Research Funds –School of Veterinary Medicine*

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