



MUNICIPALITY OF PROSOTSANI

Wednesday 17/02/2021

## **PRESS RELEASE**

The Municipality of Prosotsani, as Project Partner, organized the Open Conference 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*", with the Acronym "**BIO INNOVATE**", supported by Cooperation Programme "INTERREG V-A Greece-Bulgaria" 2014 - 2020. The project has been approved within priority axis: "A Sustainable and Climate adaptable Cross-Border Area" The Open Conference carried out virtually via the Web Platform «Zoom», on Wednesday 17/2/2021. The Open Conference started at 11:00 and ended at 14:00 am.

The project involves the following project partners:

Lead Beneficiary: School of Veterinary Medicine - Aristotle University of Thessaloniki

Project Beneficiary 2: Municipality of Prosotsani

Project Beneficiary 3: Bulgarian Biodiversity Foundation - Branch Eastern Rhodopes

Project Beneficiary 4: Municipality of Gotse Delchev



The Project is co-funded by the European Regional Development Fund and by national funds of the countries participating in the Interreg V-A "Greece-Bulgaria 2014-2020" Cooperation Programme.

Before the beginning of the presentations, Mr Theodoros Athanasiadis, Mayor of Municipality of Prosotsani as well as Mr Vladimir Moskov, Mayor of Municipality of Gotse Delchev welcomed all the participants and mentioned a few words about the project. Right after that, Mr Kostas Papadopoulos, Coordinator & Project Manager of the Municipality of Prosotsani referred with a few words about the importance of the project and he introduced each one of the speakers throughout the duration of the Open Conference.

Firstly, Mr Theodoridis Alexandros, Project Manager of the whole Bio-Innovate Project - Associate Professor of Aristotle University of Thessaloniki presented the main purposes of the project. Specifically, referred to the preservation of natural grasslands with limited human intervention, and the preservation of genetic biodiversity to ensure sustainable agriculture and ecosystem biodiversity.

Mr Dimitris Bakaloudis, Associate professor on Wildlife Ecology and Management, Laboratory of Wildlife & Fresh Water Fish, School of Forestry & Natural Environment, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, presented the main points about the wild horses of Menoikio Mountain. Particularly, he mentioned the identification of herds, the population size and the dynamic in the Ecosystem.

Dr Georgia Galidaki, School of Forestry and Natural Environment of Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, analyzed the strategies for implementing innovative management systems for grasslands and forage supple strategies in order to protect mountainous shrublands and soil erosion. The main purpose is to provide suitable type information - historic and current- so that to be used for mapping carrying capacity and soil erosion.

Mr Georgios Arsenos, Professor of Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, presented the *Biokid*, a leaflet for kids, as a way to raise awareness of the importance of wildlife and Biodiversity, which is the main purpose of the project. Moreover, he highlighted the significance of this leaflet, in order to be acquainted with the wild fauna of local ecosystems, thus giving the opportunity to make a virtual journey in different parts of the ecosystems, knowing the way of life of animals, as well as, their constant effort of survival.

Mr Nikos Pachtas - Biodiversity Promotions Center - Digital Innovations, from Municipality of Prosotsani, presented different types of applications that will be useful for the kids to fathom the importance of the project. Specifically, he referred to the QR exploration application (mini games, interactive quizzes etc.), the augmented reality card application (interactive tables with cards, 3D model animated etc.), the treasure hunting application (follow a scenario, solve quizzes etc.) in order to be for kids a fun way to learn more or to test their knowledge about the two species of local ecology and Biodiversity. He also mentioned, the interactive windows (virtual windows to see the life of these animals), interactive storyteller (cartoon style animation when click it you can ask questions) and virtual reality 360° presentation.

Mr Dimitar Plachiyski, from Bulgarian Biodiversity Foundation, presented the restoration of natural grazers populations in the area of Gotse Delchev Municipality. Particularly, he pointed out that the factors determining the overall distribution and abundance of the Red Deer are the habitat and climatic requirements, the impact of the habitat structure and the anthropogenic impact.

Mrs Galena Veleva, Project Coordinator, from Municipality of Gotse Delchev, presented the actions for Biodiversity region of Gotse Delchev. Specifically, she pointed out that this region has very rich vegetation due to geographical location and that it has protected natural sites and places such as the Pirin National Park.

Finally, all representatives had no further questions about the presentations, so they thanked each other and Mr. Kostas Papadopoulos reminded them about the next event at the end of June.