

**IMPLEMENTATION OF A QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM FOR TRAINING IN
ORGANIC FOOD RETAIL – ECOQUALIFY III**

LEONARDO DA VINCI Transfer of innovation

2010-1-GR1-LEO05-03967

MINUTES OF WORKSHOP 4

Bucharest, September 31st May – 1st June, 2012

Attendees at the Workshop 4

- **University of Thessaly, Greece**
Prof. Stergios Tzortzios – Project Coordinator
Atanasia Tziortziou-Paschalis Gkoutosidis
George Vlontzos
- **Organic Retailers Association /ORA/, Austria**
Ralph Liebing
Institute Equalita, Germany
Ulrich Diermann
- **Higher School “Agricultural College”, Bulgaria**
Assoc. Prof. Dr. Mariana Ivanova – Vice Rector
- **Eurocentre - Land and Environment, Bulgaria**
Assoc. Prof. Dr. Vladislav Popov
- **C.V.T. GEORGIKI ANAPTIXI, Greece**
Nikos Zacharoulis
Chrysovalanto (Valentini) Litsiou
- **Romanian Resource Center for the Promotion and Marketing of Organic Products - "EcoR Partner", Romania**
Damian Dragomir
Mihai Grigoras
Teodora Aldescu
Silvia Chindea – retailer, Andrei Mitrica – Targul Domnesc (organic retailer)
- **Canakkale Onsekiz Mart University, Turkey**
Prof. Dr. Feyzi Uğur
Assist. Prof. Dr. Ali Karabayır
Dr. Nazan Cevik
- **Organic Product Producers and Industrialists Association (ORGÜDER), Turkey**
Melahat Özkan

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During **31st May – 1st June, 2012**, the forth trans-national meeting of the project “EcoQualifyIII” (2010-1-GR1-LEO05-03967) was held in Bucharest, at Hotel **Marshal** (Conference Room) in Romania. This project runs under the Leonardo da Vinci Programme and is funded by the European Social Fund.

The meeting was attended by partners from Greece (1. University of Thessaly and 2. C.V.T. Georgiki Anaptixi); Austria (Organic Retailers Association /ORA); Bulgaria (1. University of Agribusiness and Rural Development and 2. Eurocentre - Land and Environment); Germany (Institute Equalita); Turkey (1. Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University and 2. Organic Product Producers and Industrialists Association (ORGÜDER) and the Romanian hosts (Romanian Resource Centre for the Promotion and Marketing of Organic Products - "EcoR Partner").

The meeting has also been attended during a brief intermezzo by representatives of Romanian organic retailers and media who have contributed to informing the stakeholders of the Romanian organic market on the progress of the project and the aims thereof. Several on-line articles on the mentioned topics have already been published the next day.

The aims of the meeting were to present:

- the activities carried out by the consortium up to now
- the responses and suggestions of the Greek NA and the reaction of the partners
- the results of WP4
- the work Plan and Working Packages – organizing project activities for the last project period and the closing meeting in Volos, Greece.

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Day 1

May 31st, 2012/Thursday/ - 9:00 - 16:00

Damian Dragomir as host and Stergios Tzortzios as project coordinator have welcomed all participants in Bucharest and presented the agenda of the conference.

Stergios has made an introduction to the results and the presentation of the evaluation interim report and has introduced a first dead-line (17th of June) regarding the Greek National Authority (NA).

The presentation of the results and evaluation of the Interim report have then followed.

Anastasia Tziortziou has introduced the issues at hand – the printed version of the QHb; knowledge diffusion; the need for conferences designed for knowledge diffusion.

Mr. Popov has pointed out that such conferences should not be an issue while still in the testing phase and that the final conference is meant to fulfil that function. Suggestions were however made and accepted that the partners organize a one-day dissemination meeting(s) where decision-makers and stakeholders from the relevant field of organic marketing are to be invited.

Further on the need for relevance concerning the questionnaires was discussed by Mr. Ralph Liebinger and Mr. Stergios Tzortzios as well as the differences between the EQII and EQIII projects - where Mr. Diermann has affirmed that the differences are quite clear and this should not be an issue and that the added value of EQIII is easily identifiable.

Then the issue of hardship regarding the willingness of those asked from the target groups to take part in the testing phase has been addressed – where the time amount needed for an expert to study the QHb has been identified as probable cause.

The decision was made that a common statement shall be drafted at the end of WS 4 from all the partners that will address the issues raised by the Greek NA.

Other specific / technical issues regarding for example assuming more than one category of technical expertise within the project by the same person have been addressed and answered by the Greek partners.

During the coffee break a discussion with representatives of organic retailers from Bucharest has taken place. They have expressed their enthusiasm toward the project and also given feed-back to the project partners, also showing readiness to support with the dissemination of the project's outcomes.

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After the coffee-break and before starting the presentations of National Reports, the partners have set the relevant deadlines regarding the proof-read of the the Sum-up report on WP 4 by the Austrian and German Partners and the deadline for completing the final version and presenting it to Mr. Stergios Tzortzios for further presentation to the Greek NA.

Further on, the presentation of the National Reports on WP 4 has followed:

The Greek Report has been presented by Valentina Litsou – among the interesting particularities mentioned, the partners have been interested by the high percentage of interviewees who receive training in organic retail (60%) and also the high numbers of winery owners who have answered the questionnaires. Thus, emphasis on product relevance for each partner country has been discussed by the partners and appreciated as a positive adaptation of the QAS. A common problem for all partners during the testing phase has been addressed – namely the very low numbers of auditors willing to participate and their very low level of knowledge of organic retailing (generally).

The response rate of 10 to 20% of those addressed has been evaluated by the partners as standard even for marketing studies in the western European states (Mr. Diermann).

The Bulgarian Report has been presented by Prof. Mariana Ivanova – one of the most important trait thereof was the applied feed-back of a Bulgarian auditor who has taken part in the survey and has suggested to the Bulgarian partner a number of twenty additional questions for the checklist. The issue of applicability of the additional questions has then been discussed by the partners and some of them have been deemed as useful and should be taken into account.

After the lunch-break, there followed **the Turkish National Report, presented by Dr. Nazan Cevik** – a number of five retailers, twelve trainers and six auditors have returned the filled-in questionnaires used as basis for the Turkish report. Some trainers have even made proposals for additional content. A clear marketing-oriented attitude of Turkish retailers has been discussed as an interesting trait and explained by the partners as a result of the third-country status in relation to the UE and the emphasized need for economic cooperation as the European CAP will not benefit any of these stakeholders. Some direct sales examples have also been mentioned and discussed (i.e Izmir cooperative).

The Romanian Report has been presented by Mag. Mihai Grigoras – the partners have commented on the very dynamic aspect of the Romanian market and were surprised by the relative complexity of the registered answers.

Mr. Liebing wanted to know whether additional content or national adaptation issues have been raised by those interviewed – Mr. Grigoras has outlined the suggestions made by retailers and also the passivity of the trainers and the auditors.

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The experts from the donor countries (Mr. Liebing and Mr. Dierman) have added their feedback after the presentation of each report.

At the end of the day, the responsible partner for WP 4 has discussed with the partners the methodology for drafting the Sum-up Report:

Mr. Popov has suggested that background, methodology description be first addressed and that the hard-data analysis is to follow.

Mr. George Vlontzos has suggested that quantifiable comparisons be adopted as analysis method: similarities, differences and unique features are to be outlined and followed upon; also concerning the testing methodology, the report should explain why it has been chosen and what are the steps thereof.

Mr. Stergios Tzortzios has appreciated the work done by the Balkan partners and expressed the necessity for this work to be refined and presented during the final work-shop of the project.

The discussion about the perspectives for creation of the final version of the QAS in the importer countries and final printing has been adjourned.

[End of Day 1](#)