

From Field to Fork in Greece: TUI Care Foundation supports local farmers in Crete and Rhodes through sustainable agriculture

- *TUI Field to Fork Greece supports over 500 farmers on the islands of Crete and Rhodes to transition to more sustainable agricultural practices*
- *Initiative brings food producers and the tourism sector together to preserve local gastronomic heritage and create a movement around sustainable food production*
- *Opening workshop in Heraklion attended by over 200 local food producers, government representatives and hospitality partners*

Berlin, 11 April 2024. *The thriving tourism industry in Greece adapts seasonally to an increase in the number of tourists who are eager to indulge in local delicacies during their holidays. Hotels and Experience providers, in particular, play a pivotal role in influencing local food systems. A new initiative will preserve the rich gastronomic heritage of Crete and Rhodes and boost sustainable agricultural practices, by connecting the tourism sector and food producers. Bringing together key stakeholders and building capacity to accelerate the production of sustainable food, it enables higher income opportunities for farmers, reduces the environmental footprint of the agricultural sector, and creates new rural tourism experiences.*

During the next three years, TUI Field to Fork Greece will boost sustainable agriculture on the Greek islands of Crete and Rhodes by connecting over 500 farmers with local food production units and hotels on the islands. This will create better income opportunities for the producers and increase the offer and diversity of sustainable food products, whilst also raising awareness amongst staff and visitors about the incredibly rich history of Greek gastronomy. To achieve the latter, staff at the participating businesses will receive tailor-made training about gastronomic heritage in Greece and will learn how to communicate about sustainable agriculture as a driver of healthy diets, the protection of soil, improved livelihoods, and rural tourism.

Together with Futouris and the Sustainable Food Destination Organisation (SFDO), the initiative implements a full learning and practice cycle which targets the production of olive oil, wine, avocados, honey, herbs and other products. 300 farmers on Crete and 200 on Rhodes will benefit from the initiative. TUI Field to Fork Greece was officially launched through a workshop, inviting stakeholders to engage on the topic of regenerative food in the tourism sector. The event attracted over 200 participants from the Ministries of Agriculture and Tourism, local government, hospitality partners and local food production units to network and discuss issues such as soil health, designing circular food systems, certification and the role of hotels as hubs for regeneration.

The German Ambassador to Greece, Mr Andreas Kindl, recently welcomed the initiative by taking a site tour at partner winery Lyrarakis, near Heraklion. At the vineyard, the delegation had the opportunity to learn more about how local farmers are supported in transitioning to more regenerative agricultural practices.

Alexander Panczuk, Executive Director of the TUI Care Foundation: "TUI Field to Fork Greece has the potential to drive transformative change in the agricultural landscape of Crete and Rhodes. By supporting local farmers in Crete and Rhodes to transition to regenerative agricultural practices, we are fostering sustainability in food production and creating a ripple effect across the entire region. This initiative has far-reaching implications, not only for the local communities but also for the broader tourism sector. It is a significant step towards building a resilient and regenerative future for these beautiful islands."

Sotiris Di. Bampagiouris, the Co-Founder and Chairman of SFDO as well as Co-Founder and CEO of Local Food Experts: "Sustainability is about slowing down degradation. Regeneration is about restoring and then regenerating a new way of living and conducting business. At SFDO, through our work, and specifically through the TUI Field to Fork Greece project, we focus on the importance of soil health within the Regenerative Food Supply Chain. Despite all of humanity's achievements, our existence is dependent on 30 cm of soil and the fact that it rains. We therefore believe that building strong bridges between farmers, food production units, suppliers, hotel units, and retailers, based on regenerative agriculture principles, is of the utmost importance. And this programme is a huge step."

The initiative is expected to contribute to the overall restoration or sustainable management of over 100 land parcels, which is the equivalent of 300 hectares. It will empower Crete and Rhodes to become shining examples of sustainable food destinations in Greece.

In Rhodes, the TUI Field to Fork programme is implemented within the framework of Rhodes Co-Lab Sustainable Destination, a cooperation between TUI Group, the TUI Care Foundation and the Government of the South Aegean to develop Rhodes into an international beacon for the sustainable development of holiday destinations. The TUI Field to Fork programme is being developed and tested there as a concrete solution which can then be replicated in other tourism destinations.

TUI Field to Fork Greece is part of the TUI Care Foundation's international TUI Field to Fork programme. The programme enables sustainable food production by establishing links with the tourism sector to create better income opportunities for rural communities across holiday destinations such as Cape Verde and Lanzarote.

About the TUI Care Foundation

Building on the potential of tourism as a force for good, the TUI Care Foundation supports and initiates projects which create new opportunities and contribute to thriving communities in tourism destinations all over the world. Connecting holidaymakers to good causes, it supports education and training opportunities for young people; drives the protection of natural habitats and the marine environment; and helps local communities to thrive sustainably and benefit from tourism. The TUI Care Foundation builds on strong partnerships with local and international organisations to create meaningful and long-lasting impact. The independent charitable organisation was founded by TUI, one of the world's leading tourism businesses, and is based in the Netherlands.

About Futouris

Preserving the heritage of holiday destinations and developing a sustainable future for the travel industry - that is what Futouris stands for! Its members are committed to the improvement of living conditions, the conservation of biodiversity and the protection of environment and climate. Futouris' aim is to help - in the long-term, comprehensively and sustainably. All measures are planned and implemented in close collaboration with the local people.

About Sustainable Food Destination Organization (SFDO)

SFDO is a non-profit organisation that works together with individuals, companies and other organisations to create Sustainable Food Destinations. Their vision are sustainable, thriving and resilient destinations that support local communities, protect earth's resources, the right to travel, human rights and animal welfare. The SFDO's mission is to accelerate the widespread adoption of sustainable food production practices; to harness the collaborative power of its members; and to create sustainable food destinations.

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