

German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier visits TUI Care Foundation's pioneering Field to Fork initiative on Crete

- *Frank-Walter Steinmeier, President of the Federal Republic of Germany, and Ms Elke Büdenbender visit TUI Field to Fork project that brings together Crete's rich agricultural and culinary heritage and its growing tourism sector*
- *Initiative supports over 500 farmers on the islands of Crete and Rhodes to transition to more sustainable agricultural practices and builds links between local food producers and the tourism sector to create a movement around sustainable food production*
- *Initiative on Crete is the blueprint for 10 Field to Fork projects that TUI Care Foundation has initiated in tourism communities around the globe*

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Berlin, 1st November 2024. *This week, the TUI Care Foundation had the honour of welcoming Frank-Walter Steinmeier, President of the Federal Republic of Germany, and Ms. Elke Büdenbender to the TUI Field to Fork project on Crete. The project, in cooperation with Greek organisation SFDO (Sustainable Food Destination Organisation) and German NGO Futouris boosts sustainable agricultural practices, preserves the rich gastronomic heritage of Crete and Rhodes and connects local food producers to the tourism sector. Frank-Walter Steinmeier, President of the Federal Republic of Germany, and Ms Elke Büdenbender were welcomed by Thomas Ellerbeck, Chairman of the TUI Care Foundation, and Alexander Panczuk, Executive Director of the TUI Care Foundation, who introduced the delegation to the TUI Field to Fork initiative on Crete. During their 1.5 hour visit, the delegation had the opportunity to speak with local farmers, food producers and hotel partners participating in the project.*

A site tour at the participating olive farm, Terra Creta, provided first-hand insights into the regenerative agricultural practices which are implemented through the project. Key components of the project are the introduction of regenerative agricultural practices and the creation of strong links between local farmers and producers with the local tourism sector. The visit also served as an opportunity for the German President and his delegation to discuss with local food and wine producers, as well as hotel staff, how to effectively connect agriculture and local production with the growing tourism industry in Greece.

In honour of the visit and as a symbol of the project's vision, an olive tree was dedicated to the President of the Federal Republic of Germany Frank-Walter Steinmeier and Ms. Elke Büdenbender. With the harvesting season underway, President Steinmeier also took part in the olive harvest and gained first-hand experience of the regenerative harvesting techniques that are part of the project. It allowed him to see the commitment of local farmers and the importance of sustainable practices in the region.

Thomas Ellerbeck, Chairman of the TUI Care Foundation: "Our goal is to create a stronger connection between agriculture and tourism. This approach brings more local products to market, strengthens local farmers and producers, and enhances the variety and quality of offerings in restaurants and hotels. The added value to the local economy increases, benefiting both businesses and employment on the islands, while production becomes more sustainable. This is advantageous for both local residents and visitors alike. The visit of Federal President Steinmeier and Ms Büdenbender to TUI Field to Fork Greece is a great honour for the project, its partner businesses and hoteliers, and the TUI employees who support the TUI Care Foundation. The importance of sustainable tourism in empowering rural communities is increasingly recognised. This initiative highlights the TUI Care Foundation's commitment to driving sustainable change within the sector on Crete and Rhodes. At the same time, it enriches the cultural experience for holidaymakers. The first TUI Field to Fork initiative was launched in Crete in 2016, and today we have similar projects connecting sustainable agriculture and tourism in ten countries. We aim for tourism that respects the cultural heritage and values of each destination. The initiatives on Crete and Rhodes are setting an example for many other regions."

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Sotiris Di. Bampagiouris, the Co-Founder and Chairman of SFDO: "Sustainability is about slowing down degradation. Regeneration is about restoring and then regenerating a new way of living and conducting business. At SFDO 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 30cm 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."

Alexander Panczuk, Executive Director of TUI Care Foundation: "The Field to Fork initiative on Crete has been an inspiration for TUI Care Foundation's international TUI Field to Fork programme. Learnings from this project have enabled us to build a global programme that has created positive impact in destinations worldwide - from Spain and Cyprus to Colombia and Cape Verde. Each project is tailored to meet the unique needs of the community, but they all share the same vision: driving sustainable agriculture and creating strong connections between local producers and the tourism sector, fostering new income opportunities and better livelihoods for local communities."

TUI Field to Fork Greece drives sustainable and regenerative agriculture on the Greek islands of Crete and Rhodes by connecting 500 farmers with local food producers, restaurants and hotels. The initiative creates new income opportunities for local communities, diversifies sustainable food options, and raises awareness of Greece's rich gastronomic heritage. Additionally, staff at participating businesses receive training on Greek food traditions and learn how sustainable agriculture supports healthy diets, soil health and rural tourism. The project focuses on olive oil, wine, avocados, honey, herbs and more, benefiting 300 farmers in Crete and 200 on Rhodes. With that it empowers Crete and Rhodes to become leading examples of sustainable food destinations in Greece.

On 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.

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.

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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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