PRESS RELEASE

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Cross-Border Alliance for Climate-Smart and Green Agriculture in the Black Sea Basin (AGREEN)

Agriculture is one of the main economic and social pillars in the countries of the Black Sea Basin (BSB). However, its development has been seriously challenged by insufficient sustainability, poor adaptation to climate change, underutilization of the regional resources and of the enlarging marketing niche for organic produce. The transformation of this sector and the adoption of practices in the BSB that are "climate-smart" has to happen quickly and on mass basis but the only way to do it is by involving all the stakeholders in agricultural industry – young farmers, and professionals, business sectoral organizations, interest groups (NGOs), higher education and research institutions.

Here comes the **AGREEN** project promoting the concept for climate-smart agriculture (CAS) as an approach for developing agricultural strategies to secure sustainable food security under climate change. The project is implemented in cooperation with Dobrudzha Agrarian and Business School (BG), Ovidius University of Constanta (RO), Tekirdag Namik Kemal University (TR), Biological Farming Association Elkana (GE), International Center for Agribusiness Research and Education (AM) and Development Agency of Eastern Thessaloniki Local Authorities (EL).

The project *"Cross-Border Alliance for Climate-Smart and Green Agriculture in the Black Sea Basin"* /**AGREEN/** aims to build capacities for networking and transnational knowledge-transfer base in order to escalate the drive for establishing climate-smart farming and maintaining higher rates of economic and social fulfilment as it is the evolution and future.

To that end a community-of-practice (COP) approach shell be applied as one of the most efficient for building professional expertise and knowledge resulting in the establishment of an Alliance of organizations for regional branding, internet connectivity and learning in climate-smart agriculture. Further, a regional brand for agricultural products originating in the Black Sea Basin and produced in a climate-smart way will be developed. The implementation of the branding strategy shall be complemented with the elaboration of an interactive map of logistic centres for retail and wholesale trade which facilitate trade in sustainably delivered agricultural products in the partner countries and the regions. The method of crop modelling based on endemic sorts will be applied to test 3 different solutions for the BSB on experimental plots produced by the partners in Bulgaria, Turkey and Georgia, resulting in the delivery of climate-smart crop models that will be made available for the stakeholders. An Internet Platform for liaising sustainable producers and promotion of climate-smart agriculture in the BSB will be launched and sustained to serve as on-line tool for information, retrieving and distributing data, provision of contacts and trade channels as well as learning opportunities among the producers of sustainable, bio and organic agricultural products in the BSB. A training course "Entrepreneurship for Climate-smart Agriculture in the Black Sea Basin", adapted to blended mobility will be developed and tested with a pilot group of trainees and will be integrated in the AGREEN platform. A cycle of awareness raising events will be conducted in the frame of the project in all the partners' countries, complemented by 3 international business conferences on climate-smart agriculture focusing on the different project group of activities and main outputs.

The project is funded by the Joint Operational Program for Cross-Border Cooperation under the European Neighborhood Instrument "Black Sea Basin 2014-2020", under Priority 1.2 "Increasing cross-border opportunities for trade and modernization of agriculture and related sectors" and lasts 30 months /from 01.06.2020 to 30.11.2022/. The total budget of the project is: 799 279.60 Euro /451 640 930.776 AMD, InforEuro, October/.

Common borders. Common solutions.