

TUI Care Foundation and Futouris successfully complete project on sustainable food production and consumption for tourism in Crete

- *Over 150 project participants cooperated in this project to help develop Crete as a model sustainable food destination*
- *More than 20 local wine labels from seven indigenous Cretan grape varieties were developed - two of which have been certified as organic*
- *Over 5,600 guests took part in over 350 food-tasting and food-cooking events aimed at promoting local products and food*

Berlin, 12 February 2020. *After three years of successful implementation, the joint project "Crete – first steps towards a sustainable food destination", which was launched in July 2017 by Futouris and the TUI Care Foundation, has come to an end. The project's completion was celebrated at a closing ceremony which was attended by over 150 of the people involved, including representatives from the Cretan regional government and institutional bodies, the retail and food production industries, and the tourism and agricultural sectors. The results of the project were presented at the event, leaving everyone motivated to continue working towards the goal of developing Crete as a model sustainable food destination.*

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Olive oil and wine play an important role in Crete's economy and are a vital part of Cretan culture and gastronomy. Conventional cultivation methods create a variety of challenges however, such as environmental pollution, soil degradation, loss of profits and the closure of many small farms. Sustainable solutions are the answer to these challenges.

In addition to agriculture, tourism is the main source of income and employment on the island and providing a sustainable and local range of food and beverages is becoming increasingly important to holidaymakers. Regional dishes which introduce guests to the local cuisine and culture are especially popular.

This is how the joint project "Crete – first steps towards a sustainable food destination" started. In cooperation with the Crete based social enterprise Local Food Experts and the German environmental consultants blueContec GmbH, local olive and grape growers were trained and supported to use sustainable crop techniques to cultivate Crete's indigenous grape varieties, which also helped to improve their income and preserve Crete's unique nature. The project applied self-assessment criteria for implementing sustainable crop management practices and recording the progress of farmers. Farmers and local food production units were then linked with local stakeholders in the tourism industry to offer holidaymakers sustainably produced products.

Thomas Ellerbeck, Chairman of the Board of the TUI Care Foundation, said: "This project is at the core of our strategy to generate real benefits for local food producers by linking them to the tourism industry. After three years of implementation, our TUI Cares for Crete initiative has shown how we can successfully open channels of cooperation to support inclusive development, as well as protect the local cultural heritage. This is a solid strategy that we can now replicate in other destinations worldwide."

Over the course of the project, 27 sustainable products have been produced:

- 21 wine labels from seven indigenous Cretan grape varieties (two of which were certified as organic according to EU regulations),
- Five olive oil labels of the Cretan variety Koroneiki (two of which were certified as organic) and
- One rusk bread from barley.

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These products were promoted to the hotels participating in the project and integrated in their food supply chain. They were also put on sale in the hotel's mini markets and offered to holidaymakers during interactive wine and olive oil tastings. In total, over 5,600 guests took part in the over 360 food-tasting and food-cooking events offered by the hotels.

Hotel employees were also given training on sustainable products, how they are produced and the project itself.

In cooperation with TUI Group, the project team also designed two exclusive and interactive excursions for TUI guests to experience the world of Cretan wine and olive oil and meet with the farmers and food producers. More than 235 guests have joined the sustainable excursions and praised the authentic and local flavour of their experience.

Throughout the duration of the project, over 1.5 million litres of wine and around 119,000 litres of olive oil were produced. Currently 13.5% of the local wines used in the project hotels are the Cretan project wines and 17% of the local olive oils used are the project olive oils.

Sustainable food production and sustainable tourism services were the pillars of the project. The project team is now carrying out a feasibility study to examine how these outstanding results can be expanded to other destinations, agricultural products and hotels.

About the TUI Care Foundation

Building on the potential of tourism as a force for good, the TUI Care Foundation supports and initiates partnerships and projects, which create new opportunities for the young generation and contribute to thriving communities all over the world.

Connecting holidaymakers to good causes, the TUI Care Foundation fosters education and training initiatives to open up new opportunities and perspectives for young people, the protection of the natural environment in holiday destinations and sustainable livelihoods in thriving destinations where local communities can benefit even more from tourism. TUI Care Foundation works global and acts local - it builds on strong partnerships with local and international organisations to create meaningful and long-lasting impact. The charitable foundation values transparency and the efficient use of funds. Therefore 100% of the donations go to destination programmes with all administration costs of the foundation covered by TUI. TUI Care Foundation was founded by TUI, the world's leading tourism business, and is based in the Netherlands.

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