

# THE SLOWFOOD-CE STRATEGY

A Common Transnational Strategy  
for the Sustainable Promotion  
of the Central Europe Gastronomic Heritage



#### *Output/deliverable*

O.T4.1/ D.T1.1.2 Transnational Strategy for the sustainable valorisation of GCH

#### *Author(s)*

Federico Corrà, Strategy consultant for the Slowfood-CE project and food expert for the City of Venice  
Isabella Marangoni, Officer in charge European projects, City of Venice  
with contributions from all Project Partners

#### *Aim*

to seek political commitment towards GCH valorisation and to ensure transferability of results outside the partnership through a comprehensive transnational approach

#### *Activity*

A.T4.2: Adoption of the transnational strategy for GCH valorization

#### *Photos*

Cover: © freepik.com

*Brno*: © Chuú Moravy, Francesco Sottile, Shutterstock, TASM, Tourist Authority South Moravia

*Dubrovnik*: © Ana Bitanga Jukić, Anita Trojanović, Family Goravica, Irena Bastijanić, Konavoska kuća Vuković, Natural History Museum Dubrovnik, pixabay.com, Solana Ston, Vlaho Mihatović

*Kecskemét*: © Betti Delicatessen, Kecskemét Brewery and Beer House, Kecskemét Green Market, Kecskemét Municipality, pixabay.com, Producers from Kecskemét, Róbert Banczik, Roland Király, Slow Food Archive, Tanyacsárda Restaurant

*Krakow*: © Barbara Witek, Daria Latała, Gawor Wędliny, Lidia Moroń-Morawska, Marco Del Comune & Oliver Migliore, Pawel Kubisztal, pixabay.com, Slow Food Archive, Wojciech Wandzel

*Venice*: © Alessandro Arcuri, City of Venice Press Office, Courtesy of the participants of the Venice SAOR festival, Donato Riccio, Giorgio Bombieri - City of Venice, Fabio Furlotti - fabiofurlottiphoto.com, Federico Corrà, Valter Cortivo, Slow Food Archive.

---

*This document has been produced with the assistance of the European Union.  
The contents are the sole responsibility of the SF-CE partners and can in no way be taken  
to reflect the views of the European Union.*

*The contents of this document have been developed mainly before the Covid-19 emergency.*

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>0. Foreword</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>1. Introduction</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>2. Slow Food-CE Partner Cities and Their Gastronomic Cultural Heritage</b>	<b>10</b>
2.1. Partner Cities and Their Territories	11
2.2. Gastronomic Cultural Heritage (GCH) mapped in the partner cities	18
<b>3. The Slow Food-CE pilot projects</b>	<b>28</b>
3.1. The focus of the pilot projects	29
3.2. Lesson learned from the Organisers' point of view	39
3.3. The evaluation of the Pilot Actions	40
<b>4. A Strategy for valorisation of European Gastronomic Cultural Heritage</b>	<b>42</b>
4.1. Scenario	43
4.2. Preliminary considerations	45
4.3. Methodological Approach	46
4.4. Management	49
4.5. Marketing, Promotion and Communications	50
4.6. Not only for locals	51
<b>5. Conclusions</b>	<b>52</b>
5.1. What politicians have to say	53
<b>6. Policy recommendations</b>	<b>56</b>
6.1. Cities have a key role to play	57
6.2. Connect, engage, learn, act	59
6.3. Measure to improve	59
6.4. Relaunch the dialogue between the urban and rural dimensions	60
6.5. Sustainability is the keyword for local ecosystems	60
6.6. Communicate and educate to make the difference	61

0.

# FOREWORD

*by Piero Sardo*

*President of the Slow Food Foundation for Biodiversity*

*Inspiring principles for new regional, national and European strategies where gastronomic cultural heritage is a driving force for local development*

Writing about gastronomy cannot be done without addressing the theme of agriculture. Beyond the obvious consideration, that every cuisine is based on the processing of raw materials made available by agriculture and fishing, today we must take into account the fact that there are two types of agriculture: one that, simplifying, we can define as agro-industry, made up of monocultures, systematic use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides, intensive farming, hydroponic procedures, and, in general, of elements that tend to adapt nature to the production needs instead of harmonizing the production with nature's cycles; the other one, made up of small and medium-scale farms, mostly family farms, mostly organic or biodynamic or in any case very attentive to territorial biodiversity, natural production, and local traditions.

Following in part this distinction, in the same way, stellar cuisine has the world as its pantry and sets prices that allow it to offer even rare and expensive products all year round. Traditional cuisine, if it wants to provide quality, must necessarily supply itself as much as possible from the excellent producers (in the full sense) of its territory.

*Well, Slow Food is convinced that quality gastronomy must always use only agriculture that is produced in an ecologically and sustainable way.*

On the agricultural production side, however, there is a problem that must first be admitted and then analysed: small-scale agriculture is constantly in difficulty. With the exception of a few niches that

have meritoriously won fair prices and visibility, most small farms live in a state of perennial suffering. A glorious, slow agony. Even if apparently the growth trend of organic products, for example, would indicate the opposite, most producers do not stand up to the competition of agro-industry, do not have access to large commercial structures, are unable to manage distribution, and have difficulty in communicating. The gurus of the global economy continue to preach that undersized companies are mostly destined to disappear and this certainly does not facilitate the resilience of the small ones.

*European gastronomy, in search of quality, could therefore offer (and seize) the opportunity for a double benefit: to raise the level of gastronomic offer by choosing to use only sustainable and local agricultural products, thus launching an extraordinary plan to support small and medium-sized companies of excellence.*

The effects of this alliance would be extraordinary in the immediate future, for both parties involved, and with extraordinary potential in terms of economic development and tourism, bearing in mind that so-called rural tourism lives on landscapes that are eminently agricultural landscapes. On the other hand, despite the fact that gastronomy is one of the founding elements of European commonality, we are still grasping, superficially. It is good to remember that George Steiner, when he wrote about the five elements that characterize Europe compared to the rest of the world, placed the presence of cafés in first place: not the bar *tout court*, but precisely the café, a place of conviviality and gastronomy, albeit particular, but always gastronomy.

*So why not try to trace European routes marked by exemplary gastronomic places, where the truth of the link with small local products is evident, where the tribute to traditions is experienced as a productive opportunity and not as an empty narrative, where local communities recognise and feel gratified?*

Routes of this kind can, and to a small extent already do, trigger phenomena of virtuous tourism linked to the territory. A quality, traditional gastronomic place can easily encourage the spread of tourism, the promotion of small producers, exchange and word of mouth, as long as they are places where narrative and substance coincide, thanks to solid skills (on both sides) that are in part still to be built, or to be rebuilt.

It is on these principles that institutions, at every level, from local to regional, and then moving on to the national and European levels, can play a fundamental role, highlighting the essential role of food culture and gastronomy linked to a territory and their function as a catalyst for sustainable local development, both rural and urban.

1.

# INTRODUCTION

*“I need to know the history  
of what I eat, not only the price.  
I need to know where it comes from,  
the hands that farmed and produced it...  
the day food has lost its true value  
and its history, there will be  
no hope for the future.”*

*Carlo Petrini  
Slow Food President*



The intangible cultural heritage of food is an enormous, yet underestimated, resource. Gastronomy conserves the entire history of a territory and embodies how different cultures have merged over the centuries. It is largely used to promote tourism, but is hardly ever treated as a resource that can leverage environmental sustainability and social integration.

Slow Food-CE is a transnational cooperation project that seeks to improve the capacities of local, public and private actors in order to safeguard and give value to their gastronomic cultural heritage as part of a vision that integrates economic, environmental and social sustainability. The project is founded on the “new-gastronomy” concept that Slow Food as a movement promotes: a multidisciplinary approach to food that recognises the strong connections between plate, planet, and people. The project intends to create a transferable model that can give traditional foods their true value through knowledge of producers, plant varieties, animal breeds, traditional processing techniques, folklore, and cultural landscape. It will enhance the common food heritage of Central Europe, leading to a new alliance between the cities of Venice, Dubrovnik, Brno, Kecskemét and Krakow.

One of the main outputs of the project is the Transnational Strategy for the Valorisation of Gastronomic Cultural Heritage (GCH), defining what partners have learned and experienced, as well as methods and recommendations to improve policies that can be transferred at local, regional and EU policy levels in the medium and long term. The strategy is designed to raise decision-makers’ awareness and gain political commitment towards GCH valorisation and to ensure transferability of results outside the partnership through a comprehensive transnational approach. It systematizes analysis, results of the pilot actions, and discussions with local stakeholders and is meant to positively influence attitudes and to solidify political support.

The first section of the document is dedicated to the presentation of the partners’ territories and to the first phase of the project: GCH mapping and analysis by the main stakeholders of the local food systems who gathered together in Local Working Groups.

Following the initial, challenging phase of studying and cataloguing the cultural gastronomic heritages in partner cities, the project continued with the planning and organisation of demonstrative actions that project partners carried out to validate the potential of GCH to promote sustainable local growth and territorial development, which are described in the second section.

The last two sections of the document consist of the Transnational Strategy for the Valorisation of Gastronomic Cultural Heritage in Central Europe and the policy recommendations crafted to ensure transferability of project methods and results. The transnational strategy and the policy recommendations have been jointly developed by partners through the use of tools, improved competences and shared responsibilities and collaboration designed and tested within the project. The pivot strategy is the collaboration between the private sector, which brings its expertise in GCH valorisation, and the public sector, which positions private sector input to be of service to local common interest. The document demonstrates how to make this collaboration a win-win strategy by providing guidance on identifying GCH resources, creating a shared vision that integrates all the tenets of sustainability, utilizing co-design tools, involving local communities, and improving policy maker capacity in GCH protection and valorisation.

2.

**SLOW FOOD-CE  
PARTNER CITIES AND  
THEIR GASTRONOMIC  
CULTURAL HERITAGE**

## 2.1. PARTNER CITIES AND THEIR TERRITORIES

Cities are a perfect laboratory where change addressed by the Slow Food-CE project can be successfully achieved: small enough to strongly influence the entrepreneurial and social scenes but also large enough to serve as a gateway to international markets. The project brings together five Central Europe heritage cities - Brno, Dubrovnik, Kecskemét, Krakow and Venice - that, with the lead of Slow Food and the scientific support of the University of Gastronomic Sciences of Pollenzo, and the cooperation of relevant NGOs of the food sector, have worked together to build a common methodology for the identification and valorisation of cultural resources connected to food heritage.

More specifically, the Slow Food-CE partnership is made up of 10 partners from five Central European countries:

- Slow Food (IT)
- City of Venice (IT)
- University of Gastronomic Sciences (IT)
- City of Dubrovnik Development Agency - DURA (HR)
- Kinookus Association (HR)
- Tourist Authority South Moravia (CZ)
- Slow Food Brno (CZ)
- Municipality of Krakow (PL)
- Local Government of Kecskemét City (HU)
- Kiskunság Tradition-bound, Artisans' and Tourism Association - Convivium Kiskunság (HU)

Moreover, seven associated partners support the project partners in involving stakeholders and disseminating project results: the Ston Tourist Board (HR), the City of Dubrovnik (HR), the City of Brno (CZ), the Malopolska Tourism Organisation (PL), the Academy of Physical Education and Tourism in Krakow (PL), the European Institute for the History and Cultures of Food (FR), and Europa Nostra (NL).

## 2.1.1. VENICE



Venice is an Italian city of about 260,000 inhabitants, and is the capital of the Veneto Region. Besides its famous historic centre, a global destination for over 25 million tourists per year, the Venice territory is composed of the islands of the lagoon and by the mainland, thus forming a remarkably varied landscape from historical, social, economic and environmental points of view.

The site ‘Venice and its Lagoon’ has been inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List since 1987 for the singular nature of its cultural richness, consisting of an extraordinary historical, architectural and artistic heritage integrated in a natural landscape made of water and land that is unique in the world. The uniqueness of Venice and its exceptional historical identity have transformed it into an international capital of tourism. Tourism in Venice is one of its primary economic resources and represents an incessant source of cultural exchange, an opportunity for economic growth and an important social resource for the development of the community. At the same time, the impact of mass tourism on its fragile environmental and social ecosystem calls for a renewed integrated strategy for the management of such a complex resource.

In this framework, Venetian gastronomic cultural heritage is a strategic asset to be valued in order to promote sustainable tourism and, in particular, so-called “experiential tourism”, while protecting Venetian authenticity and improving the quality of life for the city’s residents.

**2.1.1.1. Project partner: “Comune di Venezia” (City of Venice) is the local municipality responsible for the governance of the territory of the islands and mainland.**

The City of Venice, as a local democratic government, exercises administrative actions, plans and manages the services, activities and procedures that are related to culture, social welfare, sport, tourism, environment, civil protection, commerce and education. It acts at the European level by promoting initiatives and projects in priority areas for the growth of the municipality and of the local community.

## 2.1.2 DUBROVNIK



Dubrovnik is a Croatian city with more than 40,000 inhabitants, located in the southernmost part of Dalmatia. The city is located below the hills of Srđ (419 metres) and Žarkovica (321 metres) and is facing the open sea from the south. It consists of 32 settlements and covers an area of 143.35 km<sup>2</sup>. Trebišnjica is a 96.5 kilometre-long hinterland river of Herceg Novi, Montenegro, which springs at an altitude of 398 metres. Trebišnjica is a part of the complex, underground and above-ground river system which empties into the Adriatic Sea by way of the Ombla River (also known as Rijeka Dubrovačka) near Dubrovnik. Dubrovnik River has a flooded river valley with steep (up to 600 metres high) valley walls. Along the river there are numerous summer houses and parks. There are six islands in the archipelago, including the three main ones, Koločep, Lopud and Sipan. Two of the three islands, Koločep and Lopud, are car-free zones. The present administrative territory of the City of Dubrovnik, unfortunately, does not correspond to the territory that, for centuries, has been one body. It was formed, both culturally and socially, during the creation and development of the Republic of Dubrovnik. This historical and cultural heritage was mirrored by the administrative system of the Municipality of Dubrovnik in the former Yugoslavia where it covered the historical territory of the Republic stretching from the Bay of Kotor (Montenegro) to the peak of the Peljesac peninsula together with nearby islands.

However, despite the unquestionable development and affluent tradition of Dubrovnik tourism, there is a feeling that tourism is “just happening”, meaning locals are less creators and more victims of tourism dynamics. Gastronomic offerings, with the rare exception, are uneventful, and seldom entice visitors with local traditional varieties.

Progressively, tourism has become a monoculture and, thus, the possibility to express its uniqueness is lost, with the exception of historical heritage. The settlement within the walls of the town, which the locals call “Grad” (“the Town”), year after year is slowly being depopulated and there is the danger of turning that beautiful space of exceptional history into an empty soulless shell.

One of the most tragic years in the history of Dubrovnik is the Serbo-Montenigran aggression of 1991. A significant part of the territory was occupied and devastated in the period from October 1, 1991

until the liberation in October a year later. Today, the historical damages from the war have mostly been restored, and tourist facilities are open.

After the Croatian War of Independence, tourism turned towards globalization, and pertinent decisions have been determined by questionable economic feasibility. Nevertheless, thanks to the talks we conducted during the project, we noticed some indication of a revitalisation of traditions. For the elderly, nostalgia is crucial, and is evoked by the frustration from a lack of quality imported food. The younger generations, thanks to their education and training, understand high quality and the uniqueness of local traditions, and along with the indisputable trends in tourism, step by step, they are including traditional products and giving value to organic production, seasonal rhythms, and traditional ways of preserving and preparing food. Moreover, awareness is growing regarding the importance of linking local gastronomy with history, legends, and myths as critical elements to better understand and experience the territory of the former Republic of Dubrovnik. On the other hand, the abandoning of the “Grad” and “buy-to-let businesses” continue, as life within the walls is expensive and hard. The lure of quick and relatively easy profits finalizes the process of turning tourism into a monoculture, which had started even before the war.

Positive examples given during project talks are just a tiny core of a possible change in understanding tourism, creating a new entrepreneurship environment that will not only react to outside stimuli, but will actively shape the type of tourism that is desired. Establishing the required infrastructure, promoting organic and traditional production, and coordinating the elements of tourism from sale to transport, accommodation and supply could, in due course, solve the problems of the “Grad” and bring a renaissance by creating new and creative tourism with the same or better financial results.

#### **2.1.2.1. Project partners: the City of Dubrovnik Development Agency (DURA) and the Kinookus Association**

DURA is a professional, non-profit organisation with the status of legal body, formed as the basis for substantial support to small and medium-sized enterprises (SME), as well as to the overall economic, social and cultural development of the City of Dubrovnik (CoD). The Agency’s activities represent a link between the city and other major institutions and organisations in supporting local development. Scope and area of expertise includes implementation of the CoD development strategy, coordination and assistance in applying for EU funds and national projects, encouraging development of civil society, entrepreneurship, agriculture, tourism industry and SME, providing seminars, trainings and various educational opportunities. To date, DURA has successfully implemented more than 50 EU projects and is in charge, together with the city department, of national projects concerning the city.

Kinookus (Cinetaste) is an NGO established in 2010 by a group of experts in the audio-visual, educational, scientific and artistic fields. The association has extensive experience in the development and realisation of international, national and local projects in the fields of: food, environmental and film education; sustainable development; traditional and sustainable agriculture; human and civil rights; civil society development; inclusion of citizens in decision-making processes; and, active safeguarding of natural and cultural heritage and local traditions. The Slow Food Dubrovnik chap-

ter implements its projects through Kinookus. Its main experiences are: realisation of 10 editions of the international food film festival Kinookus, organisation of several campaigns on the national level (protection of common goods, anti-land grabbing campaigns, inclusion of citizenship in decision-making processes), development of film and food educational programs and workshops for children and young people, and a publishing activity.

### 2.1.3. BRNO



Brno, the second largest city in the Czech Republic with about 400,000 inhabitants, is a cultural centre full of historical monuments, modern architecture, cafés, and exciting gastronomy, that reflects its position at the crossroads of Europe. Beyond the city is the picturesque countryside of South Moravia, a mosaic of meadows and narrow lanes dotted with orchards and charming villages. Due to its warm climate and natural setting, this region is home to the majority of the vineyards in the Czech Republic and is also known for its cultivation of almonds, cucumbers, and asparagus, as well as for its fish ponds and smoked meats. Recurrent festivals give visitors a glimpse into local folk traditions, and a variety of exciting bistros, breweries, and boutique hotels draw on diverse cultural influences to present unparalleled gastronomic experiences.

#### 2.1.3.1. Project partners: the Tourist Authority South Moravia and Slow Food Brno

Tourist Authority South Moravia coordinates the development of tourism in South Moravia and presents South Moravia both internally and externally. The starting point is to identify the interests of those involved in tourism development. The goal is to provide visitors reliable information, create tourism products, support cooperation with entities active in tourism, create visually attractive, content-rich materials about South Moravia and develop human resources in the field of tourism services. In cooperation with partners, Tourist Authority South Moravia also realises project activities

co-financed by the European Union and the state budget. Slow Food Brno (SFB) is a local Slow Food convivium. It produces educational, awareness raising and informational programs for school children, the general public and farmers/producers, in order to return value to food culture, regional GCHs and the relationship between food consumption and the preservation of the environment. For gastronomy professionals, SFB prepares and implements practical training workshops and visits to local producers, encouraging the development of a sustainable local food economy. SFB staff has experience in the field of school food programs (localising supply chains, connecting schools with local farmers, etc.) and children’s education towards more healthy and sustainable lifestyles.

#### 2.1.4. KECSKEMÉT

Kecskemét, the capital of Bács-Kiskun County, brings together all of the beauty and values of the Great Plain and is situated in the middle of Hungary on the sandy plain between the Danube and Tisza rivers. It is located in the Kiskunság region and in Kiskunság National Park, the latter having been declared a biosphere reserve by UNESCO. An important market town for centuries, it had become a sizable city by the turn of the 19th century. Today it has more than 111,000 inhabitants. The development of the town and its surrounding area was determined by the land tenure system, where, for centuries, farming, herding and fishing on the banks of the Tisza were practised. Kecskemét is also referred to as the “orchard of Hungary” because of the quality of its local fruits, particularly apricots and grapes. These apricots, as well as the apricot brandy, have gained worldwide fame. Thanks to the viticulture of the surrounding settlements, wine culture is part of the country’s wine map. Guests arriving at local equestrian farms can experience history at horse-riding shows and in farm restaurants where they can taste traditional Hungarian cuisine. Hospitality and well-established tourist attractions bring visitors from all over the world. Hírös7 Festival is one of the most important and popular programs of the city so visitors to Kecskemét will find a food culture that is both rooted in local folk traditions and receptive to outside influences.





#### 2.1.4.1. Project partners: the Local Government of Kecskemét City and the Kiskunság Tradition-bound Artisans' and Tourism Association

The Local Government of Kecskemét City is the governing authority of the city, which is the economic, administrative, educational, and cultural centre of the region. Kecskemét has gained experience and knowledge in the cultural and natural heritage valorisation sector, too. Presenting and promoting locally produced, high quality, unique products, as well as handicraft items, has always been a priority in order to raise awareness among citizens. Advertising campaigns are aimed at changing consumers' habits, encouraging people to make conscious choices. Kecskemét Green Market is a voluntary cooperative organisation in the project. The Market has played a significant role in city life, and as an institution controlled by the municipality it has also had significant influence. It is an important public place where farmers and local producers of the region are present in impressive numbers. There are almost 300 small-scale producers and around 40 traders regularly present at the market hall or in the outdoor area. In order to complement market supply, there are also 42 shops present. Many of them have been there for more than 30 years. Kecskemét Green Market is also the organiser and venue of several events. Kiskunság Tradition-bound Artisans' and Tourism Association is a non-profit civil organisation, the core of which is Slow Food Kiskunság Convivium (referred to in project documents as SF Kiskunság). Main fields of activities are: representing and providing assistance for producers and production based on Slow Food principles; preserving and promoting traditional techniques of plant cultivation, animal breeding and food processing based on the principles of preserving agrobiodiversity and local traditions; transfer of knowledge, including trainings for adults and educational programmes/summer camps for children; organising events (exchange of indigenous seeds among local producers, taste education in schools, local farmers' markets); and, offering services in the agro-tourism sector. An internationally acknowledged and qualified product of SF Kiskunság is the Mangalica Sausage (Slow Food Presidium), which calls attention to this traditional indigenous Hungarian breed of pig that is almost disappearing.

#### 2.1.5. KRAKOW

Krakow is the second largest city in Poland, both in terms of population and area. It occupies 327 km<sup>2</sup>. In 2018, the city had 774,839 residents, which constitutes about 2% of Poland's population. Krakow is one of the most important urban centres in the country and remains a regional and international hub of social, economic and cultural life. It is the capital of the voivodeship of Malopolska. Krakow is a thriving scientific centre. Intellectual potential of Krakow is created by 23 universities, which employ 22,000 people (including about 1,500 professors) and educate 212,000 students. Krakow is the biggest outsourcing centre in the country. Forty percent of all people employed in this sector in Poland are working in the city. There are about 65 companies in the business process operation sector in Krakow and its vicinity. They provide accounting, taxation, IT or financial services for companies. At the end of 2018 this BPO/SSC sector employed 79,700 people and was still growing. Krakow is a cultural and tourist centre of Europe. The area of the historic Old Town and Jewish quarter, Kazimierz, was entered on the first list of world cultural heritage by UNESCO in 1978. In 2019 Krakow was awarded the title of the European Capital of Culture. In 2018, Krakow was visited by 13.5 million people, out of which 10.4 million were national tourists.



#### 2.1.5.1. Project partner: the Municipality of Krakow

The Municipality of Krakow (Gmina Miejska Kraków) is a self-government unit that is responsible for the governance of the Krakow territory, the cultural, administrative and business centre of the Lesser Poland voivodeship and southern Poland. The decision-making body is the City Council of Krakow, and the President of the City of Krakow is the executive body. Krakow Municipal Office hires over 2,700 employees in approximately 40 specialised departments. It introduced a modern management system that was certified with ISO 9001:2015.

## 2.2. GASTRONOMIC CULTURAL HERITAGE (GCH) MAPPED IN PARTNER CITIES

A brand-new methodology has been applied to map the GCHs, starting with Slow Food 'Ark of Taste' and 'Granaries of Memory' experiences as well from the contributions of partners of the Slow Food-CE project, focusing on achieving homogeneous results in the various contexts of application.

The GASTRONOMIC CULTURAL HERITAGE MAPPING MODEL (GCH) is a full, in-depth analysis for the identification and documentation of gastronomic cultural resources in local contexts, responding to the need for data collection and evaluations useful for heritagization.

The object of the model is to map the local context: to research, interview and collect information both from local actors (formal and informal actors, such as chefs, journalists, experts in local gastronomy, traders and managers of cafés, hotels and other venues where gastronomic products are

sold) and producers, those who preserve local gastronomic heritage. Respondents were also asked to provide relevant information on local food biodiversity (agricultural production, livestock farming, gastronomic traditions, etc.).

The mapping of resources, based on this methodology, was carried out by project partners in their respective local contexts, outlining a rich and varied set of products of high cultural and gastronomic importance, which enriched the documentary value of the entire project. Moreover, the comparison of the various products in the different contexts revealed many interesting cultural, historical and utilization similarities and differences for further consideration.

### 2.2.1. THE VENICE GCH

The importance of gastronomic cultural heritage in Venice comes from the uniqueness of the natural environment and from a remarkable variety and quality of local products in the area, besides the presence of excellent cuisine.

Productive resources are fundamental for the lagoon landscape in its components of agriculture, aquaculture and traditional crafts.

Agriculture has always been a key component of this territory. Some of the most significant products of the Venetian agricultural typology are inseparably linked to the insularity of the City of Venice. For instance, on the Sant'Erasmus isle, considered the vegetable garden of the city, the famous violet artichoke is cultivated, and is now included in the Slow Food Presidia. In recent years the Dorona grape, an ancient vine that had almost disappeared, has been recovered and is now cultivated on the islands of Sant'Erasmus and Mazzorbo. Besides agriculture, another important Venetian activity is represented by fish farming.

Some of the main products and dishes of the territory are:

- **Violet artichoke of the Sant'Erasmus isle:** In particular the “castraure,” the first tender apical buds of artichoke
- **Caparossolo de ciosa:** Clam of Chioggia
- **Moeche and masanete:** Soft-shell crabs
- **Sepa bianca de ciosa:** White cuttlefish of Chioggia
- **Schia della laguna di Venezia:** Small shrimp
- **Bigoi:** A typical pasta, very similar to large spaghetti
- **Baicoli:** Typical Venetian biscuits
- **Bussolai:** Typical biscuits from the Burano isle
- **Fave alla veneziana:** Small biscuits made with almond and pine nuts
- **Frittelle veneziane:** Venetian pancakes
- **Fugassa veneta:** Venetian focaccia
- **Galani e crostoli:** Fried pie strips
- **Mandorlato veneziano:** Venetian nougat
- **Pagnotta del doge:** Loaf of the doge
- **Zaletti:** Typical yellow biscuits made with corn flour
- **Baccalà mantecato:** Whipped codfish

- **Sarde in saor:** Sardines in sauce, with onions and vinegar
- **Risi e bisi:** Risotto with peas
- **Bigoi in salsa:** Bigoi with sardèe, a first dish made with ‘bigoli’ egg pasta and a sardine sauce
- **Fegato alla veneziana:** Venetian liver with onions and accompanied by white polenta
- **Castradina:** A salty, smoked and then ripened sheep’s leg, used to make a tasty soup with the addition of cabbage, onion and other herbs



### 2.2.2. THE DUBROVNIK GCH

While during the time of the Republic there were only two deficit food items, cereals and meat, food production gradually came to a halt, and today almost nothing is produced. Following the development of tourism, most of the inhabitants focused on renting rooms, apartments and houses, and the arduous activities of cattle breeding, and cultivating vegetables and fruits has almost disappeared. The elderly still remember women with baskets (“košić”) on top of their heads walking to Dubrovnik, and it is easy to understand how hard it was just to reach the market itself. Today’s technology and traffic development have significantly changed the former food production and placement dynamics. However, it is obvious that tourism is more attractive as it provides more profit for less effort, and the risk is much lower. Almost everyone has surrendered to the rules of the market that promotes the cheapest possible goods and completely ignores traditional, local and quality values.

Therefore, it has been observed from conducted interviews that today’s producers are more motivated by their wish to consume healthy food and by nostalgia, rather than by economic logic. Examples include a restaurant that produces food items for its own needs; another restaurant owner thinking about launching production for themselves and for partner restaurants; and a person with enough free time who enjoys producing for their own family.

It has also been noted from the interviews that there is a demand for food items of local origin and high quality, but such conclusions were drawn thanks to private experiments. It is abundantly

obvious that there is no general strategy that would determine professional guidelines for tourism development, market needs and possibilities for local and traditional product placement. Moreover, it seems that individual observations have never been recorded. The impression is that the people have been passively giving in to tourism market logic, without thinking beyond that, for example, towards potential new health, sports, environmental, educational, cultural, and rural offerings. It is also clear that these forms of tourism are less linked to July and August and that they provide more possibilities to promote traditional and local products. Tourism, as any other sector of economy, can and should set the foundation for a type of tourism that will reflect the values that were received from nature and from which local ancestors created wisely. Finally, there should be tourism that does not devastate but valorises. Is it too much to expect that such tourism should be at least recognised and valued through a long-term strategy?

What is especially evident from the interviews with elderly participants is the reality of an unbelievably hard life for the local, not-so-ancient ancestors. Direct witnesses are still alive: they are the ones who remember those hard times when there was no electricity, running water, means of transportation, or telecommunications. It seems necessary to raise awareness about the progress made in the improvement of the quality of life in the area, primarily thanks to the development of tourism. It is interesting that those experiences, arduously collected through hundreds of years, offer some appeal and distinction that make this area unique and worth visiting. It could be said that the people here have paid a lot, but sell almost nothing. However, in order for the desired changes to occur, a long-term project with a clear workflow and easily understood objectives is needed.

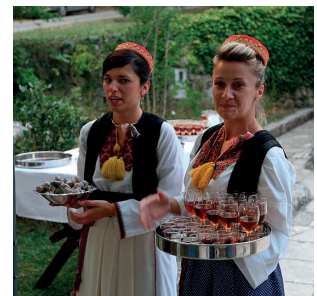
Among the interviewees were three young caterers (Mihanović, Bitanga-Jukić and Šarić), who not only understand the mentioned values, but have implemented them into successful projects. Moreover, the producers of meat (Mihlinić), wine (Karaman), fruits and vegetables (Pendo), shellfish (Hladilo), traditional desserts (Jakobušić) and micro-herbs (Matić) have also incorporated tradition and innovation into entrepreneurial ventures. The pensioners (Trojić and Dobud) have shown a realistic picture of the past, and the efforts required by such living conditions, but they have also confirmed all of those values. The research work of Jadranka Ničetić has provided a wonderful platform for future innovators who will want to offer something completely “new”. A witness of those times (Kisić) shared a valuable memory of one symbol of food: bread. A saleswoman (Klešković) confirmed all of this to be true since, for years, tourists from countries around the world have recognised and sought local products. A private producer (Marinović) testified that all of this can also generate an immense sense of satisfaction. Therefore, the development of the kinds of jobs about which people will be passionate, and that will bring satisfaction, is what is desired.

Some of the main products and dishes of the territory are:

- **Župski Kavulin:** This is a two-year-old plant breed from the broccoli family. It is characterized by a taller plant and more elongated leaves, compared to today’s typical variety. The flower is loose and makes fifteen small flanking leaflets separated by small leaflets. The reddish brown color comes from the significant anthocyanin content. The blooms, with a 15 centimetre-long slit, are cut when they are fully developed, but before the flowers start to open. Then they are traditionally coupled together in a bundle and thus prepared for the market.

- **Crne Prikle:** The main characteristic of these fried sweets is the fresh blood of wild boar that is added to the dough.
- **Malostonska Kamenica:** The European Flat Oyster is a salt-water bivalve mollusc that lives in marine or brackish habitats. Its meat is considered a delicacy. The European oyster grown in Croatia is almost extinct and can only be found in some places in the Mediterranean, the east Atlantic and the Black sea. Because of the specific conditions oysters need to thrive, the Mali Ston Bay is an ideal place to grow them.
- **Usoljeni (salted) Crneji:** it is very easily recognizable by its color and by its name. Though it is perceived as black, it is actually somewhere between a dark brown and dark purple color. It lives along the coast at depths of up to 40 metres, and can grow up to 16 centimetres in length and 80 grams in weight. Although it is a very delicious fish, it does not have particular nutritional value due to its small size and relatively large number of bones. It is rarely found at markets, except occasionally in the southern part of the Adriatic where it is salted, similarly to sardines and anchovies.
- **Ston Sea Salt:** Along with Dubrovnik, Ston was economically and strategically the most important place in the Dubrovnik Republic and the second planned town built in Europe. It was developed thanks to the salt that brought a third of the income to the Dubrovnik Republic. The tradition of salt harvesting has been passed down for over 4,000 years and has been produced in the same way with only the assistance of the sea, the sun and the wind. Solana Ston consists of 58 pools divided into five groups, as the whole salt producing process has to go through five stages which last one to two months depending on weather conditions. There are nine pools for the crystallization process and all but one, Mundo (world), are named after saints (Francis, Nicholas, Balthazar, Anthony, Joseph, John, Peter and Paul). From the nine crystallization pools, you can harvest about 500 tons of salt annually. During salt harvest time during the Dubrovnik Republic, all of the inhabitants that were of working age from Ston and the surrounding areas were involved, as salt production has always been of extraordinary economic importance. Production, transport and trade of salt in the economic sense in Ston was a considerable priority and brought a profit of 15,900 gold coins per year to the Dubrovnik Republic, which was the highest profit. Solana Ston, with its present arrangement dating back to Dubrovnik Republic times, represents the complexity of salt production from the Middle ages and is a top class historical monument and very popular tourist site. The method of salt production has not changed over the centuries. In such environmentally friendly and healthy conditions it guarantees excellent quality salt which meets all the needs of today's modern times.
- **Malvasija Dubrovačka:** A famous wine made of a local variety of white grape (malvasia), that almost disappeared in the 20th century. It was the protocol wine of the Dubrovnik rector during the Republic.
- **Prošek:** A sweet dessert wine made from Malvasija Dubrovačka which follows a very interesting procedure of drying grapes in the sun.
- **Konavoska Kapula:** A local variety of onion from the Konavle region.
- **Menestra Zelena:** A traditional dish made of a local variety of cabbage and smoked meat.
- **Golokud Corn:** A local indigenous variety of corn.
- **Olive Oil:** Made of local olive varieties such as oblica, lastovka, etc.
- **Bread:** Two or three types of bread that used to be made in the region (this tradition disappeared, but stone mills still stand from the Republic).
- **Bitter Orange Marmalade (wild orange tree):** This tradition is still alive and wild orange trees are strongly linked to the Dubrovnik landscape (traditional gardens) and architecture.

- **Pelješac Varenik:** This is already a Slow Food Presidium.
- **Mantala:** A sweet made of varenik.
- **Poveruni or Peveruni:** A local variety of very delicious, small green peppers.
- **Buša Cattle:** A local breed of cattle (already included in the Ark of Taste).
- **Škripavac Cheese:** This is made of buša breed milk (already included in the Ark of Taste).
- **Plavac Mali Grape and Wine:** One of the most famous Croatian grapes and red wines.
- **Edible Flowers:** The tradition that was very strong during the Republic, and which has a certain revival thanks to some restaurants.
- **Dubrovačka Ruda:** This is a local sheep breed.



### 2.2.3. THE BRNO GCH

The South Moravian Region includes several distinctive ethnographic areas, characterised by a wide range of folk traditions, which allowed the creation of a distinct regional gastronomy. The typical features of the local cuisine are mostly due to the region's fertility, with plenty of fruits, vegetables, grains, and grapes.

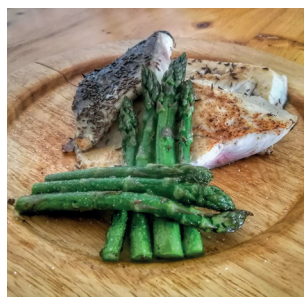
The climate of South Moravia is one of the warmest in the Czech Republic. More than half of the area of the South Moravian Region is dedicated to agriculture. Breeding mainly includes pigs, water poultry, and chickens. The most common cereals are wheat, barley, and corn, while among vegetables the famous local pickles, peppers, and tomatoes should be named. Due to the warm climate, peaches, apricots, and grapevines also grow well in the region: over 96% of all vineyards in the Czech Republic are located in South Moravia.

Brno and the entire South Moravian Region are a natural crossroads where trade routes have intersected for centuries. As a result, Czech and German influences naturally blend together both in terms of language and cuisine. There were also Jewish, Hungarian, and Polish cuisines that left numerous influences and ingredients in Moravia that local people eventually grew to accept as their own. The current cuisine of the region has been greatly influenced by the former Austro-Hungarian

Empire. Typical examples of this are Wiener schnitzel and Hungarian goulash, which have become so domesticated that the Czechs, Moravians, and Silesians consider them as genuine local meals. Brno is the gateway to the traditional grape area of Moravia. Besides its natural and historical attractions, local wine production is one of the main attractions for visitors.

Some of the main products and dishes of the territory are:

- **South Moravian Wines:** namely Müller Thurgau, Rulandské bílé (Pinot Blanc), Veltlínské zelené (Grüner Veltliner), Rulandské šedé (Pinot Gris), Ryzlink vlašský (Welschriesling), Pálava and Muškát moravský (Moravian muscat)
- Znojmo Pickles
- Hustopeče Almond
- Ivančice Asparagus
- Pohořelice Carp
- Punkva Trout
- Apricots



## 2.2.4. THE KECSKEMÉT GCH

Kecskemét is a special Hungarian lowland market town/country town, where a special settlement structure of farmland was created. Agriculture has always been very significant in this area.

The sandy soil of Greater Kecskemét is particularly suitable for wine-producing and fruit-growing cultures. The traditions of folk dietary customs are:

- **Kása:** /mush- or pap-/ type dishes, as well as the various types of unleavened *lepény* /girdle-cake/ can be considered as the most ancient types of food.
- **Bread:** It is an historically acknowledged fact that in the 16-17th century the best bread in Hun-



gary was baked in Kecskemét. In this region the most popular type of bread was the white bread with a very soft inner part and a crispy crust. To produce a really fine white bread with an almost “foamy” inner part it is not sufficient to use wheat varieties of high gluten content and to adopt the adequate grinding and sifting techniques. The skill of the baker is also an important factor. Occasionally a smaller part of the dough was pinched off, and then it was baked at the “mouth” of the oven, near the flame: its name *lángos* /flame cake/ refers to its origin.

- **Meat:** Pork - the most common breed of pig in the 19th century was the *mangalitz*a, although the breeds called *jenei* and *kisküküllői* were to be found, too, and occasionally the breed called *szalontai* also occurred. The pig-killing season lasted from December to February, and it was associated with noted days (Christmas, wedding feast). Among the processed products there were three types of *szalonna* /bacon/ (salted, smoked, steamed); two types of sausages (thin and thick); three or four types of *hurka* /puddings/sausages made from chitterlings/ (white and black pudding, one made with rolls, one made with liver). Liver paste was also very popular. Needless to say, that *tepertő* (or *töpor*tyú) /crackling/ was one of the favoured products. The leaf-lard was also utilised: mainly for making pastry (*rétes*, *pogácsa*, tarts with fillings). During the weeks after the pig killing, *kocsonya* was a standard meal on the table.
- **Poultry:** On the *tanya*, on peasants’ farms during the 19-20th century, a wide variety of fowl were raised: chicken, turkey, duck, goose, guinea fowl and pigeon. From the giblets of turkey they cooked soup. When the meat was tender they took it out from the soup, and roasted or *kirántották* /bread-crumbed and deep-fried in hot oil or lard/. Since the meat of the turkey is dry, they mostly made *pörkölt* /stew/ from it. The roast autumn goose used to be a Sunday dish: the fattened goose was cut into four pieces and was roasted in the oven and served with mashed potatoes. The goose liver was also roasted beside the meat in the meat pan, but it was put in the oven later. The duck, too, was roasted in a meat pan in the oven. They seasoned it generously with salt, pepper and paprika. Chicken was also prepared as a Sunday meal: a soup and the pieces of meat bread-crumbed and deep-fried in hot lard. As the side dish for the *tyúkpörkölt* /poulard stew/ they served *nokedli* /dumplings/. The *zúzapörkölt* /gizzard stew/ is some sort of a novelty, but already very popular.

In the recently edited Travel Book<sup>1</sup> an effort was made to collect the most significant places where Kecskemét gastronomic heritage is still alive:

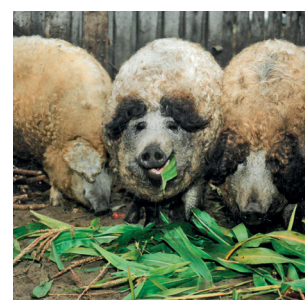
- **Goulash:** It was the most important peasant food and the basis of Hungarian cuisine. It is still very popular. The “Hungarian goulash soup” has been a hungaricum since 2017.
- **Ox-frying on open fire:** According to the now forgotten tradition, the ox was filled with a sheep, a sheep with a hen, a hen with a pigeon and a raw egg. The ox is fried properly if the egg is cooked.
- **Apricot Pálinka (Brandy) of Kecskemét:** This is a protected Hungarian brandy. The raw material of the apricot brandy with the “Kecskemét” designation is the apricots grown in the Kecskemét region using environmentally friendly production methods and with a certificate of origin. As a result of fruit processing, the apricot brandy of Kecskemét has now become a hungaricum.
- **Apricot Jam of Kecskemét:** Due to its favorable soil and climatic conditions, the cultivation and processing of apricots in Kecskemét and its surroundings has a history of several centuries. The product of the 20th century is peeled, halved, sweetened, and boiled, resulting in apricot jam.

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.interreg-central.eu/Content.Node/KECSKEMET-travel-book.pdf>

Only sweet-seeded apricots are suitable for its preparation. The characteristic aroma of Kecskemét apricot jam and its pleasant taste is inimitable.

- **Mangalica Sausage (Slow Food Presidium):** After almost disappearing completely, the Mangalica pig breed was revived in the late 1990s. The corpulent pigs grow very slowly and cannot be kept in small enclosures. The main product made from Mangalica pork is sausage. The meat is minced finely with the animal's lard, and seasoned with salt, pepper, sweet paprika, and other spices, depending on the producer's particular recipe. The sausages are stuffed into the casings (traditionally the pig's duodenum) by hand and cold-smoked over an acacia or beechwood fire. They are then left to age, ideally for at least 2-3 months.



## 2.2.5. THE KRAKOW GCH

Gastronomy connoisseurs find Krakow and Malopolska local specialties delicious, unique and definitely worth trying. Krakow was chosen as the European Capital of Gastronomic Culture in 2019. Krakow has the resources that ensured this success: great recipes, top-quality products from local suppliers, as well as hospitality and a pleasant atmosphere.

Some of the main products and dishes of the territory are:

- **The Krakow Obwarzanek (bagel):** Fresh and crunchy obwarzaneks, with salt, poppy seed or sesame, are available in the Main Market Square and all throughout the city.
- **Pierogi:** These are half-circular dumplings, stuffed in different ways and containing blueberries, cottage cheese, potatoes, mushrooms, meat or cabbage.
- **Żurek po Krakowsku:** The Polish Sour Soup Krakow Style is made of soured (fermenting) rye.
- **Krakow Red Borscht:** This delicious soup is made of beetroot.
- **Kiełbasa piaszczańska:** This is a semi-dry, cured pork sausage traditionally produced in Piaski Wielkie, a village just outside of Krakow, now the district of Krakow.
- **Prądnicki Bread:** At one-metre-long and half that across, this is a loaf that weighs 14 kilograms!

Sold today are most usually the “mini” versions of the loaf, weighing only 4.5 kilograms (10 lbs).

- **Lipnicki Bread:** A sourdough rye bread made in a wood-fired oven.
- **Miód Spadziowy:** A balsamic organic fir honeydew.
- **Krakow Celtuce:** A form of lettuce grown for its thick stem. This part should be peeled, revealing an interior that is crisp, delicate and mild.
- **Oscypek:** A Slow Food Presidium, this is a sheep’s milk cheese made by highlanders from the milk of local sheep according to a recipe that is hundreds of years old.
- **Redykołka:** A mini variety of the oscypek, redykołka is produced in various, fantastic shapes: mountain animals, ornaments, and hearts.
- **Bundz:** A traditional cheese made from sheep’s milk resembling a kind of cottage cheese with a mild, gentle flavour.
- **Bryndza podhalańska:** Soft sheep cheese, savoury and salty.
- **Żentyca:** Whey of sheep milk obtained while making oscypek and bundz, with a strong sour taste.
- **Lisiecka sausage:** Owes its delicate taste to the choicest morsels of the best pork from locally raised pigs.
- **Zatorska goose:** Animals are bred according to traditional methods and feed on natural fodder, composed mostly of oats, grass, and potatoes.
- **Carp from Zator:** For many years, it was carp from Zator that Polish kings would order to their tables, hence the name of the subspecies preserved to this day: the royal carp.

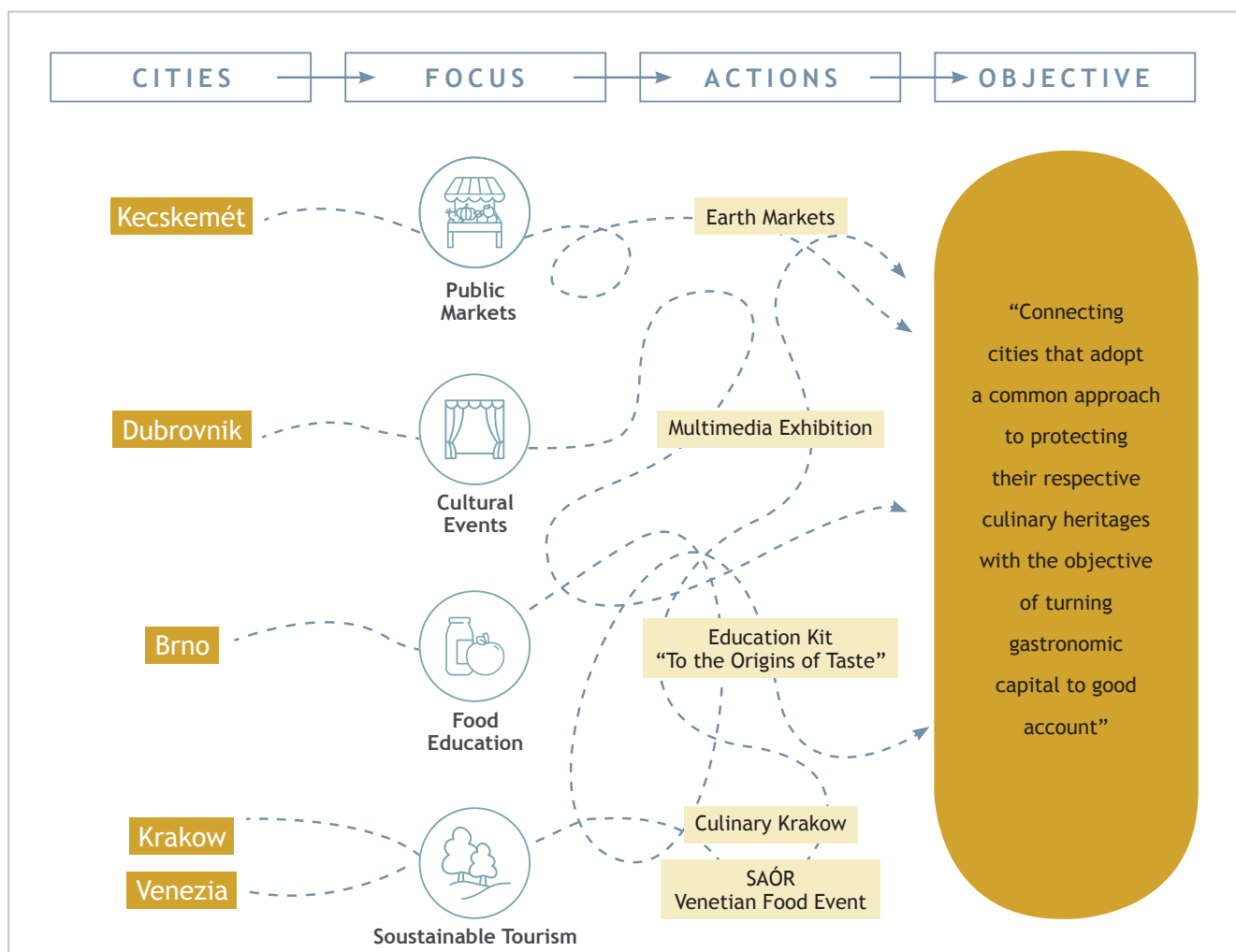


3.

# THE SLOWFOOD-CE PILOT PROJECTS

### 3.1. THE FOCUS OF THE PILOT PROJECTS

The pilot actions of the partners focused on four main areas: Public Markets (Kecskemét), Sustainable Tourism (Venice and Krakow), Food Education (Brno) and Cultural Events (Dubrovnik).



### 3.1.1. THE PILOT PROJECT IN VENICE: A BRAND NEW CITY FESTIVAL IN VENICE TO ENHANCE LOCAL PRODUCTS AND GASTRONOMY

The pilot action for Venice was the design and organisation of a three-day event, “SAOR - *Saperi e sapori veneziani in festa*” (‘SAOR’ Venetian taste and knowledge event), held from September 27-29, 2019. It was based on the successful event format of the “Urban Food Festival,” experienced in many cities in Italy and all over the world. The venues of SAOR were spread out both on the mainland and in the insular part of the city. The program featured some key events organised by the City of Venice itself and more than 50 events held by local stakeholders who spontaneously set up their own events according to the festival guidelines. The City of Venice organised the opening event (a culinary challenge among restaurants on the theme “SAOR”, a typical Venetian recipe), a gastronomic/cultural event in the Rialto market on Saturday night and the closing event with a multimedia performance by a well-known Italian artist, “Don Pasta”, in Forte Marghera on Sunday. Side events, organised by stakeholders and coordinated by the city, included original and unpublished ideas:

- COOKING SHOWS (Cooking demonstrations, tastings, etc)
- KM ZERO events (Direct purchases from the producers of fruit and vegetables, meat, fish, preserves, pastry and bread, etc.)
- MEETINGS AND TOURS (Itineraries, guided tours and workshops; meetings with artisans, traders, hosts, restaurateurs, other operators, etc.)
- CONFERENCES (Thematic conferences and workshops on food, tradition, taste, etc.)
- OTHER EVENTS (Special menus and “micro events” in markets, restaurants, bars, wine bars, taverns and other locations)
- FUSIONS (Exhibitions or other events e.g.: food and art, food and history, food and culture, etc.)
- PARTIES (Music, contests, games)

#### 3.1.1.1. Considerations and tips from the organisation

The pilot action for Venice was an overall success as it received a warm welcome by citizens, other stakeholders and relevant public institutions.

The main points of strength of the pilot action outlined by the City of Venice were:

- INNOVATIVENESS, as SAOR was the first edition of a widespread urban food festival for Venice
- OPENNESS, because events took place in locations that are not always “open” or dedicated to food. SAOR was also an inclusive event, encouraging participation, stimulating sociability and sharing by supporters of all ages: first and foremost citizens, but also attentive and informed visitors.
- TRADITIONAL AND CONTEMPORARY SETTING, because it started off from the millennial history of food in Venice and followed its evolution up to present day, with a look also towards future trends, all the while preserving its unique identity even in its most contemporary reinterpretations
- VALUE-BASED, because, following the Slow Food motto “*Buono, Pulito e Giusto*” (Good, Clean and Fair), the content of SAOR was truly Venetian: genuine, healthy and tasty, beyond dynamic and engaging. It fostered sustainable choices from an environmental point of view, increasing awareness of the fragile local ecosystem.
- LOCALLY FOCUSED, because the events were spread throughout the entire territory of Venice (Center, Mainland, Islands of the Lagoon), focusing on enhancing the delicate Venetian food chain between land, sea and lagoon

As a first edition, some minor problems have been detected that will be taken into consideration for future editions of the festival. These problems mainly concern:

- COORDINATION of the various actors in the area
- PLANNING of events to avoid overlap
- EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION through different media, such as maps, web, social media, and the press to introduce programs and events to participants (citizens and visitors)
- INTERNAL COMMUNICATION between stakeholders and the city, to create greater cohesion and team spirit

SAOR has been well received by stakeholders and by the Venetians who participated in it, so much so that a second edition was immediately taken into serious consideration.

These are the opportunities to be considered for the future, continuing with what has already been done in the pilot edition:

- INVOLVE more actors with knowledge of Venetian culinary traditions and its gastronomic heritage
- STRENGTHEN the value system and the identity of the Festival, spreading the SAOR brand beyond the borders of the City of Venice, establishing collaborations and partnerships with similar festivals in Europe (taking advantage of the strong attraction and notoriety of Venice)
- STRUCTURE the program, rationalising the categories of events to facilitate participation and understanding by the participants
- LOCALISE new spaces and/or liven up places with high potential, but not yet opened and used by the community
- FOSTER support from institutions and create stable work groups on the subject of food in the City of Venice

Finally, among the threats for the potential next editions, the following points should be taken into consideration:

- The SAOR SCHEDULE MAY OVERLAP with other events on the very busy Venice calendar
- STRUCTURING, give a stable and structured organisation to the festival, where roles, responsibilities, allocation of resources and processes are clearly defined
- DIFFICULTY to innovate the SAOR concept while maintaining the key points of identity and distinction



### 3.1.2. THE DUBROVNIK PILOT PROJECT: A MULTIMEDIA EXHIBITION DEDICATED TO GASTRONOMIC CULTURAL HERITAGE

After conducting desk and field research, the project team of the Kinookus Association and the City of Dubrovnik Development Agency (DURA) held 15 video interviews with people who, according to defined criteria, retain stories, knowledge and skills of the gastro-cultural heritage of the Dubrovnik region. After analysing the video interviews, and considering the main goal of the Slow Food-Central Europe project in Croatia (directing the attention of the general public, local authorities and citizens to the extremely rich but inadequately and insufficiently valorised GCH), the project team decided to set the video stories as the framework for the future exhibition. The concept of the exhibition aimed to emphasise the central role of the people (producers, activists, sellers, experts, regular citizens, etc.) in the preservation and development of GCH, and the importance of recognising their way of life, and the location where they live and earn a living. In line with the Slow Food approach, aside from the basic information on each interviewee, the exhibition emphasised the territorial complexity of the former Republic of Dubrovnik, its particularities and common ground with other cultures, and special attention was paid to the language component, that is, to the local vernacular terminology relating to the production, tasting, farming and other food-related activities.

From an anthropological perspective, the audience's attention was directed to the faces of the interviewees, meant to encourage a direct relationship and acquaintance with the people who feed us, and to establish a long-term relationship of trust and mutual respect. The exhibition aimed to entice the consideration of the dignity of food producers, their image and position in contemporary society and its dynamics. This is how Dessislava Dimitrova (member of the International Slow Food Council) came up with the ingenious definition that Slow Food is food with a face, which means food we know the origin of, as well as the manner and place of production, and as such it has become the motto of our pilot action.

The opening of the exhibition featured the tasting of some of the products mentioned in the interviews, with a contemporary take on the traditional meals. The visitors had the opportunity to learn some interesting facts about the gastronomic history of the Dubrovnik region, with a special emphasis on the places where the food was served.

The multimedia exhibition «City Breadwinners» aimed to communicate that gastro-cultural heritage is an extremely important part of a local community's identity and that its preservation and strengthening of local food production is of essential importance to the challenges that climate change and global economic dynamics present to cities. In the context of Dubrovnik, the project also gains importance due to the extreme monoculture of tourism, whose adverse effects can already be clearly seen in the social fabric of society, the environment, the quality of the water, sea and air, and local life in general.



### 3.1.2.1. Considerations and tips from the organisation

#### THE ORGANISATION

The multimedia exhibition was organised by the Kinookus Association and City of Dubrovnik Development Agency (DURA) in collaboration with the Dubrovnik Museum of Natural Sciences, Event Lab Agency and the Restaurant Kopun.

Many different experts were involved in the creation of the exhibition content: Ivan Vigjen, art historian and archeologist; Jadranka Ničetić, food historian; and, several local producers and food experts.

The pilot action was covered by local and national TV stations, internet media and radio stations.

Two umbrella associations were also involved in the pilot action: the Association of Dubrovnik Caterers and the Association of Dubrovnik Tourist Guides.

The exhibition in Dubrovnik can be considered a point of reference for planning culture and food related initiatives for the future. In particular, the pilot action was:

- **PIONERISTIC AND INNOVATIVE**, since no such exhibition has ever been set in Dubrovnik. Different ethnological exhibitions have been organised in Dubrovnik but none of them had the producers at the very focus and none of them followed Slow Food philosophy
- **TAILORED** for the local community since cultural life is very vivid in Dubrovnik, and exhibitions are a very important part of it
- **VERY WELL COVERED** by local and national media
- **VERY WELL VISITED** by local people since it was opened in low tourist season
- **STRONGLY SUPPORTED** by the city administration who needs guidelines for the revitalisation of local GCH
- **SUITED** for all types of the general public: children, students, adults, experts, tourists (all content was presented both in English and Croatian)
- **VISUALLY EFFECTIVE AND MULTIDISCIPLINARY**, so it attracted a lot of people and the feedback was more than positive. At the same time it presented the complexity of local GCH following the Slow Food multidisciplinary approach
- **BOTH TRADITIONAL AND CONTEMPORARY**, since traditional products and methods of production were examined in the contemporary context (needs and dynamics), following the Slow Food idea of tradition as successful innovation.

The main weakness of the Dubrovnik pilot action is the doubt about the possibility of real change in prioritising local GCH by the local administration since the support in valorising it in a proper way could remain only “on paper”. The exhibition is for sure a very good and effective starting point but a lot of follow-up should be done in order to have tangible results.

The exhibition was very well received by the local population and by the city administration. It will initiate a process of serious rethinking of local GCH. Many small, local initiatives (new small-scale production) began in Dubrovnik and its surrounding in the last four years. What is missing is a systemic approach that will connect all the actors in the local, efficient food system.

The exhibition could be a good starting point for the future Museum of Dubrovnik Gastro Culture, which will be a multifunctional space (museum, shop and restaurant) situated in one of the renovated high-value monuments from the time of the Republic (food as link between tangible and intangible heritage).

The exhibition could also be very inspirational for local restaurants and chefs to go deeper into local food tradition and establish a direct link with local producers. The same could happen with local tourist guides who could create new tours based on the stories about local GCH, and with the retailers who could have more local products in their shops.

The same exhibition format could be repeated in different places in Dubrovnik-Neretva County and in Croatia.

The negative impact of mass tourism is still very strong in the Dubrovnik area, and the measures put into practice by the actual city government are not efficient enough to change this negative trend. The risk is that high value natural resources and potential agricultural fields will be lost forever due to overbuilding and pollution of sea, water and air.

### 3.1.3. THE BRNO PILOT PROJECT: TASTE THE DIVERSITY OF SOUTH MORAVIA

Pilot actions in the Brno territory focused on the role of education in promoting GCHs, on the involvement of children, youth and families, to promote intergenerational transfer of knowledge and reinforce the sense of belonging to the community. The objective was to improve the capacity of local administrators to design and implement initiatives that bring GCHs into the schools and the canteens to allow students, families, teachers, and school managers to become active actors in protecting GCHs and in improving the awareness and the use by a larger audience.

The actions of the Brno pilot were:

- Translation and local adaptation of the Slow Food Taste education kit “To the Origins of Taste” for teachers, to be used for taste education workshops
- “Taste the season” consisted of creating and publishing seasonal menus for chefs and school cooks, using local ingredients and traditional recipes
- Producing an online and printed “farm and local products catalogue”, to help in connecting chefs to local producers
- The “See and taste the biodiversity of our region” activity was dedicated to a tasting exhibition of seasonal fruits and vegetables of the South Moravian Region
- The “Taste South Moravia from Farm to Fork” activity offered practical, hands-on workshops for children and other participants, to show and teach traditional cooking, food preparation and food preserving techniques
- Other outdoor educational activities included a School Farmers’ Market, where several Brno based schools presented the products of their educational, gardening and cooking workshops

### 3.1.3.1. Considerations and tips from the organisation

As the actions of the Brno pilot were very positively welcomed by stakeholders, these should be considered as main points of strength of the initiative:

- Very good cooperation with Mendel University and its academic staff. Very high quality information regarding the exhibited produce.
- Using the space of Zelný trh (the farmers' market) in the city centre made the activities very attractive.
- The interest by the community in high quality food and supporting local producers was remarkable. People living in South Moravia are proud of the region and its local products.
- On the other hand, a weak interest in education and distribution of local products by representatives was noted as a point to improve.
- A total of 157,492 contacts from Brno or South Moravia were reached through social networks, mailing campaigns (internal contact database), printed leaflets and the newsletter 'Brno - střed'. At the time of the promotion and on the days of the event, there was an increase in the number of visitors to the website [www.ochutnejtemoravu.cz](http://www.ochutnejtemoravu.cz) (approximately 40% on average), linked to all promotional channels and media.
- The highest interest in the pilot actions was particularly among women, as they were attracted by the food, cooking and tastings at the hands-on workshops. Attendance at the exhibition was, on average, 500 people per day. All workshops and the Chef's table were at full capacity.

Some topics may be subject to additional consideration to further exploit unexpressed opportunities and to avoid critical issues in the future:

- A wider participation of schools and students, thanks to planning communications with schools in advance.
- The schedule of educational activities with farmers could be set in the winter months, when they have more free time from work.
- The involvement of the community to support food policy through gastronomic tourism, social media and targeted campaigns.
- Avoid conflicts in planning and scheduling of the events as expected harvest times and availability of exhibition spaces do not always match, due to the inconstancy of weather conditions. The availability of fresh products, moreover, is mostly in the summertime, when a lack of participants due to summer holidays is expected.
- The rent of the public space (Zelný trh) depends on the decisions of the City of Brno and should be planned according to the availability of the venues.

### 3.1.4. THE KECSKEMÉT PILOT PROJECT: FLAVORS AND GASTRONOMIC EXPERIENCE AT KECSKEMÉT GREEN MARKET

The pilot action of Kecskemét City is based on two pillars: supporting and prioritising local producers, and the environmental education of children. To achieve it, a "Slow Food Producers' Market" was developed by Kecskemét City. This kind of market is organised in accordance with Slow Food Earth Market quality criteria. It takes place on the last Friday of every month in the outdoor area

of Kecskemét Green Market and provides a space where people can interact with producers and ask about the origin of the products. The Slow Food Producers' Market also includes live folk music, educational activities and baking and cooking demonstrations. Now there are around 20 producers and some artisans at the market.

The environmental education of children is very important and that is why many children's groups are invited to attend our Slow Food markets. Children love tastings, interactive presentations and demonstrations (e.g. grain milling, grape pressing, baking in wood fired oven).

Through the pilot action schools are visited every month and children educated about the importance of biodiversity, local products, and healthy living.

In addition, summer camps and drawing competitions are organised to emphasise the above-mentioned issues.

#### 3.1.4.1. Considerations and tips from the organisation

##### **THE ORGANISATION**

Main actors were Kecskemét Municipality and Kecskemét Green Market, as the place dedicated to the Earth Market to be implemented in the city. Besides the Municipality and the Market, there were several other institutions and organisations that contributed to the events developed in cooperation with the Municipality.

Local producers, such as farmers and artisans, did not only actively take part in the implementation of the Slow Food Producers' Market, but also held tastings, cooking demonstrations, and involved kindergarten children in the programs.

External experts shared their experience and knowledge about herbs, vegetables, and farming processes with children and interested attendees.

Other partners such as local newspapers and media, TV and radio contributed to the dissemination of project objectives and the pilot action as well as the programs and events organised during the implementation phase.

The Slow Food Producers' Market was a completely new event in the life of the City of Kecskemét. It has been very popular, and willingly attended by the citizens. Because of the Slow Food Producers' Market there are also new producers participating, so variety has likewise expanded. New customers are attending the market and, among them, even more children are present as well.

The success of the initiative can be found primarily in the following reasons:

- LOCATION of the city, because Kecskemét has always been an agricultural city with a lot of producers and famous local products (apricot, grape).
- Kecskemét Green Market is an old, popular, frequently visited place in the city center, where producers are CONCENTRATED.

- People are generally more and more aware and CONSCIOUS of their lifestyle, consumption and health. This helped to spread the messages of the pilot action to a more interested audience.
- CHILDREN are very enthusiastic and so teachers and parents are cooperative.
- There are many LOCAL EVENTS in the city throughout the year and the organisation was always present at those events.
- Some lessons have been learned from the issues and critical points which the projects faced during the development of the actions:
  - FARMERS need to be educated: they need to present their products in a more attractive way and apply narrative labels to give a detailed and complete description to consumers.
  - Some farmers are lacking in their compliance to Slow Food philosophy, and these farmers need to be warned
  - There is tension between Slow Food producers and “other” producers at the market.
  - A lot of people are still unaware of the Slow Food movement. It will take a long time to spread its values to the public.
  - The opportunity to maintain and continue the Slow Food Producers’ Market on a regular basis has been clearly identified. To achieve this, particular attention should be paid to:
    - INTERNAL COMMUNICATION between stakeholders, to create greater cohesion and team spirit.
    - SEARCHING FOR NEW PRODUCERS and educating them, continuously.
    - MAINTAINING A CONNECTION WITH SCHOOLS through repeated invitations. Involving them in later events (e.g. treasure hunts at the market).
    - PUBLISHING interesting, useful information for children and distributing at schools.
  - Some threats in the future should be avoided as well:
    - As there are too many events in the city, a way to present something new must be found; something unique, that is capable of delivering the message to the greater public.
    - Since it is very hard to make a living from farming, producers sometimes also buy products to resell alongside what they produce.
- Producers are changing: their commitment and steadiness are decreasing.

### 3.1.5. THE KRAKOW PILOT ACTION: CULINARY KRAKOW, HERITAGE ON A PLATE

The main goal of the pilot action implemented in Krakow was the promotion of the city’s gastronomic heritage in the public space and creation of a “Slow Food District” as a new tourist product and compelling offer for citizens.

During the implementation of the pilot action, six of Krakow’s most important gastronomic heritage symbols were chosen and promoted as the “Six Stars of the Pilot Action”. Among the six stars, there are three types of products: bread (represented by Obwarzanek Krakowski and Prądnicki Bread), meat (represented by Ojcowski Trout and Piaszczańska Sausage), and vegetables (Krakow Celtuce “Krakowski Głąbik” and Galician Garlic). The set of products was completed in accordance with the analysis of the most demanding challenges of Krakow’s gastronomic market, such as: limited accessibility and recognition of some traditional products, counterfeiting and even disappearance of products.

During numerous events the opportunity to establish an ample cooperation network between producers, restaurants, hotels and food markets emerged. The chosen products were promoted among

HORECA professionals, but also among citizens and tourists. The idea was to stimulate both demand and supply, and by this, to increase the presence of regional Slow Food products on the market. As a result of all pilot activities and networking, four Krakow Slow Food Zones were created.

They will be carried out also after project implementation, as a new attractive product for citizens and tourists.

The six regional products (“stars”) should be easily available in the zones.

#### **3.1.5.1. Considerations and tips from the organisation**

“Events inspired by the pilot actions (e.g. local and organic food fairs) allow producers to meet restaurateurs, establish mutual relations, exchange views and purchase products. Moreover, this type of pilot action, focused on promoting Slow Food, will narrow down the group of producers displaying their products at food fairs and increase their credibility to restaurateurs. In addition, this type of action affects both local residents, by expanding their awareness and knowledge of the Slow Food idea, and tourists - enriching Kraków’s image with Slow Food products” (from the Evaluation Report of the Pilot Action of Krakow).

The most important element in the implementation of the pilot action was the extensive involvement of the various stakeholders: restaurants, chefs, food producers, food markets, associations, and fair organisers.

The pilot action activities were supported by Internet website [kulinarny.krakow.pl](http://kulinarny.krakow.pl) (and its English version [culinary.krakow.pl](http://culinary.krakow.pl)), and also by the Facebook profile “Kulinarny Kraków - Europejska Stolica Kultury Gastronomicznej” (which is followed by 5,450 people interested in gastronomic heritage). Some issues were faced by the organisation too, such as accessibility to some of the gastronomic products (Stars of the Pilot Action). The organisation was aware that Krakow’s Celtuce is typically not available on the food market, therefore supported activities related to its experimental planting. But problems faced with the supply of Galician Garlic and Prądnicki Bread were unexpected and suddenly materialized at the time of pilot action implementation.

Another issue was related to language: in the context of the creation of a new tourist product based on gastronomic heritage, the lack of English descriptions of products sold at food markets (e.g. Handelek and Parsley markets) must be considered as a serious obstacle.

Nonetheless, the title of ‘European Capital of Gastronomic Culture,’ held by the City of Krakow in 2019 helped in the implementation of activities and in the building of the stakeholders’ network. Restaurants that took part in the municipal project “Krakow Capital Menu” were especially enthusiastic about cooperating with the Slow Food-CE pilot action.

For the future, two main threats have been identified. One is similar to all EU-funded projects, where lack of funding sources after the end of a project frequently cause problems with the continuation and durability of the results. The second is related to consistent availability of products, especially Krakow’s Celtuce.

## 3.2. PARTNER CITIES' LESSONS LEARNED

At the end of the pilot actions, partners shared the most valuable lessons learned with the group, and, also in this case, the exchange highlighted similar situations and useful considerations for the whole project team.

In particular, aspects of the involvement of all local stakeholders were exposed (IT, HR) as a key success factor for the initiatives and for achieving long-term effects. Good communication strategy and implementation is also a driver for the success of the actions (IT).

Another point deals with the difficulty in influencing local policies (HR). Where tourism monoculture prevails, the local administration should be more involved in order to take into consideration a change of direction, and also to put into place a series of measures to stimulate not only local production, but also the distribution of local food.

A different voice comes from Krakow (PL), where all actors were satisfied with the support of the pilot action by the city government. Moreover, a collaborative spirit between different actors of the food chain (producers, restaurants, fairs) was perceived and efficient cooperation between restaurants (or chefs) - instead of competition - took place, as they considered this experience an opportunity for future joint developments.

Another opinion indicates food as a very efficient 'media' for spreading new ideas (HR) and food as a key value to improve quality of life for everyone: people are willing to have more locally grown, organically produced food (HR, IT) and they should pay more attention to the origin of food (HU).

Another lesson comes from the preservation of the tradition from both Hungarian and Croatian experiences: the interviewees are a rich resource of knowledge about local GCHs, and many more stories should be documented (HR). Mapping, collecting, saving and sharing information on gastronomic heritage is a priority in order to raise people's awareness (HU). Producers' roles are also very important to focus on: getting to know them and their work better leads people to fully appreciate their products (HU). Children are excellent listeners and learners, especially when they are involved in interesting and engaging educational programs (CZ).

Finally, great attention must be paid to carefully planning and scheduling activities over the year in contexts with an abundance of events, such as in Venice (IT), due to possible unavailability of public venues and other resources. Proper scheduling is also an issue (CZ) when actions include fresh products that are very dependent on current weather, variable harvest times or that take place during holiday seasons when the public is less available to participate in the initiatives (CZ).

## 3.3. THE EVALUATION OF THE PILOT ACTIONS

*by Angelo Santocito, SlowFood-CE External Project Evaluator*

### 3.3.1. STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

According to respondents' answers, the exhibitions, workshops and direct experiences effectively improved the connection between gastronomic cultural heritage and people's perception of material and immaterial values embedded in food. Nevertheless, these kinds of activities rely on a vast effort in terms of materials, trainers, space, time, etc., thus limiting the possibility of enlarging the scope and number of recipients. Tools such as online catalogues and platforms have been considered useful instruments for rediscovering recipes and traditional local food, yet some stakeholders still suffer insufficient digital competences to take advantage of them. In one case (Brno), more than half of the chefs deemed the cookbook highly useful, and recipes have been clearly described, according to their answers.

Connections between food and public spaces are relevant topics in evaluated pilot actions, as in many cases they provide the capacity to valorise the newly-renovated spaces of highly-valuable heritage through various activities, markets and tools reinforcing gastronomical identity. The possibility of activating new economic opportunities linked to food in restored real estate properties could consequently preserve them from oblivion and abandonment and be the object of a reassignment of meanings and function towards the revival of gastronomic cultural heritage. Nevertheless, the longevity and economic sustainability of such initiatives still have to be tested and evaluated in the medium-long term.

As demonstrated by the case of Kecskemét, during the initial steps of the projects several difficulties affected a successful outcome, particularly regarding the activities of the stakeholder partners. Time delays were experienced in some stages of implementation of the project sections. Initially, neither local people nor local producers understood the Slow Food objectives. However, throughout the implementation process, each partner was able to pick up the rhythm of the project: the deeper the pilot action was in the success of the project, the easier it was to motivate participating partners. Media campaigns and communication activities to promote Slow Food goals and promote Slow Food markets as widely as possible are crucial, as they are able to attract an increasing number of participants. Local producers' reservations have diminished thanks to successful events and the local community has also understood the importance of protecting quality food and gastro-cultural heritage.

### 3.3.2. LESSONS LEARNED AND CHALLENGES

Most of the activities included in the pilot actions have been drafted considering that traditional gastronomical heritage is not represented enough neither in local restaurants nor in public spaces. In many cases, activities have improved in interviewees' opinions, and have fostered urban-rural connections, providing tools for connecting local producers with restaurateurs, food vendors, etc.



Most of the actions efficiently contribute to promoting broader accessibility to traditional products, thus increasing consumption and resulting in higher demand for the valorised products, promoting higher production and sales of local traditional products.

Valorisation of social values embedded in agro-food products is also crucial. Like the Dubrovnik pilot action demonstrated, focusing on local dialects constitutes part of the cultural treasure. Particularly through the exhibits visitors have gathered insight into the gastro-cultural treasures of the area. They have obtained information about the interviewees' professions as well as learned about words in the local dialect, which are singled out, referring to production processes, tasting or food celebrations mentioned in the interviews. At the same time, the recourse to the dialects as containers of information, as opposed to the national official language, prevents the dissemination of materials (including audio and video records) in other communities, especially with foreign people.

In terms of ability to implement concrete actions by the city and county authorities directed towards the creation of infrastructure that will support local traditional food production, food promotion and market placement (distribution) on the local level, factors such as ongoing discussions, presentations and the rise of initiatives have been deemed as highly relevant. Yet, it has been pointed out that, despite the existence of great potential in that sense, the success of initiatives depends on the willingness of local government bodies.

The evaluation also showed that information concerning events organised under the project had been posted on social media and made available to a wide range of recipients, as well as spread by word of mouth from people who lead a healthy lifestyle and thus had participated in initiatives numerous times. It has been stated that a clear interface on mobile devices, easy access to information, and the availability of an English version of the websites are crucial to widespread dissemination of project values. Nevertheless, it must also be recognised that the local population and producers often perceive new events with diffidence or caution, being the newcomer in contexts already enlivened by several summer events and food-thematic events (IT). Such events require legitimization to be well perceived.

The capacity of flexibility and adaptation of the partners is also an imperative point to achieve project objectives, as demonstrated in many cases where activities have been adapted or adjusted during their implementation due to external factors that compromised initial conditions.

It is also considered important to make project participants understand and clearly communicate that, rather than gaining new customers or making business opportunities for an immediate economic return (in this regard, tourists are not considered as the main beneficiaries of the festival), pilot actions can offer space for networking and collaborating among final beneficiaries, as well as for sharing perspective and ideas with other producers.

Lastly, Slow Food represents a recognised label, with the power to convey principles and attract people towards a clear and unique vision of gastronomic and cultural heritage of cities and their countryside. This is also confirmed by the opinions of some interviewed stakeholders who would like to expand the partnership with Slow Food in other activities outside of the project, object of the present evaluation.

4.

A STRATEGY  
FOR VALORISATION  
OF EUROPEAN  
GASTRONOMIC  
CULTURAL HERITAGE

## 4.1. SCENARIO

The Slow Food-CE transnational strategy has been developed in a scenario where, in the last few years, the European Union has dedicated more and more attention to themes linked to food and nutrition, demonstrating how crucial this issue is for the sustainable growth of EU regions.

Food is not only an essential good, but is also a fundamental social and cultural heritage that influences people's lives and health as well as the environment and economic development.

The most relevant EU policy within the framework of the issues tackled by the Slow Food-CE project, which focused on the importance of the valorisation of Gastronomic Cultural Heritage (GCH), is the motion approved in 2014 by the Committee on Culture and Education of the European Parliament for the EU Parliament Resolution "European gastronomic heritage: cultural and educational aspects" (P7\_TA(2014)0211), where food and gastronomy are recognised as artistic and cultural expression and as fundamental pillars of family and social relationships.

Among the cultural aspects to which the resolution referred, some of the cornerstones on which the Slow Food-CE project was built are found, including the following:

- Gastronomy forms part of our identity and is an essential component of European cultural heritage and of the cultural heritage of the Member States;
- Gastronomy is not only an elite art form based on the careful preparation of food, but also reflects an acknowledgement of the value of the raw materials it uses, of their quality and of the need for excellence at all stages in the processing of foodstuffs, a concept which incorporates respect for animals and nature;
- Gastronomy is one of the most important cultural expressions of human beings and the term should be understood as referring not only to what is known as 'haute cuisine', but to all culinary forms from the various regions and social strata, including those deriving from traditional local cuisine;
- Gastronomy is becoming a leading element in attracting tourism and the interaction between tourism, gastronomy and nutrition is having an extremely positive effect in terms of promoting tourism;

- Gastronomy is a source of both cultural and economic wealth for the regions which make up the EU;
- European heritage is made up of a set of tangible and intangible elements and, in the case of gastronomy and food, is also formed by the locality and landscape from which the products for consumption originate.

Thus, the European Parliament resolution recognises the importance of the valorisation of GCH as a driver of smart and sustainable regional growth and strongly promotes and supports policies and actions (examples below are strongly linked to Slow Food-CE project objectives) aimed to:

- Emphasise the need to create awareness of the diversity and quality of the regions, landscapes and products that are the basis of Europe's gastronomy, which forms part of our cultural heritage and also constitutes a unique and internationally recognised lifestyle; stress that this sometimes requires respect for local habits;
- Point out that gastronomy is an instrument which can be used to develop growth and jobs in a wide range of economic sectors, such as the restaurant, tourism, agri-food and research industries; note that gastronomy can also develop a keen sense for the protection of nature and the environment, which ensures that food has a more authentic taste and is less processed with additives or preservatives;
- Promote Europe's gastronomic heritage, such as local and regional gastronomic fairs and festivals that reinforce the concept of proximity as an element in respect for the environment and our surroundings and guarantee greater consumer confidence; encourage the inclusion of a European dimension in these initiatives;
- Help to engender general public appreciation of the social and cultural importance of food, as is the case with the 'Slow Food' movement;
- Call on the Member States to draw up and implement policies to qualitatively and quantitatively improve the gastronomic industry, both intrinsically and in terms of its contribution to tourism, within the framework of the cultural and economic development of the regions;
- Stress that gastronomy is a strong cultural export for the EU and for individual Member States;
- Call on the Member States to support initiatives related to agri-tourism that foster knowledge of the cultural and landscape heritage, offer regional support and promote rural development;
- Urge the Member States and the Commission to develop the cultural aspects of gastronomy and to foster eating habits which maintain consumer health, further the exchange and sharing of cultures and promote the regions, while at the same time retaining the pleasure associated with eating, conviviality and sociability.
- Invite the Member States to collaborate with each other and support initiatives to maintain the high quality, diversity, heterogeneity and singularity of local, regional and national traditional products in order to combat homogenisation, which in the long term will diminish Europe's gastronomic heritage;
- Encourage the Commission, the Council and the Member States to make the importance of supporting sustainable and varied European food production of high quality and in sufficient quantity an integral part of their deliberations on food policy, with a view to sustaining European culinary diversity.

More recently, in 2019, as climate change and environmental degradation are an existential threat to Europe and the world, the EU developed a "Green Deal growth strategy" to transform the Union into a modern, resource-efficient and competitive ecosystem.

In the context of the EU Green Deal, 'From Farm to Fork' will be - as it is currently in the development phase - a sustainable food strategy to achieve the ambitious objectives of the Union. European food is renowned for being safe, nutritious and high-quality. It should now also become the global standard for sustainability. European farmers and fishermen are key to managing the transition. The 'Farm to Fork' Strategy will strengthen their efforts to tackle climate change, protect the environment and preserve biodiversity. It will focus on the significant reduction in the risk and use of chemical pesticides, as well as the use of fertilisers and antibiotics. It will also contribute to achieving a circular economy. It will aim to reduce the environmental impact of the food processing and retail sectors by taking action on transport, storage, packaging and food waste.

Moreover, as cities and their territories play a leading and increasingly critical role in the achievement of the 2030 Agenda Sustainable Development Goals, in the last few years there has been a significant rise in urban engagement with food policies and practices. In this regard, it is worth mentioning that the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact (MUFPP) was launched on October 15, 2015, during World Exposition Milan 2015 - "Feeding the planet, energy for life" - in order to promote the development of sustainable food systems that are inclusive, resilient, safe and diverse, that provide healthy and affordable food to all people in a human rights-based framework, and that minimise waste and conserve biodiversity while adapting to and mitigating impacts of climate change. So far the MUFPP has been signed by 209 cities from all over the world covering a territory with more than 450 million inhabitants and demonstrating the leading roles of the urban dimension for the development of innovative food policies.

## 4.2. PRELIMINARY CONSIDERATIONS

"Man is what he eats" by the philosopher Ludwig Feuerbach is one of the most often quoted aphorisms and is worth reporting also in the original language "*der Mensch ist was er isst*" for its admirable play on words. If the intent was to affirm a clear materialist position opposed to the idealist thought of the time, today this statement is more than ever useful as a starting point to identify strategic guidelines to promote sustainable GCH valorisation in cultural, economic, environmental and social terms.

Even if today it is true that from a purely 'material' point of view we are what we eat, this is not simply due to the mere nutritional properties of food - certainly the question of the 'full belly' at the beginning of the 19th century in Europe of Feuerbach was more substantial than it is for us today - but also to the cultural aspects that make us identify ourselves with the food we eat.

In a globalised world where rapidity is accompanied by standardization and homogenisation, we feel the need to strengthen the foundations of our identity starting from the main cultural aspects, such as language and traditions, but also food, with increasing attention to safeguarding the past.

The most difficult task in developing a transnational strategy for the valorisation of GCH is to define common guidelines while enhancing differences that generate richness and exchange potential.

In Europe the current context of the local food supply chain sees, on one hand, mass retailers with aggressive quality/price policies increasingly conquering consumers' buying habits, and on the other hand, small producers, farmers, fishermen and artisans - depositories of age-old traditions and techniques, and sustainability-oriented - struggling to survive in the market. They do not have ap-

appropriate resources and skills in an unequal competition with large distribution industries that, while pursuing profit, apply economies of scale and standardised approaches that reduce the diversity of their offering. Just think about the fact that today the kitchen at home is becoming obsolete, especially in the big cities: in the supermarket we find great quantities of ready-made foods to put in the microwave or, a more recent phenomenon, the fact that in a few minutes with a food delivery app you can have a rider ringing the bell at home with your hot dinner.

Small producers have little familiarity, resources or time to dedicate to the intangible assets of innovation, promotion, marketing, and communication on which the competitiveness gap between big and small producers is based.

However, examining the marketing communications of mass retailers, we can see that their premium product lines are often promoted using the values of traditions, km0 and small production, etc.

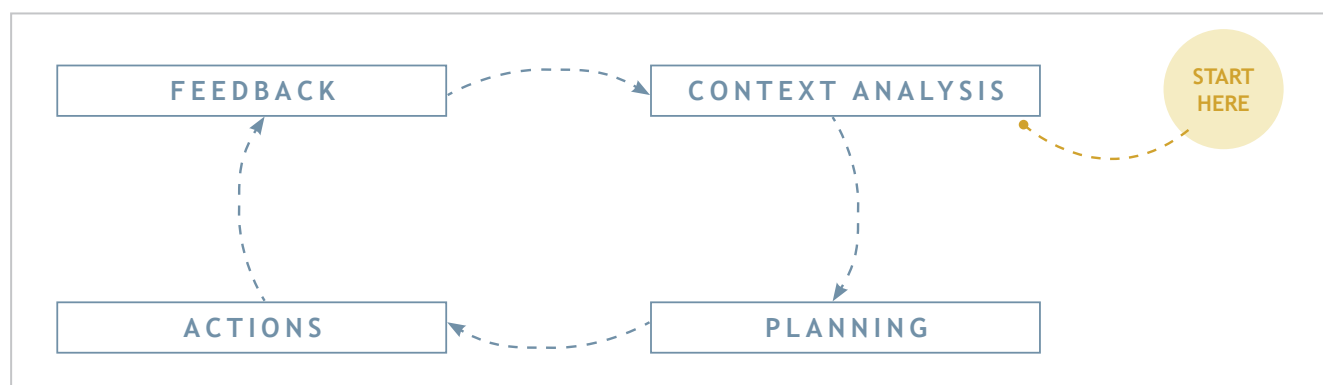
We can say that ‘being like small producers’ who are more focused on high quality is an ambition of those mass retailers. Therefore, the small producers of the short supply chain already have the potential to position themselves in the most valuable segment of the market. So, what’s missing? The answer is that often there is a lack of a strategy to create a system, to expose and to enhance their intangible assets.

Producers of the local supply chain should therefore be able to communicate effectively that they are the link between products and consumers. In recent years we have been seeing more and more attention to the person-producer, as a guarantor of the quality of his production. The successful ‘Slow Wine’ guide published in Italy by Slow Food, for example, unlike the number of ‘stars’ and ‘glasses’ assigned to specific wines, focuses on the producer, on the families who cultivate the vineyard and work in the cellar and on the fertilization methods, the number of bottles produced and so on. The product (the wine) is in the background and the producer stands in the foreground, and this is a completely different approach than in the past.

In the dialogue between producers and consumers, the institutions and the government of territories and cities must act as facilitators, providing resources, places, infrastructure and skills that can promote and enhance the value of these relationships.

### 4.3. METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

Strategic planning for the valorisation of local gastronomic heritage adopts a circular methodology that includes four macro phases: analysis, planning, actions and feedback.



1) The CONTEXT ANALYSIS phase includes:

- Mapping of current, historical and potential gastronomic cultural heritage (GCH)
- Identification of the geographical perimeter (country, region, urban area, locations)
- Mapping of main stakeholders of the food system
- Identification of target consumer segments on the basis of proximity, socio-demographic and behavioural dimensions
- Research and study of innovative best practices applied in similar contexts

2) The PLANNING phase includes:

- Involvement of decision makers in order to gain cooperation and political support on the actions to be implemented
- Active involvement of local stakeholders through the creation of effective, targeted communication channels
- Co-design of concrete actions to enhance GCH, and jointly defining resources, locations, actors, roles and responsibilities;
- Identification of metrics, indicators and objectives (KPIs and KPOs)

3) The ACTION phase includes:

- Implementation and monitoring of the planned actions
- Promotion and communication of the planned actions (before, during and after)

4) The FEEDBACK phase is also input for the re-planning (Phase 1) and foresees:

- Measurement of results (KPIs and KPOs)
- Critical and participatory analysis by the institutions and stakeholders involved (debriefings, brainstorming, workshops) of the results of the actions carried out
- Review of the actions to promote continuous improvement for the future actions
- Dissemination of the results and the transfer of effective policies and strategies at the European and transnational levels

#### 4.3.1. INVOLVEMENT OF DECISION MAKERS

Gaining political endorsement is essential in the short to medium term to ensure the feasibility of the actions and, in the long term, to integrate GCH valorisation in city development policies, in order to guarantee sustainability and duration of the strategies.

The involvement of decision makers is therefore necessary from the very start of the GCH valorisation actions planning phase. To reach this goal, it is important to raise decision makers' awareness on the strategic role that food and gastronomy can play to contribute to cities' growth, competitiveness and attractiveness and to mobilise the numerous related sectors and resources. Food production and consumption is, in fact, a cross-sectoral activity that impacts many issues tackled by EU cities and regions including culture, sustainable tourism, commerce, health and well-being, waste management, and bio-economy. This is the reason why in the last few years more and more cities and regions have been adopting specific food policies and creating dedicated food councils.

Public institutions, in collaboration with the main local stakeholders of the food system, such as producers, businesses and communities, should be in charge of developing interdepartmental and cross-sectoral guidelines and strategies to integrate urban food policy considerations into social, economic and environmental policies, programmes and initiatives. The effectiveness of a food policy depends on the capacity of virtuously connecting and integrating all food-related policies and issues, such as the ones addressed for the valorisation and safeguarding of GCH, food production, urban planning, sustainable tourism, education, circular economy and waste reduction.

The food policy in some cities like Milan (but also in Toronto, Detroit, Mexico City, Medellin, Bristol, Gent, Rotterdam, and many more) involves the creation of a Metropolitan Food Council: a body that promotes the participation of the various players of the food system (producers, traders, experts, associations, etc.) in the decision-making process on food. The board has the function of directing food policy actions, periodically evaluating the results, proposing updates, and additional objectives. Having a dedicated food policy already in place would, of course, be a very important way to promote an effective GCH valorisation strategy, and, vice-versa, the development of an effective GCH valorisation strategy could be the first important step towards the development of a complete food policy.

#### 4.3.2. INVOLVEMENT OF THE STAKEHOLDERS

Cooperation and exchange among local stakeholders and between stakeholders and public institutions to address particular needs or issues has proven to be a very effective way to enable organisations to achieve what they could not succeed on their own. This is the reason why all Slow Food-CE partners started the project building a Local Working Group (LWG) composed of the main actors of the food system. LWGs, even if involving different interests, have been an important mechanism through which groups have learned about each other and have understood the importance of cooperation to accomplish common goals.

Therefore, to develop an effective and sustainable GCH valorisation strategy able to match territorial needs, it is essential to establish from the very beginning a dialogue among local stakeholders, such as local producers and retailers, tourism operators, citizens and communities, organisations, cultural and educational institutions and public institutions in general (from local to international), to understand their needs and requests and collect their proposals and ideas. The importance of “forming a group” on the occasion of pilot projects has in fact been considered of primary importance by all partners.

Stakeholders (in particular, businesses and individuals) first dialogue with each other and address common issues. They subsequently make their requests and proposals to local institutions and citizens. They should be empowered with the responsibility of directly managing and realising the actions they proposed using resources of their own with the support of additional resources made available by public institutions that could be physical (e.g. locations, infrastructure), financial or instrumental (as a coordination board).

The exchange and cooperation between the different levels is constant in all of the identified phases.



To ensure greater effectiveness, the coordination board that governs the processes and makes relevant decisions should be composed of both parts, local stakeholders and public authorities. Innovation (models, ideas, design) can also be guaranteed by the involvement of external expertise.

## 4.4. MANAGEMENT

The management of GCH valorisation initiatives requires a systemic approach that combines the needs of each individual actor with the broader logic of sharing strategies and operational choices. The time horizon should be expanded towards medium-long term planning, with the aim of integrating and sharing ideas, strategies and management policies.

The small and micro size of local food supply chain businesses makes them highly vulnerable, especially in competition with mass retailers or other large-scale enterprises. Furthermore, in these small or micro companies the availability of resources, primarily financial but also managerial, is quite limited and cannot assure them the chance to take advantage of opportunities that may come their way. 'I don't have time' or 'I wasn't aware of it' are, unfortunately, frequently heard in feedback provided by the businesses during the planning/implementation phase of many GCHs valorisation projects.

Therefore, a particular effort must be given to creating and sharing a common vision: building networks between operators can help to overcome these weaknesses.

The development and management of a common vision requires a team that takes charge of directing and coordinating the interests and efforts of all participants and actors. A strong and competent managerial structure capable of driving change and of addressing the behaviour of each operator in creating effective actions is necessary.

The management of GCH valorisation programs must be delegated to a *super-partes* managerial structure that operates according to efficiency and effectiveness principles. The decisive skills for this management entity are related to organisation, marketing and communications, plus a specific experience in the food sector.

Management, in addition to improving the chances of success of the valorisation projects, would also allow the participating actors to acquire specific skills useful for the general development of the business in topics such as customer care, innovation and exchange of knowledge.

One of the aspects that can further improve the results of GCH valorisation actions, especially where public authorities are involved, is the development of a strong planning capacity to develop innovative projects that can be proposed for funding both to institutions - the European Union is the most significant, but not necessarily the only one - and to private investors. Having a strong planning capability is mandatory to create effective fundraising programs and attract the financial resources necessary for the development of projects.

The pilot actions for the valorisation of GCHs carried out by the Slow Food-CE partners focused on four main topics, which have been proven to be the most significant and effective in gathering the interest of stakeholders, stimulating the participation of citizens (and visitors too) and raising awareness of decision and policy makers.

## 4.5. MARKETING, PROMOTION AND COMMUNICATIONS

As stated in the guidelines, valorisation passes through knowledge and this requires effective communication skills and strategies. One of the main weaknesses of the implementation of pilot actions was the shortage of appropriate marketing and communications policies, recognised by all partners as a critical success factor. The use of technology and social networks is a must in order to attract young people and young consumers, but also to involve young stakeholders.

One way to make the initiatives widely known is to create a “brand” to improve distinctiveness and attractiveness to the planned action.

To establish the distinctive features of the GCH valorisation projects, the guidelines for the concept and the format of the actions should be initially discussed and shared with the organisation, public bodies and stakeholders. The main goals of defining the guidelines are:

- To describe the long-term objectives, the design and the values shared by all the participants in the initiative.
- To express the identity of the projects: what is different and what is recognised as similar to other initiatives, and what are the geographical, social and cultural perimeters in which the events can be planned and developed.
- To specify the requirements for the communications and promotional tools of the initiatives, such as:
  - Naming
  - Brand and identity
  - Communications strategy (messages, channels, media)

A clear identity statement should be formalized as well, with a description of:

- Vision (long-term goals)
- Mission (how to achieve these goals)
- Key values, describing the principles and the essence of the initiatives

The brands and identities must be considered long-term intangible assets of the projects.

## 4.6. NOT ONLY FOR LOCALS

Food connects people of all ages, cultures, religions and social contexts and is increasingly recognised as a potentially determinant factor in promoting cities and territories’ growth, competitiveness and attractiveness.

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development revealed that food plays an important role in the development of tourism services, since it often comprises 30% or more of tourist expenditure and this money is regularly spent directly with local business (OECD, 2012).

Beyond the value directly generated from the supply chain of the HORECA sector in tourism areas, food is one of the primary sources of attractiveness of a destination. Food merges local culture, identity values and creativity and it has become more and more relevant in highlighting the important linkages between novelty and authenticity in tourism experiences.

The role that food can play in influencing the branding and positioning of a destination should be highlighted:

- Food is part of the destination marketing mix, because it helps communicate the values of the place and allows tourists to get in touch with the local culture directly.
- Since there are two or three meals a day, gastronomy is the aspect of culture that tourists come in contact with most frequently. They are literally fed by local culture.
- Eating habits - when people eat, the way they eat and what they eat - are a crucial and distinctive element of destinations.
- Food provides a direct link with the territory because tourists can effectively recognise the origins of the food.

Recently, food and gastronomy have become the backbone of the new “experiential tourism” concept recognised as one of the most promising areas of growth in the coming years. “Experiential tourism” aims to promote the uniqueness of a destination and is based on the values of respect for culture and tradition, authenticity, sustainability and support of local activities. Nowadays local products and culinary specialities are increasingly considered by travellers as a key way to get to know the culture and lifestyle of a destination. There are a lot of very successful tours connected with food, cuisine, gourmet cooking, food festivals and fairs, local farmers’ markets, and not to mention, wine tasting. A GCH valorisation strategy can generate significant value for the promotion of sustainable and experiential tourism, because gastronomy and local cuisine-oriented tourists are perceived as high-yield markets. Eno-gastronomic tourism can easily be linked to other local attractions such as culture and natural heritage, thus offering a more complete invitation to the conscious traveller. It also offers new perspectives to rural areas for further development, maintenance or even revival of local food products. In cities, urban neighbourhoods can become more attractive to visitors as a concentration of genuine and local food restaurants, cafés and markets can bring character to the area, gathering the interest of both residents and visitors, and thus becoming a place for social and cultural exchange.

5.

# CONCLUSIONS

## 5.1. WHAT POLITICIANS HAVE TO SAY

### 5.1.1. VENICE



The Slow Food-CE projects highlighted the importance of the valorisation of local gastronomic resources to enhance competitiveness, attractiveness and growth of European cities. This is the reason why the City of Venice has prioritised the promotion of eno-gastronomic tourism within the “Destination Management Plan”, set up by the City of Venice in 2016 through a participatory process that involved the general public and private actors of the tourism sector in order to share a common vision of the objectives and strategies for destination management.

The project demonstrated how important it is to preserve food traditions, which are an essential part of our culture. The lagoon environment’s peculiarities and enogastronomic richness can play a crucial role in attracting a different and sustainable tourism, aiming at a new development model and a circular economy.

I believe this model will be even more effective in the near future, after the Covid-19 pandemic is over.

*Paola Mar, Deputy Mayor for Tourism, City of Venice*

### 5.1.2. DUBROVNIK



Heritage is as important to us as is the life of people. That is clearly evident from this exhibition, because connecting food with people used to be a perfectly normal thing, and today it is somewhat harder as most people supply themselves from supermarkets.

I hope that these and similar projects will be treating food and gastronomy as our heritage. I wish for everyone whose faces are a part of this exhibition to continue with perseverance, and we, as the municipal administration, are going to support them as much as possible at least on the territory of the City of Dubrovnik.

*Jelka Tepšić, Vice Mayor, City of Dubrovnik*

### 5.1.3. BRNO



The goal of the Slow Food-Central Europe pilot actions in Brno was to show the public that South Moravia can be a rich source of diverse agricultural products that taste great and have an important place in their kitchens. Our activities showed how important it is to support local farmers and their traditional skills. It created educational tools for teachers to help children train their senses to recognise quality food. Hands-on and entertaining workshops showed how easy it is to process fresh fruits and vegetables and keep them for use in the kitchen. Through a cookbook and a database of local producers, we will allow chefs in public catering to prepare delicious dishes from local ingredients.

*Pavla Pelánová, Director of Tourist Authority South Moravia*

#### 5.1.4. KECSKEMÉT



Kecskemét has always been the meeting point of producers, traders and merchandisers. Our gastro-cultural heritage is not a past memory but is still actively alive in the everyday life of families. Leaders of Kecskemét Municipality have been supporting, promoting and prioritising local products, methods of production and means of sales for centuries as it is the core solution for survival, development and sustainability. As the motto of the city says: ‘Neither height, nor depth deters us!’ We inherited a great treasure from our ancestors, it is our duty to preserve it, to introduce it to our children and to pass it on to future generations.

*József Gaál, deputy Mayor of the Municipality of Kecskemét*

#### 5.1.5. KRAKOW



Krakow is a city organically connected to its region: its markets are full of locally grown products, fresh vegetables, cheeses, cold cuts, excellent bread. It is a city of mixed gastronomic traditions of many nations, a city of proud culinary heritage and excellent recipes with several hundred years of history. With the change in customer behaviour, food and gastronomy have more than ever become inevitable for city development, city promotion and citizen wellbeing. Cities now have a role to play to develop a qualitative and diverse food offering for the local population and tourists in order to remain competitive. I am extremely grateful that Krakow could join the Slow Food-CE project that promotes the values of sustainable consumption, development based on stimulating local communities and creative use of our cities’ culinary heritage.

I believe that this project will allow us to develop contacts, share knowledge and be together at a time when cooperation is more important than ever before. Thanks to the network, we learn, share and connect. We are entering an era of integration and rebirth of the locality, understood as respect for our roots and the need to share with others. We believe that gastronomy will always be an important aspect of Krakow’s lifestyle and one of the most important pleasures for visitors to our city.

*Robert Piaskowski, the Mayor of Krakow’s plenipotentiary for Culture*

6.

**POLICY  
RECOMMENDATIONS**



Through the Slow Food-CE project the partnership, with the active involvement of the Local Working Groups, has elaborated an innovative methodology to map and develop an understanding of Gastronomic Cultural Heritage (GCH). It has implemented five pilot actions in the fields of Sustainable Tourism (Krakow and Venice), Public Markets (Kecskemét), Food Education (Brno) and Cultural Events (Dubrovnik) and has elaborated a strategy to valorise the GCH built on the analysis of project results. To broaden the horizon of the project beyond the partnership, a dialogue has been established with the representatives of two of the most interesting and successful EU initiatives in the field of food: David Matchett, Head of Food Policy Development of the London Borough Market, which represents one of the best examples of innovative and sustainable markets in the world, and Cristina Sossan, Policy Officer of the City of Milan Urban Food Policy Pact, the most important international pact on food developed so far.

To better disseminate and transfer project results, the partnership has elaborated some policy recommendations addressed to other cities in Europe that may be interested in exploring the potential of food and gastronomy as a driver for sustainable territorial development and are willing to set up virtuous processes of capitalisation and valorisation of their gastronomic resources. The recommendations provided in this section are addressed first to local, regional and national decision-level policy makers, but can also be useful for other stakeholders of the food system and civil society that would like to facilitate and promote the adoption of GCH valorisation strategies in their territories.

## 6.1. CITIES HAVE A KEY ROLE TO PLAY

**Cities should take the lead in the development and implementation of strategies and policies for the valorisation of gastronomic cultural heritage**

All project partners recognised that the valorisation of GCHs would deserve to be part of a more complete city food policy as a distinctive and characterising element for the aspects of sustainability, culture of the territory and ethics of consumption.

In recent years, the importance of developing and adopting urban food policies has been increasingly and widely recognised, in particular starting from the initiative taken by the City of Milan during the 2015 World Exposition in launching the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact, signed so far by 209 cities all over the world.

As stated in the “Food & Cities” report elaborated by the MUFPP Committee in 2018: *“Cities active in urban food policies have become facilitators of the discussion to co-design processes, mutual learning and exchanges of good practices amongst the wide range of urban stakeholders engaged in the urban food system {...} For cities, urban food policies represent a new and promising opportunity to lead our communities towards a more sustainable, inclusive and welcoming urban environment”*. So far urban food policies have been mostly linked to the debates on the right to food to provide *“permanent and reliable access to adequate, safe, local, diversified, fair, healthy and nutrient rich food for all”* (MUFPP), but could be a fertile ground to plant and grow the seeds of the discussion about the valorisation of GCHs as a key driver to promote sustainable city development.

A further and advanced development of urban food policies is the establishment of specific Food Councils. Being by nature cross-sectoral policies, the establishing of thematic boards within the Food Councils should also be advised, with one of them being dedicated to GCH valorisation.

Even without the adoption of an official food policy, the role of local governments is crucial for the effectiveness and sustainability of GCH valorisation measures. Public institutions should act as a CO-ORDINATOR and FACILITATOR in the dialogue and cooperation among all of the actors of the local food system (producers, consumers, chefs, caterers, retailers, etc.), in sharing expertise and planning common actions. They should also make RESOURCES open and available, such as public PLACES and INFRASTRUCTURE to efficiently bring together the two parts of the market; they should foster adequate RULES and KNOWLEDGE to support local producers and foster cooperation; and, adopt LOCAL POLICIES to increase awareness and perceived value for citizens and visitors.

An example comes from Kecskemét, where the municipality founded the Aranyhomok Subregion Development Association in 1999 in order to assure the opportunity for farmers and producers to keep their traditional farming methods as well as the local traditional gastro-cultural varieties. The association is responsible for maintaining cooperation among the subregions of Kecskemét, and organising programs and events where producers from these regions can have the opportunity to sell their products and share their knowledge. Through the Slow Food-CE project Kecskemét Municipality has been given the opportunity to concentrate this work on producers from Kecskemét and its 50 kilometre region as well as to draw people’s attention to the Slow Food movement, the importance of locally produced products, and the intrinsic value of GCH.

## 6.2. CONNECT, ENGAGE, LEARN, ACT

Effective strategies and initiatives for the valorisation of GCH need to actively involve local stakeholders

Even if public institutions should have a leading role in the development and implementation of GCH valorisation policies, to build a comprehensive and integrated strategy, with a multi-level approach, it is essential to engage citizens and local actors of the food system in participatory planning, implementation and monitoring of the initiatives.

To engage a virtuous dialogue and fruitful cooperation with stakeholders, it is fundamental to establish common ground, accepting that differences are good and should be embraced because diversity will bring added value and innovation to the GCH valorisation process.

It is very important to properly start the stakeholder involvement process in order to prepare the ground for long-term engagement, cooperation and synergies with the relevant players in the food system.

To effectively engage local stakeholders is very important to:

- LISTEN and acknowledge the voices of all players and identify COMMON NEEDS and SHARED VALUES AND VISIONS
- Build a COMMON FRAMEWORK, but LET STAKEHOLDERS FREELY EXPRESS THEIR IDEAS to valorise their competences and identity
- Be BRAVE enough to CHANGE DIRECTION if the chosen path does not match the territorial needs expressed by the stakeholders
- BUILD TRUST and respect the agreement, making their time and commitment worthy

## 6.3. MEASURE TO IMPROVE

The GCH valorisation policies and initiatives should be constantly assessed, monitored and evaluated

The constant motioning of the progress of the GCH valorisation initiatives is essential to foster the virtuous cycle of CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT and to enable more effective POLICY DECISIONS based on the analysis of the results obtained.

Site-specific key performance indicators should be identified in order to measure the social, economic and environmental impact of the actions and policies carried out. The indicators should be selected at the beginning of the planning phase through a participatory approach.

At the same time, best practices should be investigated and analysed in order to establish comparative benchmarks and start networking and cooperation with other cities facing similar challenges.

## 6.4. RELAUNCH THE DIALOGUE BETWEEN URBAN AND RURAL DIMENSIONS

**Strengthening rural-urban linkages and fostering connection between primary producers and consumers is the key to securing well-functioning supply chains and sustainable ecosystems**

It is important not to treat food as only a commodity in the context of a continual increase in production and profit. Promoting cooperation among and with primary producers and fostering community-led local development initiatives through participatory approaches would enhance the development of local food systems, promoting them and - more specifically - prioritising local varieties, breeds, products and biodiversity, which include a large set of issues such as, for example, dealing with seeds (ancient, indigenous seeds), agricultural use of the landscape (agroforestry, pasturing animal husbandry), and more.

The promotion of the km0 initiative to valorise short supply chains, such as farmers' markets, green public procurement, community-supported agriculture, could represent a very effective means of reinforcing the relationship between urban and rural dimensions and between producers and consumers. In the last few years, there has been an increasing consciousness and demand for healthy food, and traditional and original tastes. This is why direct sales are so important and increasingly popular among conscious customers.

The competent public institutions should also support rural development strategies and projects by providing assistance and guidance to civil society organisations composed of local producers in submitting project applications for fundraising, especially in the framework of the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) and in disseminating information and knowledge through the media.

## 6.5. SUSTAINABILITY IS THE KEYWORD FOR LOCAL ECOSYSTEMS

**Promoting sustainable agricultural practices and actions to face climate change must be part of GCH valorisation strategies**

A further concrete step for policy makers would be to enhance the resilience of local producers by encouraging agroecological networks: involving and activating primary producers to represent their interests and philosophy not just for their own benefit, but also for the welfare of society as a whole. Improving the management of natural resources in agriculture by supporting traditional primary producers in protecting biological diversity and valorising agroecological farming practices will boost resilience of the territories involved. It is important to map biodiversity to support sustainable management and protection of local species. Moreover, initiatives to increase capacity along the food value chain should be supported, fostering the sharing of traditional knowledge among the farmers themselves (older generations teaching younger generations) in order to not only protect traditional sustainable practices, but to relaunch job creation in the agricultural sector and prepare the ground for food innovation by the new actors involved.

Furthermore, since many cities are committed to developing specific policies to address both climate mitigation and adaptation - in particular the EU city signatories of the Covenant of Mayors that are developing their Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plans (SECAP) - it is very important that these policies include concrete actions and measures to prevent and build resilience against disasters and climate risks in agriculture.

## 6.6. COMMUNICATE AND EDUCATE TO MAKE THE DIFFERENCE

**Good communication and educational activities are fundamental factors for the success of a GCH valorisation strategy**

A further policy recommendation comes from the project pilot actions of many partners and relates to the importance of effective communication: in very 'busy' contexts, such as the urban areas, the signals must be very clear in order to reach recipients, whether they are citizens and businesses, or other institutions.

Place branding is a crucial strategy to be carefully planned and should be built with the engagement of stakeholders to exchange ideas, thoughts, knowledge and information with the support of communication experts in order to study effective communication channels for targeted audiences and assure successful promotion of GCH valorisation initiatives.

Educational activities connected to local gastronomic heritage, resources, sustainability, nutrition, and food preparation, are also very important to sustain effective GCH valorisation actions, promote behavioural changes and facilitate community empowerment. These activities should raise awareness and disseminate knowledge about the impact that food choices have on health, environment, territorial development and the future of local communities. Introducing food literacy is essential to promoting the establishment of successful food systems based on local production, food variety and traditional food cultures.

At a higher level, it is also important to be able to effectively disseminate, communicate and potentially transfer the results of the GCH valorisation strategies at regional, national and international levels. The promotion of territorial partnerships at all levels and the active participation in European projects and networks should be widely enhanced to share good practices and knowledge, to learn from each other and to improve food policies and strategies.

**Interreg**   
CENTRAL EUROPE European Union  
European Regional  
Development Fund  
**SlowFood-CE**

