



WORKSHOP ON CEREALS, June 27 and 28 2014, at the POMAK villages, northern Greece

As part of

LEONARDO DA VINCI partnership “GROW”

“Growing agricultural biodiversity: knowledge and practice in Europe”

Organized by Peliti

## Training on exploratory missions for collecting traditional local knowledge related to the cultivation of local varieties of cereals

Dear Friends

We have decided to propose a very special workshop which offers a rare training experience. It implies acquaintance with the traditional agricultural experience of the inhabitants of an area where this tradition continues to be transmitted from father to son. This is what happens at the POMAK villages in northern Greece. In this area farmers are self-sufficient to a very large degree, saving their own seeds and it is possible to also see people who use wooden plows.

### Proposed Programme

#### Friday June 27, 2014

Arrival at Mesohori, Paranesti area where the headquarters of Peliti are. You need 3hrs by car from the Thessaloniki airport to the area of Paranesti where Peliti is located.

#### 14:00 lunch

**16:00** Biodiversity tour at the larger Paranesti area. The central Rodhopi mountains can be characterized as a natural ARK due to their richness in biodiversity partly due to the fact that 10.000 years ago there were no glaciers here.

**20:00** Dinner and discussion about the next day's workshop

#### Saturday April 28 2014

**04:00** Breakfast

**05:00** Departure for the villages of the POMAKS to meet the local cultivators of **Spring Rye**.

The POMAKS are a minority that live on the Rodhopi mountains in Greece and in Bulgaria. The spring rye is a traditional variety of rye which is planted every spring after the end of the frost period and harvested after three months. It is mowed and threshed by hand.

The journey from Paranesti to the POMAK villages takes 2 hrs by 4X4 car as most of journey is through mountainous dirt roads. If you rent a car from Thessaloniki it has to be 4X4. Pomacs are the only inhabitants of this area, they are Muslims by religion and they speak a dialect influenced by greek, bulgarian and turkish etc. This area does not look like Greece as women wear scarves and in the villages you see minarets.

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**07:00 - 07:30** Arrival at Diasparto, acquaintance with the settlement which is located near the greek - bulgarian border.

**07:30 - 09:30** Exchange of experiences with local cultivators

**09:30 - 12:00** Acquaintance with the farming area, bathing interval at the local natural hot baths- (you need to have your swimming suit)

**12:00 - 13:30** Visit to the settlement of Kotani, discussion with the locals about local varieties.

**13:30 - 14:30** Lunch at a traditional tavern in Kotani, discussion about local knowledge and local seeds

**14.30-17.00** Acquaintance with the farming area

**17.00** Departure for Paranesti, the journey takes 1.5-2 hrs

**19.30** Dinner

**Sunday June 29**

**8.00** Breakfast and departure

**Coordination** by Panagiotis SAINATOUDIS

### **Personal message by Panagiotis**

I first visited the POMAK villages in March 1997. This is an introvert society and although I knew that they were saving seeds I initially had huge difficulties in finding them. It was even difficult to approach the locals through their teachers and doctors. In August 1997 a friend took me to Diasparto, a 100% self- sufficient village community with no electricity or telephone lines. I was very impressed. In 1999 while I was looking for potato growers I happened to pass from the Soumac community, my heart was beating and in two weeks I had rented a house in the area and I lived there for two years. It was a great personal experience through which I gained a lot of knowledge about local varieties and local knowledge related to them.

Panagiotis Sainatoudis

PS

In 2009, young Adam Forbes a defender of local varieties from the US visited the POMAC villages, you can read about his impressions at the following links:

<http://forbesfarmer.blogspot.gr/2009/06/remote-mountain-adventure.html>

<http://forbesfarmer.blogspot.gr/>

<http://forbesfarmer.blogspot.gr/2009/06/magical-day.html>



<http://www.peliti.gr>

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