



Bringing Organisations & Network Development  
to higher levels in the Farming sector in Europe

## PRESENTATIONS OF THE PARTICIPANTS TO THE FRENCH STUDY TOUR



This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation program under grant agreement No 774208

## Nikolina POKUPEK - CROATIA



I'm Nikolina, im 29 years old woman with master's degree in pharmacy who decided to farm. ☺

I'm wife to the love of my life Ivan and mother of beautiful girl Mirjam and charming little boy Šimun. We live in small village near small town of Križevci and we produce above organic food.

My role model is lunatic farmer Joel Salatin and I'm rising chicken and pigs his way (outdoors, moved daily for always fresh grass and bugs and clean environment). Besides raising animals, we grow animal feed and some fruits and vegetables.

Everything we produce we sell to our end customers through delivery to their doorstep. We deliver our products almost in all of Croatia. We are also working with two CSAs.

In my way to creating better world, God connected me with 5 other farmers with whom I'm building co-operative in the moment. We sell everything together and also purchasing everything we use in our production together. This way, we are building more stable business and lowering the cost of production.

Through our work and strong connections that we are building with our customers we teach them about the importance of buying from local businesses and local farmers. They come to our farms to visit us, ask us questions, to see where their food comes from and to connect with nature.

We are making all sorts of ready-to-eat healthy meals, pre-prepared meals, snacks, jams, sweets, etc. to make life and consummation of healthy food easier for our customers and that is very well recognized and appreciated.

Our mission is to regenerate ecosystem by using animals natural way of behavior, to grow healthy happy animals which will feed healthy happy people. On the way, we want to educate customers to ask for more healthy food and farmers to produce it.



This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation program under grant agreement No 774208

## Gazmend XHELILI - KOSOVO

I work for Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Development

My position is High official for training and capacity building.

As a job description I have to make sure that our farmers and municipality advisors have all the support they need from government institution.

In Kosovo we have over 37 region that are Municipality each of them have Agricultural sector and local advisors which is our main contact point to reach the farmers.

We visit farmers with our municipality advisors and advise them on the problem they face.

Every year we take over 1000 soil samples for our farmers as well as in plant protection identifying the problem thru our lab.

For example we identify if there is a problem that they face and we will arrange the training and find the expert on that subject, we do advise them on how to apply on the grants that the government and other project.

I could go on and on about my activity which is much spread on agriculture activity.



This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation program under grant agreement No 774208

## Jacek BENDER - POLAND



I am a peasant. I live in Poland, near Kraków.

My farm Brodataty (Barbapapa) is around 2ha. I grow heritage varieties of grains, vegetables, herbs and sell them weekly at the local market and the surplus to the food cooperative. I keep also some animals: 9 ducks :) to fight slug plague. I am interested in different approaches: permaculture, biodynamics, traditional farming and try to use them together.

I try to educate locally kids and adults also, in the matter of sustainable growing, living. I am also a part of food cooperative and a part of food sovereignty movement.

Besides, I like do some bike tours with my family, building with natural materials, analog photography and listening to people and music.



This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation program under grant agreement No 774208

## Irina POMPUS - Republic of MOLDOVA



Date of birth 19.12.1986

Contact information:

GSM: +37369129676;

e-mail: [irina.pompus@usmf.md](mailto:irina.pompus@usmf.md)

### Studies:

- Licenciate in Natural Science (2008)
- Master Degree in Natural Science (2009-2011), Specialization Biodiversity and Protection of Natural Resources
- Master Degree in Horticultural Science (2016-2018)

### Job:

- Researcher in Centre of Cultivation of Medicinal Plants of SUMPh "Nicolae Testemitanu"
- In addition to research, I am also also a farmer.
- Our farm is family-owned and is administered by me. We have a blackberry plantation on the 1,5 ha surface, founded in 2014. There are two blackberry varieties on our farm, one ripens earlier, Arapaho, and the other one medium-late - Triple Crown. To provide the consumer with fresh fruits as long as possible.
- As a berry grower, I am also a member of the association of berry growers "Pomusoarele Moldovei" ("Moldova berries"), so the obtained knowledge will be spread among the farmers in our association and those interested.



This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation program under grant agreement No 774208

## Andrei ZBANCA - Republic of MOLDOVA



Date of birth : 1st May 1976

married, two children (two boys).

Contact information:

GSM: +37369201414;

e-mail: [andzbanca@yahoo.com](mailto:andzbanca@yahoo.com)

### Job description and experience:

1. Since 1998, I have been working at the State Agrarian University of Moldova and currently I am a university lecturer at the Business and Administration Department, Economics. In the years 1999-2002, I passed the thesis of a doctor in economics at the same university. The lessons taught at the faculty are: the business plan; planning and organizing the entrepreneurial activity; the foundations of entrepreneurship, the elaboration and management of projects. I am the author and co-author of over 50 publications: 1 manual, 4 guides, 42 articles in local and international magazines and journals.
2. Over the last 18 years, I have been practicing consultancy services, especially in the area of agribusiness development and attracting private sector investment. I have experience working on the implementation of various international projects and services to develop sectoral studies. The personal specialization is in the budgeting and development of a high-value agricultural sector and the promotion of investments for agricultural holdings. Now, I am an independent consultant and free-lancer expert in agribusiness development at the National Federation of Agricultural Producers from Moldova AGROinform.
3. From 2013, I have created a peasant farm that specializes in the production of fruits (apples and plums). From this year on, my enterprise is a member of the Cooperative Verifruct, which also produces fruit and provides services to the members of 5 households.

The structure of cultivated areas is 68.18 ha of orchard and 50 ha of arable land (including additional 3 ha of secondary roads). The orchard area consists of 32.82 ha of apples and 35.36 ha of plums. The production of cooperatives members is approx. 800 tons of apples and 500 tons of plums in a varied assortment and enjoying demand on the local and regional market.

The market is both local and export (specialized firms export). The export is mainly done in Russia, the Ukraine and Europe. The local market is characterized by two aspects: (i) fresh state - agricultural market, supermarket and schools / kindergartens, and (ii) processing (dryers and canning factories).

Trade structure: export - 60%, local market - 20% and processing - 20%.



This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation program under grant agreement No 774208

Long-term vision (what are the plans of the group for the future)

- ✚ At the production level: planting 5 ha of berries, 10 ha of cherry, 5 ha of summer apples, 30 ha of plums. Assembling the drip irrigation system for semi-intensive apple orchard 12.6 ha and 5 ha of berries.
- ✚ At the level of value chain development: The core strategy is capital investment in storing and processing fruit to create added value in the marketing of fresh and processed fruit. Cooperatives members will assemble a 600 tons refrigerator and build a dryer to process (dry) fruit.
- ✚ At marketing level: Cooperatives certification and implementation of GLOBALGAP quality standards. Cooperatives registration in the list of exporters for direct access to the export of fruit on regional markets.
- ✚

**The problems faced by the group:** 1. Operational Issues (Internal Work Issues) 2. The biggest problem is the lack of financial resources to diminish the risks and to develop the business in a faster time. 3. The protection of orchards is very difficult and costly, and the selection of preparations is difficult and their quality is not always the best. 4. Development issues (expanding membership, expanding the business, making investments, accessing sales outlets, etc.) 5. The production of fruits must be competitive, of high quality and packaged in the proper way, respecting these aspects is not a problem with accessing the market. 6. Sustainable development is dependent on the mobilization of financial resources and the well-founded implementation of investments.

**Specific business-specific training topics:** (i) Developing the value chain Modernizing and improving the operational process (ii) More efficient promotion of goods and especially of fruit (iii) Developing and promoting the brand (iv) Effective ways of promoting the company (v) Risk management and investment pricing based on existing risks (vi) Association and cooperation of farmers (vii) Effective ways of working members within producer groups (viii) abilities and to consult and develop the business of the group of fruit producers more efficiently and sustainably.

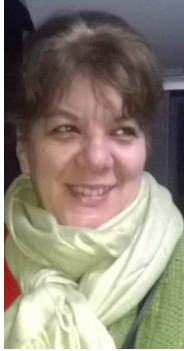
The skills and knowledge gained during the training program will be disseminated to other entrepreneurs and farmers in the training and consultancy activities.

For me, it's important to be part of the training group because I am a member of a relatively young producer group (where I will disseminate the information / knowledge) and also provide specialized consultancy services and training for farmers / entrepreneurs (to whom I will provide all these experiences and knowledge). I am currently involved in the educational process at the State Agrarian University of Moldova, I provide consultancy / training services to entrepreneurs and I am a member of a fruit producers' group. All of these were the basis for completing this application and favored the presence of me in this training group.



This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation program under grant agreement No 774208

## Karolina STAMENKOVIĆ - SERBIA



Place of residence: Babušnica

Tel. +381 69 684 735, +381 10 384 735

E-mail: [zecentar@yahoo.com](mailto:zecentar@yahoo.com)

[kstamenkovic1@gmail.com](mailto:kstamenkovic1@gmail.com)

[www.ognjista.rs](http://www.ognjista.rs)

### Employment

Founder and president of the non-governmental organisation  
"Handicrafts of Lužnica - W.E.C." (Women's Ethno Centre)

### Profession

Graphic Design Technician

I have been engaged in social impact projects for almost 10 years now. We started by helping empower women between 45 and 55 and the distribution of aid to the elderly in the snowed-in villages of our municipality. We then organized help to children with disabilities in rural areas. We also engaged actively in preserving the traditional crafts from our region, and managed to bring it to the Internet.

In 2016 our Association Luznica Handicrafts started the production of organic food with 12 households in the form of a cooperative. We managed to source 10 greenhouses for women from poor village households.

Each year we participate in fairs and exhibitions with the aim to show the results of work of ladies from our region and to collect help for children with disabilities and the elderly.

We have produced several documentaries - "The Lužnica Candy Man" ("*Lužnički bonbondžija*"), "Sentenced to Solitude" ("*Osuđeni na samoću*"), "Traditional Crafts in Lužnica" ("*Stari zanati u Lužnici*")

I personally love weaving and have frequently taught women how to make woven rugs from our area. My dream is to include all the women from our villages in the organic food production and the preservation of the traditional handicrafts so that they can become one day, why not, well known across the world.



This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation program under grant agreement No 774208



## Dan CISMAS – ROMANIA



Dan Cismas together with his wife, Tincuta and their four children are administrating the Topa Organic Farm since 2009. The farm has a total size of 43 hectares which is entirely certified organic. It's a mixt farm, having 15 cows and 13 calfs, 5 pigs and 40 chicken. Also, Dan produces corn, wheat, vegetables and medicinal plants. All products are processed on-farm and are sold through the local cooperative shop or through direct marketing to restaurants and different customers via the internet. Their main products are different types of cheeses, jams and pickled vegetables along with flour from wheat.

Dan is a coordination committee member of the Romanian peasant organisation Eco Ruralis and is active on the thematics of land rights and the European Common Agricultural Policy and is very interested in learning more about local famer-to-farmer cooperation and ways to market products in cooperation on a local level. Also, Dan is very interested in ways to upscale cooperation around political representation of farmers rights on a regional and inter-regional level.



This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation program under grant agreement No 774208

## Katarzyna Oan WRONA - POLAND

I'm Katarzyna Wrona from Krakow in the south of Poland, a mother of two matured daughters.

A few years ago, in 2012, I joined a food cooperative that operates in the city called "Koop Wawelska" which directly buys produce from farmers. I quickly became very enthusiastic with the concept, the imperative for healthy, locally grown, food and the different people and knowledge within the community. It is now an important part of my life and has had an effect on my decisions for the future as you will come to understand. The Koop has grown steadily and has undergone different changes, ideas which have all come from it's members and been agreed upon in meetings.

Through members and friends of the Koop I heard about the Nyeleni Food Sovereignty gathering, organised by La Via Campesina, in the Autumn of 2016. We went as part of a Polish delegation of like minded souls from all over Poland and had the profound feeling, finally, that we were not alone. Since the meeting in Cluj, Romania, we have now set up a new national initiative at the beginning of 2017 called Nyeleni Polska and we have been organising and promoting ever since, through presentations and campaigns for the food sovereignty movement, working at bringing together all the similarly frustrated agricultural organisations that operate in Poland. We are young but our work has led to us having our first National Conference at the start of this year in Warsaw where we had 160 people attend our first meeting, with 20 ecological organisations represented.

I have also started working on one of my dreams, which is to move back to the land and start to produce food myself within a small community of friends on a smallholding in Malopolska, South-East of Krakow. We are all people who have lived in cities for the majority of our lives and now live in an old agricultural community that has been slowly depleting as the young have had more opportunity to work abroad, to go to University or find work in cities. This is not an uncommon story and it is my wish to bring the communities together through understanding, cooperation and trade plus, to make it easier for people to start projects like mine and reinvigorate one of the biggest agricultural nations within the EU with the highest concentration of agricultural workers.



This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation program under grant agreement No 774208

## Lilyana ISAKAJ – ALBANIA



I am Liljana Isakaj from Albania, coordinator of Adad Malore. Adad Malore is a producers organization in mountainous areas since 1996.

Adad Malore is a professional agriculture organization, an important actor in agriculture and rural development with priority on fruit culture. In twenty two years, Adad Malore has invested in the establishment of several services in order to fulfill member's needs mainly in fruit growing sector.

Our mainly functions are:

Production and sharing of technical-economic references;

Technical-economic advices, development of initiatives and support for members of organization but not only;

Sectorial and territory development (structuring actors at territorial and value chain level);

Lobbying for producers interests, representation of proposing power.

It is my pleasure to participate in this project and to get know and share experiences with you.

FALEMINDERIT!

Cel: 00355 68 20 66 483

E-mail: [adad.malore@gmail.com](mailto:adad.malore@gmail.com) ; [lilianaisaku@yahoo.fr](mailto:lilianaisaku@yahoo.fr)



This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation program under grant agreement No 774208

## Arpad TOTH – SERBIA



Address: Milutina Uskokovica 85

24000 Subotica, Serbia

E-mail: lonewolfsubotica@gmail.com

Phone: +381 63 89 57 011

My name is Arpad. I live in the City of Subotica, which is located at the northern part of the Republic of Serbia, near the Hungarian border. The agriculture is one of the main activities in the region.

During the last nine years my main interest and occupation was to develop a small chili pepper farm. In the beginning it was just a few seeds of exotic peppers, mostly unknown in my region as a culture that can be successfully plant and grow in the given climate conditions. First four years I spent in experimenting with various species from Indian region, Africa, Southern and Central America. Those experiments include soil type, temperature range, quantity of daylight, etc. As a result, I came to conclusion that most of the species of the three main chili pepper regions can successfully grow in the region.

Today, it is a small family farm with a few thousands of plants, produced from our own reproduction seeds. We close the circle of production, which means from seeds to final products (dried chili flakes, grinded chili pepper, fermented peppers, sauces, etc.). Since, I have found this culture very interesting and profitable, two years ago I created a Facebook group (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/432211226965556/>) as a strictly educational and thematic one (commercial buy and sell is restricted) for one goal, to get acquainted members and visitors with exotic pepper growing at any level. One of the main reasons for doing that was the health benefit of chili peppers, which is not widely known in Serbia. The second reason, but not least important was to connect mostly small chili farmers with experts in that field, and to create some form of network. The group is fully functional and growing and that is the indicator that small chili farmers realized the need of being cooperative with other farmers for the benefit of all.

As a participant of the BOND Project I represent the Farmers Association of Subotica, where I am a volunteer. Since its establishment (2002) the Association represents the interest of famers. Main activities are: education, advisory, study trips, advocacy. Its aim is to help farmers in getting better position on the market, to get acquainted with new technologies and learn about good practice. This is why we have found the concept of the BOND Project very interesting. It gives an opportunity to learn about the good practice in the region, to share our experiences and to be a part of an important project



This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation program under grant agreement No 774208

with a long term objectives and result. The goal of the project and the goal of our Association are very similar, as our aim is to build a strong network between farmers, between farmer`s organizations at home and abroad and the policy makers. My opinion is that valuable knowledge and experience I gain through the participation in the project will contribute to make our organization stronger and in that way it will enhance the quality of our work for the benefit of the farmers. Furthermore, this project gives an opportunity to make valuable contacts with other organizations in the region and that would strengthen our organization, too it opens a great possibility to cooperate on different levels.



This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation program under grant agreement No 774208

## Hosting organisations : National/Regional Federation of Cuma



A Cuma is a group of men and women, farmers who buy farm machinery in common. On their own, the investment would be enormous, but together they share the costs and access to new technology and therefore improve their work conditions.

**A little bit of history.** The Cuma are farm machinery cooperatives which developed in France just after World War II to respond to the urgent necessity of massively mechanizing French agriculture. At the time, the watchword was to feed France and the young Europe! And to achieve this, farmers needed machinery. Individual purchase was out of the question for most farmers, and as a result, they were encouraged to get together. Very early on, Cuma developed to buy a tractor (within the framework of the Marshall plan).

**A technical innovation:** right from the start, the Cuma' mission has been to support the modernization of agriculture whilst offering high performance machinery to a large number of farmers. And nowadays as well as in the past, farmers belong to a Cuma for the same reason: "being able to get good equipment at low cost". The shared equipment has followed the evolution of the farmers' needs. And since the needs vary, one can get all sorts of equipment in a Cuma, such as tractors, trailers, mowers and straw presses, soil cultivation equipment, stockbreeders equipment, chain harrows, GPSs, oil expellers and shredders. Let us stop now this long (and quite mixed!) list of machines, to underline the fact that the Cuma have always been ahead of their time. In the past, they operated the very first tractors and the first pneumatic silo loaders: they were one the major incentives of the "fodder revolution". Nowadays, with mechanical maintenance equipment and the green energy production, Cuma help farmers to protect and respect the environment, for themselves, as well as in the general interest. Sharing the investment among several farms to purchase new technology means decreasing the financial risk; if the technology turns out to be satisfactory, the multiplier effect is tenfold.



**Local innovation:** paradoxically, it was the 80's and the 90's, when the number of farmers dropped down to less than 10 % of the working population, that the Cuma became aware of their role in the territory. At present, farmers represent less than 5 % of the working population (i.e. 600.000 farmers),



This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation program under grant agreement No 774208

but they occupy more than 2/3 of the territory. In desertified areas, the Cuma is sometimes the sole economic actor. Since the Cuma has both the knowledge, the equipment and the organization, the municipality or the community of municipalities will ask the Cuma to maintain the paths or to clear snow from the roads.

**Social innovation:** in the past, machines “relieved pain” for men. The Cuma have therefore largely contributed to the improvement of working and living conditions. Nowadays there is a lack of workforce. Using a work bank (the bank keeps track of everyone’s contributions and thus makes it possible to organize an exchange of manhours) can help secure projects at least at that level. In most cases, one farm alone cannot afford to hire an employee, but when several farms get together, it becomes possible. Without pretending to have a monopoly, the Cuma can claim they have always been groups of people who stand together and act accordingly.

C.U.M.A. is not a noun in French, U stands for using, M for machinery and A for agricultural. But the very first letter is a C that stands for Cooperative.

**A collective answer.** Cooperating means to do with, and specifically here it means to do with other people. Any Cuma relies in the background on a group of farmers capable of organizing themselves to respond to their own needs in terms of equipment and employees.

Decisions are democratic. In a way similar to how French associations are organized, the Cuma will appoint volunteers (a president, a treasurer, and someone in charge of the equipment). They will be in charge of managing different projects (within commissions, boards and committees). Each member is requested to voice his opinion on major decisions in an assembly: each member has one and only one vote (one person = one vote), whatever turnover or acreage achieved with the Cuma.

An economic and a social perspective. Obviously the first goal of the Cuma is to reinforce farmers revenue, by reducing mechanization and overhead costs... definitely taking part in the economy. But with a different approach to economy, whereby people work and decide together (a Cuma includes at least four members), in a community (a Cuma will only operate in a precise geographic area), with people who are committed in the long term so that the whole group benefits from the investment, rather than only a handful of smart guys.

These three features are not typical of Cuma only. They are (usually) shared by all cooperatives, whether agricultural or not, French or foreign: “A cooperative is an autonomous association of persons united voluntarily to meet their common economic, social, and cultural needs and aspirations through a jointly-owned and democratically-controlled enterprise” (international definition given by the International Cooperative Alliance). In fact, and sometimes unnoticed, the Cuma are also taking part in creating more solidarity, reinforcing communities and even generating social interactions within the economy. Thus making the economy more social.



This project has received funding from the European Union’s Horizon 2020 research and innovation program under grant agreement No 774208