



# Focus groups discussions, WP8 Results

Focus – Balkans MT6

Trieste, Italy, 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2010

# Methodology

- **FGD 1 – Skopje, 8 participants**
- Participants took active participation in the discussion. The discussion was generally on intellectual level given the participants educational background and it complied with the topic. Discussion was highly influenced by the participants and the moderators had only minor role in directing it on the core topic few times
- **FGD 2 – Strumica, 8 participants**
- In the second focus group discussion participants were a little bit shy at the start of the discussion and needed more explanation by the moderators of the discussion but after that they had a lot to say and explain on the topic. Versatile background in participant's settlement put the discussion into the interesting mode and helped all of the participants to learn some new things on the traditional food from each other

# Perception of traditional food concept

- Participants from both focus groups had relatively firm choice of traditional products comparing to the others that were displayed and they not consider them as traditional
- The impression of the moderators was that Macedonian consumers have clear perception of the traditional product when it is displayed together with the product which is not commonly considered as traditional in our country.
- Participants not from Macedonian ethnic background included some of the products which were not displayed by moderators as traditional
- Taste, tradition of preparing the products, the heritage throughout the years, remembrance and relation to their predecessors and health were main categories mentioned as most important about the description of what traditional product may be perceived like.
- Most of the perceptions of the traditional products were positive. Some negative perceptions about the products were related to their impact of health when consumed.

# Traditional food consumption and purchasing

- Participants living in urban settlements in both focus groups purchase traditional products as they purchase most of the food for the household i.e. once a week on green markets or in supermarkets. Participants from rural places stated that they usually grow the fruits and vegetables needed to prepare the traditional dish
- Urban participants didn't remember of the last consumption moment of the traditional dish or product. Most of them stated that they have eaten traditional dish in the restaurant with some members of the family (husband, wife, partner, children)
- Some participants living in rural settlements enjoy preparing traditional food for them and for the family and that is why they eat it frequently (2/week)
- Most common traditional dish consumed by the participants in the focus groups is the beans and most common traditional product is ajvar.
- Traditional dishes are regular appearance during the holidays and when people have days off work
- Traditional dishes are also eaten in the restaurants and with people who haven't tried it as paradigm of Macedonian traditional cuisine.

# Image of traditional food

- Urban participants - concerns about the healthiness of the traditional products and dishes. Macedonian traditional dishes are very caloric and that may lead to the negative influence of health
- That perception was not present among the participants living in rural settlements
- Traditional products were generally considered as natural products by participants in both focus groups
- The conclusion of the majority of the participants in both focus groups was that the quality of the traditional product is combination of many factors but the most important is safety and then taste of the product/dish
- Participants from both focus groups didn't have information related to introducing labels showing the origin of the product in Macedonia
- Macedonian traditional products should be protected in some way, possible with label but not necessary, since it is more important to be protected by some national or international legal regulation as Macedonian traditional products

# General conclusion

- Traditional food is very frequent topic of discussion among Macedonian population in general. Execution of these two focus groups discussions confirmed that
- Most of the perceptions of the traditional products were positive
- Some negative perceptions about the products were related to their impact of health when are consumed
- Urban people purchase less frequently at the green market or supermarket
- Rural people grow ingredients to prepare products or dishes
- Difference in consumption moment by participants living in big city, town or village
- Quality = combination of many factors, safety and taste the most important
- Participants not aware of possible national regulation on protecting traditional products but agreed that it is important that kind of regulation to exist and be put in place.