

# WP8 focus groups on traditional food

First conclusions

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# Reminder: Objectives of focus groups in WP8

- Identify how consumers elicit what traditional food is.
- Identify consumption contexts of traditional food.
- Determine attributes of traditional products that we will use for conjoint analysis.
- Specify and confirm hypotheses linked to traditional food consumption.

# Implementation of focus groups

- 2 focus groups / Balkans countries
  - 104 participants
  - One focus group in capital / one in a major town far away the capital
- In some countries there was a strong urban/rural difference
- No difficulties to recruit people in all countries
  - Interesting discussion in all focus groups

# Purchasing and cooking habits

The habits are similar in all countries:

- Most participants cook and eat at home.
  - Most participants rarely eat in restaurant, often due to a lack of money.
  - Interest for food and pleasure to speak about traditional food.
- Strong involvement of participants in the choice and preparation of meal.
- All participants eat traditional food.

# Focus on examples of traditional food

## Prior to focus groups:

- asked for a short list of traditional products (or dishes) to each WBC partner

## In focus groups:

- asked for list of 5 examples of traditional food to each participant – spontaneous, no discussion
- presented a set of products and dishes, asked participants which were traditional and why

# Traditional food spontaneously mentioned

## Some are found in several countries:

**Sarma:** BiH, Croatia , Mne, Serbia

**Pies:** BiH , Mne, Serbia

**Soups and stews** (vegetable, beef, veal, chicken, lamb): BiH, Cr, Mk, Se, SI

**Beans:** BiH, Croatia, Mk, Mne, Serbia

**Gruels** with water or milk (buckwheat in Slovenia, corn in BiH, Mne and Serbia (kačamak))

**Ajvar:** Mk, Serbia

**Cabbage** – special type: BiH, Croatia , Mne, Serbia

**Cheese** – special types: BiH, Croatia , Mk, Mne, Serbia

**Dry ham, sausage:** BiH, Mne, Slovenia...

## Some are country-specific:

ričet (SI), shirden, pastrmajlija, crushed paprika... (Mk)

# Traditional food spontaneously mentioned

- Geographical differences:
  - Slovenia at one end, Macedonia at the other.
  - To a lesser extent? Mediterranean – Continental
- No obvious differences in names of types of food between both focus groups in each country
- Some foods that were assumed to be traditional or local were rarely spontaneously mentioned by consumers (e.g. ajvar and belmuz in Serbia)

# Consumers spontaneous answers / partners' answers

Short list provided by partners beforehand: We asked mostly for **products**. Consumers think of **dishes, home-made food, everyday food**.

Product	Listed by partners	Listed by consumers
Cheese (special types, sheep, goat)	BiH, Cr, Mk, Mne, Se, SI	BiH, Cr, Mk, Mne, Se
Ham	BiH, Cr, Mne, Se, SI	BiH, Cr, Mne
Honey	BiH, Mk, Mne, Se, SI	BiH, Mk
Sausages (dry, smoked)	Cr, Se, SI	Cr
Olive oil	Cr, Mne, SI	
Ajvar	Se, Mk	Se, Mk
Beans	Mk	BiH, Cr, Mk, Mne, Se, SI
Soups and stews	Mk	BiH, Cr, Mk, Se, SI
Gruels		BiH, Mne, Se, SI
Cabbage		BiH, Mne, Se, Cr
Gibanica	SI	Se, SI



# Food presented in focus groups and chosen as traditional

A wide variety of foods:

**dishes** (some had been listed as traditional),

**cheeses, hams, sausages**

**home-made**, made by **farmers**, made by large **industries**

strong **brands** on the market for a **long time**

**sweets** and **savouries**

presented either on a **plate**, or **ready-made** and **packed**

...

Often list longer than in guidelines

Provoked discussion and good linkages with the rest of the FG discussion

# Food presented in focus groups and chosen as traditional

- Some products which were not spontaneously listed were often selected as traditional:
  - some cheeses or other special dairy products
  - honey
  - in specific countries: Slatko, cvarci, kranjska klobasa, olives...
- Participants have diverging opinions on which foods were traditional, in particular for some industrial products or food that comes from other regions.

# Food presented in focus groups and chosen as traditional

**Regional differences:** Cr, BiH. **Not** in Se, Mt, or Mk.

In smaller towns, rural areas, industrially-made dishes not as traditional as in capitals (e.g. sarma in BiH, vampi and ričet in Slovenia).

Frequent discussion:

Food “per se”

Food **industrially** produced, **packed**, with a **brand** name, sold in a **supermarket**

Young participants tend to consider brands related to their childhood as traditional (bananica in Se and BiH, Cocta in SI)

Brands that have been on the market for a long time can be considered traditional only if they have an emotional value (e.g. Jošt cheese vs. Cocta in Slovenia)

# Description of traditional food : two oppositions

## Traditional food

- Home made
- Home-made by family
- Dish
- Specific recipe
- Linked to childhood, presence for many generations
- Local food or specific of a place
- Long time presence in the market
- Eaten during festive moments (Christmas, Easter)
- Limited production
- Bought from reliable farmers or sellers
- Good taste
- Healthier

## Non traditional food

- Industrial food (pizza)
- Innovated food (Vegeta)
- Packaged food or canned food
- Exported products

# Context of consumption of traditional food

→ Last consumption moment:

Today, yesterday / Each week-end / For special occasion

Depends on participants, rural/urban, countries

→ At home / At friends or family home / At restaurant

Depends on countries

→ During holidays:

- Traditional dishes need more preparation.
- Seasonality of some products or ingredients

→ Every day / Festive moment

Depends on regions, on participants

# Image of traditional food

No strong differences between countries

- **Healthy**

- No additives, pesticides, not made industrially, home made...

- **But unhealthy**

- If too fat and too much

- **Natural**

- Due to raw stuff, natural environment

- **With high quality ?**

- Because home made

- Not necessarily in Cr, BiH, SI and Se

- **Not associated with origin labels**

- Origin labels are unknown

- Protection is important but labels are not a characteristic of traditional food

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# Conclusions

**WP8 title: “traditional food”**

Focus groups -> **“concept of traditional food large, often associated to cuisine, home-made food”**

Our first impressions on WP8 were focussed on products, **especially PGI PDO type products: Difference with consumers’ idea**

**Vocabulary problem: foods/products/dishes** in English, French, Slovenian, Croatian, etc. Can influence results.

# WP8 Hypotheses

Consumers living in rural areas and small cities eat traditional food products more often. – **depends on the country**

Consumers often identify traditional food at the opposite side of industrial and strong branded food. – **except when strong brands recall childhood**

Consumers buy traditional products especially in direct distribution channels on local markets. – **and via family or friends – depends on urban/rural lifestyle**

Traditional products are processed products based on ancient cuisine and old recipes rather than raw foodstuffs. - **Both are true**

Consumers consume **some** traditional products in “festive consumption” moments.

Consumers consume **some** traditional products in everyday life.

For consumers, traditional characteristics are more important for some categories of products than for other products – **Not really measured**

Consumers consider traditional products as “healthy food”: without preservatives, without artificial colouring, or other additives – **except fat and salt content**

Consumers perceive products with origin labels such as PDOs as traditional products.



# New hypotheses

- **Health concerns** may influence negatively consumption of traditional foods that contain a lot of fat and salt.
- *Urban rural differences?*

## Suggested by Belgrade:

- Women might perceive traditional food quality not as high as men.
- Consumers living in the rural areas eat more often local, available and recognizable traditional food.
- Consumers living in the urban areas eat well-known and recognizable traditional food with export possibilities.
- Consumers care of the quality of meat more than the quality of other types of traditional food.
- Traditional food is associated with a family concept equally by men and women.

# WORKING GROUP

- New reactions to first hypotheses
- Suggestion of new hypotheses about perception and consumption of traditional food in Balkans countries

→ 15 mn per group

→ 15 mn discussion