



## **DELIVERABLE 6.1.2. – Presentation of best practices of the area**

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of project “**Supporting Social Enterprises in combating poverty and social exclusion**” with the acronym “ **SOCIAL PLATE** ”in the framework of the European Territorial Cooperation

Program INTERREG V-A Greece - Bulgaria 2014-2020

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The Creative Effect

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This deliverable is being implemented within the SOCIAL PLATE project. The project “Supporting Social Enterprises in combating poverty and social exclusion” with the acronym "SOCIAL PLATE" is funded by the European Territorial Cooperation Program INTERREG V-A Greece - Bulgaria 2014-2020.

SOCIAL PLATE is a project to support the establishment of a social enterprise in Greece (Central Macedonia) and to promote it in Bulgaria through social franchising, i.e. cross-border transfer of social enterprise from one country to another. The purpose of the social enterprise will be the distribution of long-term products that otherwise would be waste, promoting an ecological approach and employing people from economically and professionally challenged groups to ensure the day-to-day operations of the entity. The cross-border area includes some of the most remote and isolated areas of both countries as they are characterized by rising levels of poverty and high unemployment rates, particularly among women and young people. Social entrepreneurship has managed to alleviate such problems in various regions of Europe but has not developed to a satisfactory degree in the cross-border area. Social entrepreneurship can address issues of reduced provision of services to specific populations subject to or threatened by social exclusion, while at the same time giving them access to the labor market. This worsening socio-economic context has prompted partners to create and operate social enterprises in Greece and Bulgaria that offer (a) an additional opportunity to enter into the labor market for the economically and financially vulnerable and vulnerable groups;) to seek new and sustainable resources to meet social goals for the benefit of the public. The idea of the project was developed as a solution to unemployment, poverty and social exclusion. In particular, the project aims to promote regional cohesion through the creation and promotion of social enterprises in Greece and Bulgaria, with the role not only of providing jobs to long-term unemployed and marginalized people, but also by feeding people from vulnerable social groups.

In the framework of the implementation of the actions of the "SOCIAL PLATE" project, Central Market of Thessaloniki SA, LB of the project, organized the event titled “Good Practices in Social Entrepreneurship” that took place on Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> of April 2019 at Porto Palace Hotel, room Crystal, in Thessaloniki.

The room was filled with participants coming from circles of undergraduate students, unemployed people, entrepreneurs, social enterprises representatives and representatives from local authorities. The event enjoyed great media coverage with several newspapers promoting the Press Release and the local channel TV100 interviewing most of the speakers. Highly important officials supported the event with their presence.

Mr. Papadopoulos Theodoros, vice president of Central Market of Thessaloniki S.A., welcomed the event, emphasizing the significance of the implementation of the "Social Plate" project in the cross-border area and its full implementation with the participation of regional actors while Mr Dimitrios Champidis, president of the Central Market of Thessaloniki S.A. (KATH S.A.) welcomed the participants and Mrs. Katerina Demertzi participated in the presentation of the project "SOCIAL PLATE".

Dr Kostas Nikolaou representing the People's University of Social and Solidarity Economy UnivSse presented 10 successful stories from all over the world. Mr. Lazaros Aggelou presented the PROSKALO initiative example and social enterprises created in Thessaloniki with great success such as Bios Coop.

Then, Mrs. Paschalidou Maria took the floor and presented the Social Entrepreneurship in the Municipalities and Mr. Xanthopoulos Isaak presented a good practice of social entrepreneurship in Europe.

At the end of the Round Table "Joint Policy", a round of interviews with the public followed, giving the audience the opportunity to speak and express their views.

Between the participants were representatives of Social Groceries, Professors of Universities, and representatives of social institutions.

The event was honored with his very interesting experiences by Mr. Papadopoulos Theodoros, who closed the event and express his ideas for the duration and the sustainability of the project.

## 1. Introduction

The project "**Supporting Social Enterprises in combating poverty and social exclusion**" with the acronym "**SOCIAL PLATE**", was submitted on 22.04.2016 to priority axis 4 - 'A Cross-border Area without Social Exclusion' and in particular:

- In Thematic Goal: 09 - 'Promoting social cohesion, combating poverty and discrimination'
- In investment priority: 9c – 'Providing support to social enterprises'
- In Specific Objective: 9 - 'Expanding social entrepreneurship in the cross-border area'

The duration of the project in the stage following its formal approval was from 01/08/2017 to 31/07/2019 and after an extension request is from 28/09/2017 to 27/09/2019 and is of a duration 24 months in total.

The financing contract was signed on September 28, 2017 and has the number B2.9c.03, while the partnership agreement was signed respectively by the representatives of the partners participating in the partnership on August 29, 2017.

The Central Market of Thessaloniki SA is the Lead Beneficiary of the project entitled "Supporting Social Enterprises in Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion" and under the acronym "SOCIAL PLATE", which is 85% co-financed by Community funds and 15% national funding, in framework of the European Cross-Border Cooperation Program Greece - Bulgaria 2014 - 2020 (INTERREG V-A).

In the corporate form of this project, as submitted and approved, TECHNOPOLIS - INTERNATIONAL EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTE (126.040,00 €), Municipality of Borino (106.009,40 €) and Active Youths (100.980,00 €) also participate. The total approved budget of the project "SOCIAL PLATE" is € 551.779.40, while the budget of the Central Market of Thessaloniki SA for the implementation of the deliverables to be undertaken as the Projects' Lead Beneficiary amounts to 218.750,00€.

### **Eligible Area**

The eligible area of the Programme consists of the Region of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace (Prefectures of Evros, Kavala, Xanthi, Rodopi and Drama) and the Region of Central Macedonia (Prefectures of Thessaloniki and Serres) in Greece and the South-Central Planning Region and South-West Planning Region (Districts of Blagoevgrad, Smolyan, Kardjali and Haskovo) in Bulgaria.



The Greece-Bulgaria cross-border cooperation area for the programming period 2014-2020 is identical to the current ETC programme. It extends to 40.202 km<sup>2</sup> and has a total population of 2.7 million inhabitants. It covers four territorial units at NUTS II level (Regions), and 11 territorial units at NUTS III level (Districts). The eligible area extends across the entire Greek-Bulgarian border and is neighboring with Turkey (east) and FYROM (west), both countries aspiring to access to the EU. It is part of the most south-eastern non-insular area of EU, and it is situated between three seas: the Black Sea, the Mediterranean Sea and the Ionian-Adriatic Sea. Finally, it sits at the crossroad of strategic fossil fuel pipelines supplying the EU market and TEN transport axes.

The settlement structure of the area is characterized by the presence of 10 medium-large cities (>50.000 inhabitants) which accumulate 38,2% of total population, and 25 small cities (10.000-50.000 inhabitants).

Despite the historically relatively small amounts of funds allocated, there is a long history of cooperation in the eligible area, which started with Community initiative INTERREG I (1989-1993).

**The priority axes are:**

PA 1: A Competitive and Entrepreneurship Promoting Cross-Border Area

PA 2: A Sustainable and climate adaptable Cross-Border area

PA 3: A better interconnected Cross-Border Area

PA 4: A socially inclusive Cross-Border area

PA 5: Technical Assistance

**Project background**

The cross-border area comprises some of the most remote and isolated areas of both countries as they are characterized by increasing levels of poverty and high unemployment rates especially for women and young people. Social entrepreneurship has been able to alleviate such problems in various parts of Europe but in the cross-border area it has not developed sufficiently. Social entrepreneurship can address issues of reduced service provision to specific populations subject to or threatened by social exclusion and at the same time provide them with access to the labor market. This deteriorating socio-economic context has aroused the interest of partners in the creation and operation of social enterprises in Greece and Bulgaria that offer (a) an additional opportunity to enter the labor market the professionally and financially troubled and vulnerable groups and (b) to seek new and sustainable resources to meet social goals for the benefit of the public.

The idea of the project was developed as a solution to the issues of unemployment, poverty and social exclusion. Specifically, the project aims to promote regional cohesion through the creation and promotion of social enterprises in Greece and Bulgaria with the role of not only providing long-term unemployed and marginalized people but also feeding people from vulnerable social groups. In addition, through training seminars, the project seeks to increase the skills of the unemployed, as well as people already working in other social enterprises lacking in marketing, business planning, etc.

The purpose of the project is to support the establishment of a social enterprise in Greece (Central Macedonia) and to promote it in Bulgaria through social franchising, that is, the cross-border transfer of the social enterprise from one country to another. The purpose of the social enterprise will be the distribution of long-term products that would otherwise be wasted, promoting an ecological approach while employing individuals from economically and professionally disadvantaged groups to ensure the daily operations of the entity.

### **Expected results**

The project is a solution to the perennial problems of poverty and marginalization of socially vulnerable groups such as women and young unemployed. The "Social Plate" project will create jobs for the aforementioned individuals, helping them to contribute to the local economy as well as help themselves: two NGO staff will be employed as volunteers. Volunteering is promoted after it has been shown that through socialization and community participation, people can go beyond marginalization. Using a food surplus that would otherwise end up in the trash bin suggests an innovative and environmentally friendly approach.

The fact that public, regional and local stakeholders are involved in the partnership ensures the project's broader contribution to the development and support of social entrepreneurship. Educational institutions and other public bodies will also be involved in information effort and raising awareness about the opportunities and conditions for the development of social entrepreneurship by organizing joint forums / discussions. There will also be joint seminars / events of good practice aimed at a wider audience of people with financial and social problems, providing them guidance in business planning, marketing



strategies etc. By providing guidance and support in creation of new NGOs, the project “Social Plate” becomes one of the few organized efforts to promote social entrepreneurship locally and nationally in the cross-border area, thereby enhancing the development of local businesses economies.

## 2. Report of the event "Good Practices in Social Entrepreneurship"

On Thursday, April 18, 2019 at 4:00 pm at "Porto Palace" Hotel, in Crystal Hall in Thessaloniki, the event entitled "Good Practices of Social Entrepreneurship" was held under the cross-border project "Supporting Social Enterprises in Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion" with the acronym "Social Plate" organized by the Central Market Thessaloniki, project's Lead Beneficiary.

The event "Good Practices of Social Entrepreneurship" received wide publicity and was promoted locally in the city. In particular, the event was featured on online newspapers "voria" and "politisnews". In addition, the invitation of the event was posted on the official website of the Central Market of Thessaloniki.

Social media has also been used like the Facebook profile of the Social Plate project where all relevant announcements were posted before and after the event. In addition, the UnivSse website and Facebook promoted announcements for the workshop. The event also covered by TV100 with interviews and videos. Finally, an article was published by thesspress and on the website of the Trinity Association of Thessaloniki after the implementation of the event.

The event was attended by many students, university professors, businessmen, representatives of social enterprises and institutions who were invited both by telephone and by informative mail. All participants were given time for registration and networking around a host buffet.

The event was supported by representatives of both Greek partners who are actively involved in the "Social Plate" project. More specifically, the event was attended by Mr. Hambidis Dimitrios, President of Central Market of Thessaloniki, Mr. Papadopoulos Theodoros, Vice President of Central Market of Thessaloniki SA and the event coordinator, Ms. Katerina Demertzi, Head of Communication for the Lead Beneficiary, Mr. Papathanasiou Athanassios, President and Managing Director of Technopolis - International Educational Institute, Ms. Paschalidou Maria, President of the Eleftheriou-Kordeliou Municipal Unit, Mr. Xanthopoulos Isaak, General Secretary of Oreokastro Municipality, Dr. Nikolaos Kostas, Ecology and Social Solidarity Lecturer and President of the Finance Committee of "PRASKALO".

Among those present, there were Ms Loukia Kotsali, representative of Technopolis - International Educational Institute, Ms Kyriaki Gioldeli, representative of the Urban Nonprofit Society (NGO) created by the project, and Ms Anastasia Bomba. In addition, the event was attended by representatives of the social partners who already receive food assistance from the program, representatives from the city's social agencies, members of social enterprises, traders and employees of the Central Market of Thessaloniki SA and representatives of disadvantaged groups.

Mr. Papadopoulos Theodoros, the event's coordinator, welcomed the audience and the speakers and thanked the attendees who honored the event with their presence. Mr. Papadopoulos made a brief introduction to the project "Social Plate" and mentioned the other 3 Project Beneficiaries (PBs), the Technopolis-International Educational Institute from Greece, the Municipality of Borino and the Active Youths from Bulgaria.

The event was also welcomed by Mr. Hambidis Dimitrios, President of Central Market of Thessaloniki, who referred to the justified absence of the Bulgarian partners, thanked Mr. Papathanasiou, representative PB2, for having been present at the event and thanked everyone who contributed into the project implementation.

Then, Mr. Papadopoulos gave the floor to Ms. Demertzi Katerina, LB's Contact Officer, who in turn thanked the public and presented the actions that the LB has completed so far within the project while he presented the Urban Non-Profit Company (NGO) under the name "Social Food Brand" and a distinct title Social Food Support, which was created to help the implementation of the idea as the online platform "Food Angels" "Which is available either for those who want to get food, for those who want to provide food, or for someone who wants to volunteer and help with food collection and distribution.

Afterwards, Dr. Nikolaos Kostas spoke and presented on his speech the 10 success stories of cooperation in Greece and abroad. In his speech, Dr. Nicholas delved into the way SSE is applied to the planet, Europe and Greece. He then presented 5 successful examples of social entrepreneurship abroad, including the Mondragon Federation of Cooperatives in Spain and

the Cooperatives in Saint-Etienne-Auvergne-Rhône-Region, Alpes in France. Then he proceeded to analyze successful cooperative companies operating in Greece such as the Livestock Cooperative "O Voskos", the Ag. Antoniou (Thessaloniki), the Metangitsi Agricultural Cooperative (Halkidiki), the Thessaloniki Social Life Consumer Cooperative "Life Coop" and the Popular University of Social Solidarity Economics "UnivSSE Coop".

Mr. Angelou Lazaros, Chairman of the Board of PROSKALO, spoke about the ecosystem of the Social Solidarity Economy of PROSKALO in Thessaloniki. Mr. Aggelou gave a descriptive analysis of the concept of PROSKALO and then the successful social enterprises. Mr. Aggelou did not forgive to mention the Thessaloniki Social Consumer Life Coop "Life Coop" as well as "Movement 136" - "Citizens' Union for Water", the Social Waste Management Cooperative "Revival" and the SCE.

Ms Paschalidou Maria initially thanked for the special honor of being at the event and representing the local government in a project as big as the Central Thessaloniki Market executes and has to do with the care of the weak and vulnerable West Thessaloniki groups. She also talked about social entrepreneurship in the Municipalities and the social grocery stores that are actively contributing to society. In particular, Ms Paschalidou stressed that the initiative taken by Central Market of Thessaloniki is of enormous value and deserves many congratulations to all those who have inspired and implemented and are implementing this action as the needs on the western, downstream side of the city have always been greater. Ms Paschalidou referred to working-class citizens with low incomes struggling for their daily lives. It is precisely this day-to-day making of products through the project. Then he talked about the daily relief of our fellow citizens when they accept this offer, which is ultimately an offering of love to fellow man, an unselfish offering for one who is in need.

As Ms Paschalidou comes from the area of local government she wanted to report that the social structures of all municipalities with social groceries and social pharmacies have played an important role in addressing the problems of a large number of citizens that we can identify as vulnerable groups. But, as Ms. Paschalidou said, these structures alone are not enough to

face this enormous problem, and the contribution of other entities in the private or public sector is valuable.

Finally, she pointed that this initiative has inspired more people to follow, to help, to cooperate and to want others to help their fellow citizens in need by their own way. After all, there are no great sponsors and beneficiaries in the Thessaloniki area, so she mentioned all these people who offer little to help those in need.

Last but not least, she warmly congratulated for all that has been done so far and wished this project to continue with an even greater offer, while stressing that municipal social entities would be on the side of the NGO to support as much as possible with this social project character that both helps the region and the citizens.

Then, Xanthopoulos Isaak, General Secretary of Oreokastro Municipality, spoke and began by saying that his speech would not focus on Oreokastro Municipality but on his capacity as professor and economist. He emphasized the hard work that we must all do on the path to entrepreneurship. He stressed that entrepreneurship needs a lot of internal effort and there is the potential for the best.

He did not fail to mention that Greek family that removes and repels young people from business, as it does not allow them to take risks. However, this departure from business does not help in improvement of entrepreneurship at all.

Then he gave some typical examples of entrepreneurship from Europe and highlighted the personal potentials one must have to become a successful entrepreneur.

In addition, he said in his speech that there are 1,200 social enterprises in Greece while most Greeks consider social-cooperative enterprises to be unsustainable. He also went on to say that Europe through funding is next to all people who want to do business and that nothing is more important than dedication and hard work.

By the end of his talk, he referred to the idea of Social Plate which he finds excellent and believes that the program provides tremendous support and assistance to society while Municipalities are always open to our fellow citizens who are in need and can help society and promote equality of citizens.

Afterwards, Mr. Papadopoulos, coordinating the discussion, gave a speech to Mr. Papathanasiou Sakis, President and CEO of Technopolis, PB 2 of the project, who referred to the actions that PB2 has completed in the context of the project and emphasized the desire for public awareness and after the end of the project.

He also wanted to point out that legislative stabilization of the food harvest would greatly help both the business and society. Then he referred to a tangible example of food harvesting and distribution that France has set for all the super markets of the country.

In the framework of the open discussion created by Mr Makris Athanasios representing the Alkioni organization he raised some key questions. Initially, he asked how the project could become financially autonomous after its completion. He also felt it right to point out that we should not confuse the concepts of social welfare and social entrepreneurship and not confuse the possibilities that one must have in order to achieve success and sustainability.

During the event the interest of the participants was undiminished. The discussion was concluded and the coordinator Mr. Papadopoulos undertook to thank the participants and the speakers for the excellent course of the event and to summarize the main points highlighted by all the speakers, while he invited attendees to watch their newest facebook project, on the Food Angels online platform and on the websites of both Central Market of Thessaloniki and Technopolis-International Educational Institute.

## Annex

1. Speakers' presentations
2. Event's photos
3. Publicity of event (Press Releases for Promotion and Reports)
4. Invitation (English, Greek)
5. Agenda (Greek)
6. Cover page of Folder (Greek)
7. Participants' List
8. Sample of Folder (Greek)