

# NEWSLETTER

*December 2025*



*Three-day Training School in Athens (Greece).*

## **Driving Innovation in Mediterranean Food Production**

We are pleased to share the latest highlights from EXCEL4MED, a project dedicated to advancing innovation and sustainability across Mediterranean food systems. Here's a look at our recent progress and public engagement.

## **Project Highlights**

**ECOTROPHELIA National Competition 2025 (17–18 June 2025, Greece).** EXCEL4MED participated in the ECOTROPHELIA National Competition, organised by our partner SEVT, engaging 14 university teams and promoting the project's mission to future food innovators focused on sustainability and entrepreneurship.

**Training School – Date Marking from Laboratory to Industrial Applications (30 June–2 July 2025, Greece).** A three-day EXCEL4MED-supported training school, organized by the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens (NKUA), brought together researchers, students, teaching staff and industry professionals to explore the critical role of date marking in improving food safety and waste reduction through improved date marking practices.

**FOODTECH 2025 (7–10 November 2025, Greece).** EXCEL4MED was showcased during a SEVT-led event on new technologies and AI in the food industry, promoting innovation in Mediterranean fruit supply chains.

**XXXII Conference on Polyphenols (7–10 July 2025, Finland).** NKUA disseminated during an oral session EXCEL4MED's research on sustainable, non-thermal extraction of phenolics from pomegranate seeds.

## Key Events

**13th International Conference on Predictive Modelling in Food (1–3 September 2025, Greece).** SEVT delivered a well-attended presentation focused on our project's vision and challenges, green technologies for extracting bioactive compounds, circular solutions to reduce food waste, and the development of functional food products like enriched yogurt and feta cheese.

**Conference on Ecological Crisis & Economic Impacts (30 October 2025, Aegean College, Greece).** Smart Agro Hub introduced EXCEL4MED to an interdisciplinary audience of students, academics, policymakers and agri-food professionals, showcasing the project's relevance to ecological and economic transition challenges.

**7th International Conference on Food Science & Technology, (8–9 November 2025, Greece).** EKPIZO presented the results of our first-year consumer survey, which revealed what truly drives people to choose Mediterranean functional value-added products.

**39th EFFoST International Conference (17–19 November 2025, Portugal).** Project results on pulsed electric fields for valorising pomegranate seed by-products were presented via a scientific poster.

## Staff Exchanges

**Staff Exchange Between SEVT and The Malta Chamber (22 September 2025, Athens).**

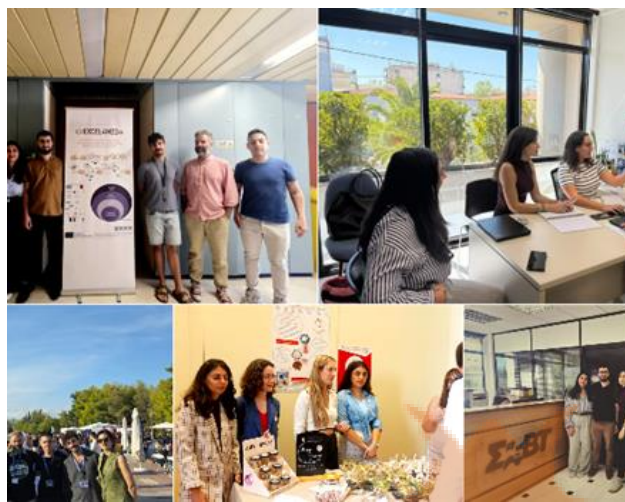
A staff exchange between SEVT and The Malta Chamber strengthened collaboration within EXCEL4MED. Participants explored joint project tasks, visited the NKUA laboratories with Prof. Valdramidis, attended a presentation of the award-winning *AiryBerry* product, and took part in Researchers' Night at the National Technical University of Athens. The exchange fostered stronger alignment, knowledge sharing and new ideas across the consortium.

**MAFA representatives completed a week-long staff exchange with EKPIZO as part of the EXCEL4MED project (24–28 November, Athens).**

The programme included visits to EKPIZO, the Hellenic Food Authority (EFET), National Union of Agricultural Cooperatives of Greece (ETHEAS), and the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens. Discussions focused on consumer protection, food safety governance, agricultural practices, and project dissemination. EFET provided in-depth briefings on key scientific and regulatory issues. The exchange strengthened cross-border cooperation, enhanced knowledge transfer, and supported progress toward EXCEL4MED's objectives.



7th International Conference on Food Science & Technology.



Staff exchange between SEVT and The Malta Chamber.

## Closing Remarks



EXCEL4MED novel food products: cheese in brine and yoghurt, both enriched with bioactive compounds recovered from fruit by-products.



EXCEL4MED in action at Malta's first Food Coop.

EXCEL4MED partners have developed **new functional food prototypes**, such as **bioactive-enriched yoghurt** and **brined cheese with natural by-product extracts**, showcasing circular economy approaches to healthier, more sustainable foods.

At the **11th International Conference on Food Chemistry & Technology (15–17 October 2025, Italy)**, the Malta Chamber and the Malta Food Agency presented EXCEL4MED's latest advances, from valorising citrus and pomegranate by-products to turning waste streams into bioactive ingredients and scaling research from lab to Living Labs.

During the **"Widening at NKUA" webinar (25 November 2025)**, EXCEL4MED's vision and progress were presented alongside other Horizon Europe initiatives, fostering collaboration on sustainable food systems.

In October 2025, Koperattivi Malta launched **Malta's first Food Cooperative**, improving access to fresh, sustainable produce. Supported by the Malta Food Agency, the Food Coop provides a replicable model for stronger local food systems. This action supports EXCEL4MED by strengthening sustainable Mediterranean food supply chains.



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