The meeting was held in Uzhhorod, Ukraine, with the organisation of Nadiya Boyko and co-workers, from the Uzhhorod National University. The meeting was focused on the evaluation of the results of mid-term review, introducing necessary adjustments, and at the application for a project’s time extension. It was agreed to apply for a 7-month extension, to October 2012. Nadiya Boyko introduces new lab facilities to participants, with her usual enthusiasm.

Survey missions were carried out during summer 2011, aimed at further on-site exploration and documentation of local plant and food resources. As expected, this kind of activity is a real challenge: in the beginning, it seems that nothing could come out, and that all knowledge is faded and forgotten. Then information starts to emerge and it becomes clear that knowledge is still there, people only wait for the occasion to recover it, and the reason of oblivion is only the present tendency to uniform habits and likes all world round. But, at the same time, it is equally clear that the risk of knowledge loss is real. A project such as BaSeFood could only give a small contribution to start or, better, to be in a strain of a potentially exciting work of recovery, well beyond what is allowed by the limited resources.

Organisation and management

4th Coordination and Project management board meeting

The meeting was also an occasion to taste traditional Transcarpathian and Ukrainian dishes, also in the nice context of the Uzhhorod castle.

Plants and foods reports

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L. Filippo D'Antuono (UNIBO) and Iordanka Alexieva (UFT)

The surveys have been carried out in the area around Plovdiv, in the lower eastern Rodopi and southern Stara Planina. The focus was on primitive wheats, herbs and fruits, and related foods, that will represent relevant chapters of the work done on site. **Primitive wheats.** Limetz is the Bulgarian word to indicate hulled wheats. We found limetz one year ago on the central Rodopi mountains, still grown by traditional farmers (see issue 3 of BaSeFood newsletters), and this was emmer wheat (*Triticum turgidum* L. subsp. *dicoccum* Schrank ex Shubler (*Thell*)). This year we visited a biological grower in the area of Rabovo, in the lower eastern Rodopi area. He told the story of seed recovered from a limetz crop old fields, largely grown until the sixties, that he is trying to reproduce and propose again for the market of biological products. This time limetz was einkorn wheat (*Triticum monococcum* L.). So it seems that both emmer and einkorn wheat are, or were, grown in Bulgaria until not so long time ago. This situation stimulated curiosity: a visit to a natural product store in central Plovdiv revealed that limetz is already marketed in commercial channels.

**Fruits.** Bulgarian herbs represent a key ingredient of many dishes. This summer’s on site exploration and joint brainstorming sessions with local people suggested some preferential themes for the final steps of investigation and reporting, and indicated some unexpected facts.

Chubritza (*Satureja hortensis* L.) is for sure the key dry herb of the Bulgarian tradition. **Samardala** (*Nectaroscordum siculum* (Ucria) Lindl. ssp. *bulgaricum* Janka; syn. *Allium bulgaricum*) is very popular, allium-like plant. It is a very seasonal plant, which leaves are preserved dried and mixed with salt. The mixing with salt is also popular for annual savoury, thyme, oregano, lovage.

**Fruits.** As for other parts for Black sea area, the focus was on two themes: a) local species and varieties and specific properties and uses; b) ways of preservation based on local traditions. With respect to the first point, the work is still initial. Without any doubts, cornelian cherry is a strongly characteristic species of the area (see also the report for Ukraine), widely used also in Bulgaria.

**BaseFood NEWSLETTER**

Issue 5, September 2011
Ukraine is the second largest nation in Europe: no surprise that, going local, means finding diversity in food traditions, especially in the regions that share different cultures and are more physically characterised. Without any doubt, the Carpathian area and the Crimea peninsula represent such cases. Local surveys have been carried out in summer 2011, jointly by local partners (UZHNU and ONAFT) and UNIBO, bringing out peculiarities, and the presence of some strikingly bridging and unifying plants and products.

In Transcarpathia, visits were carried out to industrial vegetable processors (Univer and Korado), supermarkets, a local firm in Mala Dobron', Dobron's paprika factory, a com milled and packed. The market is internal Ukrainian. Paprika is a wonderful product, full of colour and carotenoids, adding flavour to several dishes. Perfect for a traditional-fusion cooking.

Pressure seed oils. Artisanal pressed sunflower oil can be found everywhere in Ukrainian open markets.

Transcarpathian onion, but with apparently little consciousness of its peculiarity. The elongated bulb makes it somewhat similar to big shallots, or bunching onions. Bulb flesh can be white or light violet, revealing some variability. A first investigation seems to indicate that similar types are also grown in southern Poland.

Both Ukrainian onions seem to be good candidates to future actions for better exploitation as typical products, as it occurred for some onion types in Italy.

Transcarpathian onion, Mukachevo market, August 2011. An elongated onion, with pink bulb was noted in the Mukachevo central market. Locals said that is a typical

The elongated Transcarpathian onion, Mukachevo market, August 2011.

The growing and drying of sweet peppers to make paprika is part of Hungarian culture. A local firm in Mala Dobron' upscaled the production of paprika to commercial level, still retaining the traditional scheme. The fruits are hand picked, pre-dried in the shade and then dried with hot air.

Variation of seed cold pressed oils in Ukraine, August 2011.

We visited Dastor supermarket, in Uzhhorod and Silpo, in Simferopol. An amazing array of pressure oils is available: sunflower, com, rapeseed, linseed, pumpkin, sesame, walnuts, almonds, pine seed, sea buckthorn and olive, of course. Supermarket managers say that this is a recent fashion, a matter of image, rather than business. Indeed, most people consider only sunflower; apparently there is no memory of what was used before sunflower oil, that did not exist until 2 centuries ago. Do some of these niche pressure oils this memory? In the Mediterranean countries they are overwhelmed by king olive oil. But, for sure they represent interesting niche products, retaining the flavour of individual raw materials, and most of the substances that are extracted by
pressure with oil, some of which, perhaps, healthful. The sensory and analytical characterisation of these oils would be a challenge, for the future.

**Fruits.** The further exploration of fruit uses and perceptions confirmed a few points. There seem to be a rather limited consideration for local varieties of major fruit plants, that are however sometimes mentioned. This may depend on the diffuse presence of fruit trees along road sides, in city gardens and other public places, that was highly encouraged during the soviet period to allow the availability of fruit for everybody. Complementary to this, and in the same frame of the integration of diets, there is still a high use of wild and semi-wild fruit resources. All possible ways of preservation are still practiced, generating an interesting diversity of products: from the reduction of the amount of water, to different degrees, to the addition of sugar or, more rarely, salt.

In all the Carpathian area (regions of Transcarpathia, Lviv, Ivano-Frankivsk, Ternopil and Chernivtsi) it is established a system of exploitation of natural resources represented by wild berries (“fruits of the forest”). These are brought to local collection points and frozen, both for internal use or export. Ukraine is now among the major exporters of frozen wild berries. It is reported that this organisation arose from a need of the mountain people, who were the first who lost jobs after the social changes following independence. But this is almost surely based on a pre-existing tradition of using natural resources to integrate home food resources. The present commercial exploitation may pose some challenges in term of to long term sustainability.

**Comelain chery.** Cornelian cherry fruits road selling, Alushta, Crimea, August 2011.

The use of wild resources was further explained during a visit to a local cooperative in then village of Petrovo, Crimea. Besides collecting and partly growing a quite wide array of medicinal plants, then dried and sold to herbal and pharmaceutical firms, they also collect and process wild fruits during the period of the visit the harvest and processing of cornelian chery fruits was in full development.

**Exciting visit at a cornelian chery old plantation, Chema, Transcarpathia, August 2011.**

Comelain chery is really a late-summer king, when its fruits are actively picked, sold fresh in every market and road sides, and processed in various ways. The documentation of cornelian chery uses and foods will be a part of BaSeFood results.

**Comelain chery preserves, Alushta, Crimea, August 2011.**

Mr. Vasyli Ivasivo, the Head of village council, is a true fan of these and other plant resources. And a nursery in the Donskoie village, Crimea, where about 16 varieties of cornelian chery are propagated and sold to national and foreign amateurs.

Other wild fruits that retain a prevailing local value are sand hawthorn, barberries, rose hips.

**Herbs.** The herb culture, especially in northern Ukraine, does not reach the peaks of the south Black sea region, where Georgian kitchen makes extensive uses of large amounts of fresh herbs.

**Bunches of dill plants, wrapped in horseradish leaves, to be used for pickles, Mukachevo market, August 2011.**

**Cornelian chery fruits in a forced air drier, Petrovo, Crimea, August 2011.**

Comelian chery has been also subject to selection and several improved varieties are available. Other two interesting examples of cornelian chery exploitation were visited. An old plantation in Chema, Transcarpathia, that is jealously managed by the people of the village, as a precious resource.

**Home made cornelian chery compote, Chema, Transcarpathia, August 2011.**

**Comelain chery fruits, var. Elegant, Donskoe nursery, Crimea, August 2011.**

Comelain chery is however a real master plant of eastern Europe traditions. Its fruits are very little involved in the modern trade of “forest fruits”, but at the same time, so strongly rooted in local uses. They are preserved in all possible ways: dried, in compote, with sugar, boiled until the paste is dense enough, sometimes pickled. The use is almost invariably associated with some putative benefit to health. It has also been used as a vitamin C supplier to seamen during wartime.

**Cornelian chery fruits in a forced air drier, Petrovo, Crimea, August 2011.**
Dill represents again a staple. Very characteristic is the use of dill to flavour pickled vegetables (cucumbers, courgettes, zucchini squashes), together with horseradish leaves, in traditional preparations or, more commonly, mustard seeds, in the more industrially oriented productions. This tradition is being exploited by some industrial firms producing vegetable preserves. Horseradish leaves are reported to contribute also to crunchiness of pickles, besides flavour.

In Crimea whole dill plants still represent the dominant kind of summer herbs, sold in open air markets. However, characteristic is the use of dill to flavour pickled vegetables (cucumbers, courgettes, zucchini squashes), together with horseradish leaves, in traditional preparations or, more commonly, mustard seeds, in the more industrially oriented productions. This tradition is being exploited by some industrial firms producing vegetable preserves. Horseradish leaves are reported to contribute also to crunchiness of pickles, besides flavour.

Com in Transcarpathia. The central-European influence is also reflected in the wide use of com in the Transcarpathian cuisine.

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Inspiring stories for intercultural comparisons

One of the BaSeFood goals is the enhancement of the awareness of potential consumers of traditional foods. This is being carried out by the documentation of local foods and crops, but also by an attempt to cross cultural compare knowledges of apparently very different areas. And things are slowly coming to the surface: the soft technologies that were available in traditional food systems had to rely on the same backgrounds and facts, so clear convergences are emerging about the uses of plant resources in food production. But intercultural comparison does not have only a historic or folkloric documentation value. It may be also inspiring for stimulating new opportunities of valorisation of local resources.

The Italian pekmez: saba, savour and related facts

L. Filippo D’Antuono (UNIBO) and Cristina Bignami (UNIMORE)

The traditional diet of many rural communities in the Black sea area and in the Mediterranean basin is characterized by fruit derivatives. Similar raw materials and home processing systems characterise these foods, which respond to common needs whatever the area of origin: to make the seasonal and perishable fruits available out of season and to obtain sugar substitutes for seasoning, preserving fruits or direct consumption.

Tasting white mulberry pelamushi, Aspindza, Georgia, August 2010.

Lowering water content, and increasing solute concentration, is an effective way to preserve fruit and vegetables. The typical example of this procedure are the different sorts of pekmez, largely prepared and used in Turkey, that will be the subject of in-deep documentation. Sometimes the fascination of exotic foods products may lead to forget domestic products.

Red grape (Lambrusco salamino and Lambrusco grapparosa) sughi", Modena and Reggio Emilia area, September 2011.

In this case, however, the wonderful sight of Turkish pekmez had the opposite effect of suggesting a cross-cultural parallel to Italian situations. Grapevine is largely grown all over Italy and represents a very important crop in the plains and hills of the Emilia Romagna region, as well.

Jars of "savor", Montegelli, Italy, September 2010.

Grape use is rooted in tradition, not only for wine making. In the past, sugar was expensive and was not always available in the countryside. During grape harvest, part of the grape must was not fermented, but slowly boiled for 24-36 hours, until the volume was reduced by two thirds. The final product, with a sugar content of 50-60% was stable for long time. It’s name is Saba or Sapa, the Italian pekmez, whose origin dates back to pre-Roman times.

Traditional preparation of savourett, Carpineti, Italy, October 2010.

Saba was used on bread, with polenta, as a seasoning of cooked beans, chickpeas and chestnuts, as a filling of pastries. Children used to put saba in snow during winter, to make a kind of grenadine. The use of saba was progressively lost, until some years ago, when its preparation was recovered in some places. Now saba is available in limited amounts also in commercial channels, and is the subject of popular autumn festivals. But saba is also the base to prepare savour or savor (literally: taste), a particular dense and dark jam, used with cheese, roasted or boiled meat, bread and as ingredient of sweets (tortelli, sabadoni, Christmas sweets). To prepare it, saba is put to boil again, and pieces of any kind of fall fruits (mainly apples, pear, quinces), nuts, but also dried summer fruits, pumpkins, watermelon and melon peels are boiled into saba for several hours.

Different sorts of Italian “Saba”, September 2011.

After all, it is a kind of sladko, where the sugar syrup is saba. In some mountain areas, where grapes are not available, the autumn fruits (apples and pears) were boiled for long time, in order to attain a concentration suitable for preservation, without any sugar addition.

Termarina grape (bottom), in comparison to “conventional” grape.

A procedure very similar to that used to prepare Transcarpathian lekvar. A only-pear variant of this is “savurett of Carpineti”, in which a particular variety of pear (Spalér) is first boiled to prepare...
the concentrated base (instead of saba), and then pieces of Nobile pear are added to complete the preparation. Similarly to the Muscadine grape lekvar, a thick jam without added sugar was prepared in the province of Reggio Emilia and Parma with the Termarina, an ancient seedless grapevine cultivar with very small and sweet berries, also used to make ‘saba’. Like savor and savurett, even Termarina jam is an ingredient of ‘pesto’, the sweet filling of the pastries ‘tortellini dolci di Natale’. Finally, “sughi” are kinds of puddings prepared by cooking grape must with flour, until a semi-solid texture is attained. Sughi were a popular sweet for children in the past, then were almost forgotten. Sughi are very similar to ‘pelamushi’, that is prepared in Georgia mixing flour and the boiled juice of grape or other different fruits.

Herbs and salt: the salamoia bolognese and other aromatic salts

L. Filippo D’Antuono (UNIBO)

Add salt and dried herbs: a classical step for the preparation of recipes all around the world.

What is special with the Salamoia bolognese? First, it is traditional of the area of Emilia-Romagna. Second, the herbs are ground and mixed with salt when still fresh.

The typical ingredients are garlic, rosemary leaves and coarse salt. Variants include sage leaves and black pepper. The herbs are finely chopped, the salt is ground in a mortar or by rolling a bottle, and the two ingredients are mixed. Then the salamoia can be kept for some months, retaining the fresh herb flavour. Well known: garlic, rosemary and sage are highly valued for their putative health promoting properties.

Salamoia is widely used mainly to flavour baked meat, fish and potatoes.

Jars of “Salamoia bolognese”, September 2011.

Traditionally it was used with chicken. In the times when resources were exploited to the maximum, chicken was used on Sunday to prepare broth, boiling several hours. Then the chicken was baked in the oven, but lot of flavour was gone. So the salamoia was called to make the little miracle, that was first perceived by the aromatic smell from the oven.

Salamoia has been always prepared at home, and also by small scale butchers, sometimes also offering it for free to customers.

Caber (www.caber.org) is a small scale firm close to Bologna, that started her business with salamoia bolognese, in the sixties of last century. The firm is grown, but the salamoia still remains the core product and the symbol of the local roots of the firm. On September 23, Caber inaugurated the “herb garden”, a garden in which people can see the herbs that Caber itself started growing to assure a supply of fresh and safe product. A demonstration of the preparation of salamoia was also done.

Herbal salts are already commercial available also from Black sea are herbs. They may be bought on the internet, as well. But maybe that the example of Caber could enhance the idea of linking commercial products to the background traditions.
Ana Sanches Silva (INSA), Tânia Gonçalves Albuquerque (INSA), Paul Finglas (IFR) and Helena Soares Costa (INSA)

Traditional foods are the key elements that differentiate the dietary patterns of each country. In most countries, there is limited information on the nutritional composition of such foods, therefore, there is a need to investigate, register and promote traditional foods. These foods are also a valuable contribution to the development and economic sustainability of rural areas and preservation of biodiversity. Therefore, the nutritional composition of thirty-three traditional foods from Black Sea Area countries (BSAC) is being carried out by INSA and IFR.

Prioritisation of the components to be analysed for each traditional food has been performed and the appropriate methods and number of analytical samples have been selected. The following components are being determined: water/moisture, ash, total fat and individual fatty acids, starch, total sugars, total dietary fibre, minerals and trace elements (Na, Fe, Zn) and vitamins A, E, C and B2. To assure the quality of analytical results accredited laboratories were chosen.

In order to include the new food data in Food Composition Databases (FCDB), it is essential to guarantee data quality which is strictly dependent on the documentation of each sample. FCDB provide detailed information on the nutritional composition of foods and have different applications, such as public health and education, clinical practice, research, the food industry, food consumption surveys, sports nutrition.

Fig. 1 summarizes the most important categories that should be taken into account to assure the full value documentation, which includes: Information on food description, sampling plan, sample handling, component identification, method specification, value and quality assessment was collected for each of the traditional foods for inclusion in the available national food composition databases.

Categories included in full value documentation.

INSA and IFR have developed guidelines for the sampling and sample handling of primary and composite Traditional Foods of BSAC in order to establish a common approach for all countries and to ensure that representative food samples are analyzed and that they produce reliable and high quality data to include in FCDB. A form, prepared to harmonise the information collected by the partners in different countries and for the inclusion of relevant data was filled in by BSAC partners with information on the traditional recipes and primary foods. This document contains information regarding Food description (including name in English and in the original language and the scientific name in the case of primary foods); Sampling plan (including date and time of collection, sampling point, process and preservation method and description of the ingredients) and Sample handling (including mixing/homogenization method, storage/container; information about pool preparation, storage and transport to the laboratory). For Method specification, in the labs another form was filled out, including information on the analytical methods for each component.

The use of a common methodology for the study of traditional foods will enable countries to further investigate their traditional foods and to continue to update their national food composition databases. Moreover, knowledge base of traditional foods from Black Sea Area countries will contribute to promote local biodiversity and sustainable diets, by maintaining healthy dietary patterns within local cultures.

We're on the Web!
See us at:
http://www.basefood-fp7.eu/
Microbial “portrait” of traditional foods: BaSeFood 2.4 and 3.1 tasks almost completed

Anzhela Dolgikh, Ivan Kutchak, Vitaliya Dutova and Viktor Petrov (UMNI, UzhNU)

The aim of in vitro studies within task 2.4 is to find the key microorganisms which can be introduced to our organism, using traditional products as their possible carrier. The goal of task 3.1 is to test whether prioritised foods and drinks as composite foods, or their major plant components can provide inhibitory properties on pathogenic or opportunistically pathogenic bacteria, stimulating effects on species beneficial to human health. 36 prioritised traditional dishes within BaSeFood project, and their 45 major plant components have been twice examined: first - for their contamination with all the variety of bacteria and fungi, and then for their pro- and antimicrobial properties against 27 strains of 15 (16) bacterial species: 14 (16) pathogenic and opportunistic pathogens and 10 (11) beneficial (commensal) bacteria in vitro by using 4 different methods. Strongly “positive” effect we observed in cases of: Fresh extracts - pure juices of: beet, garlic, and blueberries, and composite foods: Okroshka (Russia); Churchkhela (Georgia); Nettle with walnut (Georgia) all types of Georgian bread (long loaf bread and Tseti dol bread with makhebli), Black tea (Georgia), Smilyan bean soup (Bulgaria), Sunflower seed tahini halva (Bulgaria), and Pomazanka (Ukraine). Slightly “negative” effect on gut microbes had been detected for pure plant extracts of: nettle, cucumber, tomato, onion (local) and barley (Bulgaria).

Polyphenols richness in traditional foods: antioxidants and beyond

Francesca Danesi and Federica Pasini (UNIBO)

Polyphenols are the biggest group among bioactive compounds. The biological, pharmacological, and medicinal properties of polyphenols are largely known. However little is still known about their distribution and content in traditional foods. The 33 traditional foods of the Black Sea area, prioritised in the BaSeFood project (see http://www.basefood-fp7.eu/dissemination/public_deliverables/d_1_1_national_country_specific_documentation/traditional_foods_files_1/), have been analysed at UNIBO for phenolic content and antioxidant capacity. The related potential bioactivity will be the subject of further investigation. The study demonstrates that the traditional dishes prepared with vegetables, herbs, spices or fruits, like berries represent important sources of polyphenols. In particular, the foods from purple fruits, like plums and blueberries, the dishes prepared with nettles or large amount of spices, sunflower seeds showed high contents of phenolics. In addition, a 200 mL serving of mursal tea - prepared with the Bulgarian Sideritis scardica - provides a very high amount of phenolics, ortho-diphenols, and hydroxycinnamic acids, comparable with a portion of green tea supplied by the Georgian partner. However, green tea exhibited the highest antioxidant capacity between beverages, 4.4.5 times higher than mursal tea. The quantification of polyphenols in foods consumed in Black Sea Area will contribute to the better characterisation of these foods, as potential sources of useful dietary substances. It may also allow to contribute at the estimation of the availability of polyphenols in the diet of these Countries, in which some of the food examined represent basic staples.
Bioactivity of traditional foods

Clinical trials at the Uzhhorod national University

Taras Chendey, Mykola Rishko, Olena Plyska, Tetyana Vasylovka (UZHNU)

UzhNU team at Zakarpattya Regional Clinical Cardiology Dispensary carries out WP3 task 3.4 “Clinical trials to quantify the bioavailability and efficacy of selected BSAC foods”.

The ambitious goal of over 80 enrolled patients had been set in clinical trial investigating effects of nettle and mursal tea on flow-mediated vasodilatation (FMD) in population of patients at high cardiovascular risk. FMD is known to be a good surrogate marker of vascular/endothelial function which could be altered in the setting of cardiovascular disease.

The study had been launched in late June 2011 and is now in progress with 43 patients enrolled to date. End of enrolment is expected in late October 2011 and last patient last visit is to occur at the end of November 2011. The study will also explore the effects of these traditional Black Sea region food components on blood pressure and lipid profile.
**BASEFOOD dissemination**

**Dissemination events**

See also the updated dissemination table at: [http://www.basefood-fp7.eu/dissemination/dissemination_table](http://www.basefood-fp7.eu/dissemination/dissemination_table)

Due to the courtesy of Dr. Ruth Chamonièque, the link to BaseFood newsletter will be communicated to the INFOODs listserver.

BaseFood newsletters are also linked to the EuroFIR website at: [http://www.eurofir.net/node/211](http://www.eurofir.net/node/211)

9th International food data conference, Norwich, UK, September 14-16, 2011

The conference ([http://www.eurofir.net/9th_ifdc](http://www.eurofir.net/9th_ifdc)) took place at the Conference Facilities of the Norwich Bioscience Institute (NBI), Norwich Research Park. The Conference was a forum attended by more than 150 food and nutrition scientists. BaseFood was represented by partners from Italy, Portugal and Ukraine. BaseFood research found adequate space, with 3 oral and 4 poster presentations, which titles are reported here below. Find the .pdf of presentations in the BaseFood web site at: [http://www.basefood-fp7.eu/dissemination/presentations_at_scientific_meetings](http://www.basefood-fp7.eu/dissemination/presentations_at_scientific_meetings)


**Presentations at other meetings**