**Hellenic Republic**



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 Athens, May 20 2024

**PRESS RELEASE**

**Considerable Actions undertaken towards strengthening the Sector of Οenotourism at the Agricultural University of Athens.**

On Tuesday, May 14 2024, the first meeting of the Οenotourism Committee was held at the Conference Room of the Library & Information Centre “Alexandros Poulovasilis” of the Agricultural University of Athens. In the first place, the Minister of Tourism Ms. Olga Kefalogianni, who had taken the initiative of establishing the pertinent Committee, along with the Deputy Minister of Tourism, Ms. Elena Rapti and the Deputy Regional Governor of Attica, Ms. Christina Kefalogianni, have attended this kick-off meeting, wherein, by the presence of the President of the Οenotourism Committee and Rector of the Agricultural University of Athens, Mr. Spyridon Kintzios and the Vice President of the Οenotourism Committee, Mr. George Kotseridis, Professor of Oenology, have extensively reported on the development actions of Οenotourism in Greece. In addition, on the part of the Agricultural University of Athens, the Vice Rector for Academic and Administrative Affairs, Lifelong Learning and Extroversion, Mr. Emmanouil Flemetakis, Professor and the Vice Rector for Research, Finance and Development, Mr. Thomas Bartzanas, Professor, have given their presence at that meeting.

It is worth mentioning that at the greeting extended, the Minister has referred to the use of resources of the Recovery and Resilience Fund, for the promotion of the different types of tourism, especially of Οenotourism, inasmuch wine marketing, with a view to highlighting the areas of Greece, which provide vineyards and wineries. Furthermore, the Minister has recalled that the political leadership of the Ministry, by means of the establishment of the Οenotourism Committee last year, is becoming aware, because of the rapidly growing trend on a global level towards Oenotourism, of the necessity for both boosting Greek wine and implementing additional outreach actions, because such a policy contributes actively to the sustainability of tourist destinations all over Greece.

 Subsequently, the President of the Οenotourism Committee and Rector, Mr. Spyridon Kintzios has noted the excellent cooperation between the Ministry of Tourism and the University, on issues pertaining to the Sector of Οenotourism. The Rector, Mr. Kintzios, has stressed the need for fostering wine branding destination, benefiting from the winter period of tourism, as well as updating legislation, in respect of the wineries and vineyards that can be visited. Besides, the Rector has proposed the creation of a Network of Wine Regions and Municipalities, as well as the establishment of Oenotourism pilot-Plant. Also, the Rector has highlighted the necessity for performing a central co-ordination of all actions, relevant to the subject of Οenotourism, inasmuch making the best use of the work produced and the experience gained so far, by all the involved stakeholders.

Afterwards, the Vice President of the Οenotourism Committee and Director of the Laboratory of Oenology of the Agricultural University of Athens, Mr. George Kotseridis, Professor, has laid emphasis on the necessity for networking and branding of the wineries that are accessible to visitors, underlining that out of the approximately 1.750 wineries set up in the country, only 100 bear the brand of a winery being open to the public. Therefore, enhanced effort should be made towards networking and partnerships building amongst the wineries, hotels and restaurants respectively.

It is also noticeable that, a number of executives and representatives, coming from all the participating Agencies, have been present at the meeting, for example, the Central Union of Municipalities of Greece (KEDE), the Greek Wine Federation (G.W.F.), the National Interprofessional Organization of Vine and Wine (EDOAO), the United Winemaking Agricultural Cooperative of Samos (UWC SAMOS), the Association of Greek Tourism Enterprises (SETE), the Hellenic Hotel Federation (HHF), the Greek National Tourism Organisation (GNTO), the Hellenic Chamber of Hotels (H.C.H), the Ministry of Tourism and the Ministry of Rural Development and Food.

In conclusion, through the participation to the leadership of the Oenotourism Committee, the Agricultural University of Athens emerges, for another consecutive year, as the strategic partner of the State and all the productive actors, regional and local self-government authorities and social stakeholders, engaged in that main national branch of activity.