  

# **GREECE, BELGIUM & AUSTRIA UNIVERSITIES**

## **BLENDED INTENSIVE PROGRAM (B.I.P.)**

Title: “Mediterranean and Plant-Based Diets: A Path to Health, Environmental Sustainability, and Allergy Risk Management”

Code number: 2024-1-EL01-KA131-HED-000209488-1

**Partners**

* Hellenic Mediterranean University (HMU), Dept. of Nutrition and Dietetics, Sitia, Greece
* University College of Leuven (UCLL), Dept. of Health, Leuven, Belgium
* University of Applied Sciences for Health Professions Upper Austria, Linz, Austria

**Objectives and description**

The BIP aims to provide an interdisciplinary educational experience focused on the Mediterranean and plant-based dietary patterns, their role in health promotion, environmental sustainability, and food allergy management.

* Objectives:
	+ Explore the health benefits and sustainability aspects of dietary patterns.
	+ Investigate how food allergies develop and their connection to modern dietary transitions (e.g., plant-based substitutes, ultra-processed foods, novel ingredients).
	+ Equip students with skills to design allergy-conscious and sustainable dietary strategies.
	+ Promote intercultural collaboration and teamwork in international, multidisciplinary groups.
* Description:
* Students will participate in interactive lectures, workshops, group projects, field visits, and cultural activities, combining academic learning with hands-on experiences.
* Students learn to translate the national context and the place of the dietitian, within an international setting.
* Students learn to cooperate, present and discuss in an international setting.
* Students gain international knowledge and experience in nutrition and dietetics.
* Students learn to reflect on their own functioning in an international setting.
* Students broaden their international network in the field of nutrition and dietetics.

**Methods and outcomes**

* Methods:
	+ Online sessions (orientation, group formation, pre-tasks, final reflections).
	+ Face-to-face week with lectures, workshops, group projects, and field visits.
	+ Multidisciplinary teamwork and peer-to-peer learning.
	+ Cultural immersion in Crete (e.g., olive oil mill visit, local traditions).
* Expected Outcomes / Learning Results: Students will be able to:
	+ Describe health benefits and sustainability aspects of Mediterranean and plant-based diets.
	+ Explain food allergy development, prevalence, and causes.
	+ Identify allergy risks in diet planning and propose mitigation strategies.
	+ Collaborate effectively in intercultural, multidisciplinary teams.

**Duration**

* **Virtual Start:** 6 October 2025
* **Virtual End:** 28 November 2025
* **Physical Start:** 13 October 2025
* **Physical End:** 17 October 2025

**Student Activities**

**Pre-f2f (6 October – online):**

* **1 pre-online-session**
	+ **Monday, 6 October 2025, at 17:00 CET (18.00 Greek time)**

Agenda:

* Welcome & introductions
* Presentation of the programme objectives
* **Formation of country groups** (students grouped by country)
* Allocation of tasks for the **country presentations** (to be delivered on Day 1 of the face-to-face week)

**Country/HEI presentations**

**4 sections** (a. Presentation of each country, b. education systems, c. national food cultures, d. national dietary guidelines).

**Country Presentations – Instructions**

Each country group prepares one presentation divided into **four sections**:

1. **Introduction to the country**
	* “We are from Belgium/Greece/Austria”
	* Cover key national characteristics (population, climate, nature, cultural habits, hobbies, sports, or other unique aspects)
	* **Exclude food-related content**
2. **Education system**
	* “Us, as students…”
	* Present the higher education system in your country, focusing on the study of Nutrition and Dietetics
3. **Food culture**
	* “Belgian/Greek/Austrian food culture”
	* Describe typical meals, dietary habits, gastronomy, and iconic dishes
4. **Nutritional recommendations**
	* Present national dietary guidelines (e.g., Food Pyramid, Mediterranean diet, NutriScore, new recommendations)
	* Include emphasis on **food allergies**
* Duration: ~ 8-10 minutes for each section (≈ 32-40 minutes total for each country):
* **All members** of the group must contribute.
* The presentations will be delivered on **Day 1 (Monday 13/10/2025)** in Sitia.
* Each **home group** uploads their PowerPoint to the Google Drive folder “BIP\_HMU\_2025, in the subfolder “Country Presentations”, before the start of the face-to-face week.

**Face-to-face (13–17 October – Sitia, Crete):**

* **Day 1:** - Country Presentations (delivered by the home country groups) *(see instructions above)*

 - Formation of **international mixed groups** (~9 students, Greece–Belgium–Austria): Mixing Belgian students, Austrian and Greek students, dividing them into groups and letting them work together on case studies related to the programme’stopics. Throughout the first three days, they work on a ‘group assignment’ after which they present an elevator pitch on Day 4.

 - Assignment of **4 thematic projects**:

1. Mediterranean diet & allergy
2. Plant-based foods & allergy
3. Ultra-processed foods & allergy
4. Food labeling, policy & allergy awareness
	* Tutor assignments:
		+ HMU: Anastasia, Christopher, Vassilis
		+ UCLL: Sigrid, Frank
* **Day 2 - 3:** Lectures, Group work on thematic projects with tutor guidance, field visits, and cultural excursions
* **Days 4:** Final group presentations (elevator pitches)
* **Day 5:** Closing session & reflection, Certificates of attendance

**Post f2f online-sessions**

* + **Friday, 7 November 2025,** **at 17:00 CET - 17.00 CET (18.00 Greek time)**
		- Food Culture in Europe (Klaus Nigl)
	+ **Friday, 14 November 2025, at 17:30 CET** **(18:30 Greek time)**
		- *Cretan Diet: Promoting Health, Food Security, and Cultural Cohesion”* (HMU – Dr. Ioannis Sfendourakis),
	+ **Friday,** **21 November 2025, at 17:00 CET (18:00 Greek time)**
		- Classification of Ultra High Processed Food (Klaus Nigl)

**BIP program timetable:**

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| **Date** | **Content** |
| Sunday 12/10/2025 | * 07.55-12.20: Brussels – Heraklion
* 13.00-16.00: bus Heraklion – Sitia
* 16.00: check-in hotel Sitia Beach
* Free evening
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| **Monday 13/10/2025** | * **09.15-09.45**: Welcome at the department of Nutrition & Dietetics
* **09.45-12.30**: **Country groups:** Presentations by students (Ms. S. Vanhaesebrouck / Mr. F. Delaere) *(see instructions above)*
* "We are from Belgium/Greece/Austria" – Introduction to the home country, highlighting aspects of Belgium, excluding food.
* "Us, as students..." – Introduction to the educational system in Belgium/Greece/Austria, focusing on the study of Nutrition and Dietetics.
* "Belgian/Greek/Austrian food culture" – Exploring typical meals in Belgium/Greece/Austria and food specialties.
* Nutritional recommendations in Belgium/Greece/Austria (e.g. Food Pyramid, Mediterranean diet, new recommendations, Nutriscore), with an emphasis on Food Allergies.

Each **home group** uploads their PowerPoint to the Google Drive folder “BIP\_HMU\_2025, in the subfolder “Country Presentations”, before the start of the face-to-face week.* **12:30-13.30**: Coffee – Lunch Break
* **13.30-15.00**: “*Plant-Based Diets, Health and Sustainability”* (Dr. C. Papandreou)
* **15.00-15.30**: *“Dietary management of food allergy: passive or active?”* (Ms. S. Vanhaesebrouck / Mr. F. Delaere)
* **15.30-17.00**: International Group formation and task allocation (dietary profile assignments):

Assignment of **4 thematic projects** & Formation of **international mixed groups** (Dr. A. Markaki / Dr. V. Raikos / Dr. C. Papandreou / Mr. F. Delaere)* 1. Mediterranean diet & allergy
	2. Plant-based foods & allergy
	3. Ultra-processed foods & allergy
	4. Food labeling, policy & allergy awareness
* 17.00-19.00: Welcome reception at the Lobby of the Department (Mr. I. Sfendourakis)
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| **Tuesday** **14/10/2025** | * **9.15-12.00**: Project work (Dr. A. Markaki / Ms. S. Vanhaesebrouck / Mr. F. Delaere)
* **12.00-13.00**: Coffee – Lunch Break
* **13.00-14.30**: *“Food allergy health prevention: a solution-based interaction*” (Ms. S. Vanhaesebrouck / Mr. F. Delaere)
* **14.30-15.30**: “*Local Nutrition Topics including Oil Lecture” (*Dr. G. Fragkiadakis)
* **16.30-18.30**: visit Olive oil processing unit at Maronia village (Mr. I. Sfendourakis)
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| **Wednesday** **15/10/2025** | * **10.00-17.00**: Richtis Gorge (Dr. I. Sfendourakis)
* Last evening
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| **Thursday****16/10/2025** | * **09.15-13.00**: Project work (Dr. A. Markaki / Ms. S. Vanhaesebrouck / Mr. F. Delaere)
* **13.00-14.00**: Coffee – Lunch Break
* **14.00-16.00**: Elevator Pitch presentations (Prof. Dr. A. Markaki / Dr. G. Fragkiadakis / Dr. C. Papandreou / Dr. I. Sfendourakis / Ms. S. Vanhaesebrouck / Mr. F. Delaere)
* **19:00 – 20:30** Cretan Traditional Folk Dance Lesson (Dr. Psaroudaki)
* **21:00** Farewell Dinner at a local restaurant (Dr. I. Sfendourakis)
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| **Friday** **17/10/2025** | * 10.00 – 12.00 Closing session & reflection, Certificates of attendance
* 10.00- 13.00: bus to Heraklion
* 13.00-14.00: check-in hotel Capsis Astoria
* 14.00-17.00: Free afternoon (Knossos / national museum / exploring Heraklion)
* 20.00: Goodbye with Belgian students in Heraklion
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| Saturday 18/10/2025 | * 11.20-14.00: Heraklion-Brussels
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**Post f2f - Reflection Report (by 28th of November)**

**Guidelines for the Individual Reflection Report**

**1. Aim of the Reflection Report**

The reflection report has two main purposes:

* To reflect on **your own role and contribution** within the group,
* To identify **what you have learned** from the group work: in terms of nutrition, sustainability, allergy management, intercultural collaboration, and international experience.

**Important:** The focus is **not on describing what you did**, but **how you did it** and what you learned from it.

**2. Guiding Questions**

Use the following questions to guide your reflection:

* How did the collaboration go:
	+ Within your **country group** for the *Country Presentation* (preparation and delivery on Day 1 in Sitia).
	+ Within your **international group** for the *Thematic Project* (developed during the face-to-face week).
* What lessons did you learn from collaborating with students from **other countries and cultures**?
* Looking back at the **learning objectives of the BIP**, what do you conclude?
What did you learn from:
	+ Preparing and presenting the **Country Presentations**,
	+ Working on the **Thematic Project** (nutrition and allergy focus),
	+ Participating in **lectures, field visits, and cultural activities**,
	+ Watching the presentations and outputs of the other groups.
* Provide one idea for each of the following:
	+ What advice would you give yourself regarding your learning process if you could restart the BIP? (You may refer to comments in your peer feedback.)
	+ What advice would you give the teachers to improve the BIP next year? (e.g., online sessions, project work, communication, group support).

**3. Format and Submission**

* Length: **1–2 pages**
* Style: **Professional but personal**
* File format: **Word or PDF**
* File name: *Individual Reflection Report + [Your Name]*
* Submission: Upload your file (named “Individual Reflection Report + [Your Name]”) to the “Individual Reflection Reports” subfolder in the Google Drive folder “BIP\_HMU\_2025”
* **Deadline:** **Friday, 28 November 2025**

**4. Evaluation Criteria**

Your reflection report will be assessed according to the following criteria:

* Is the report written in a **professional and structured way**?
* Is the report written in a **critical and analytical way** (not descriptive)?
* Does the report provide a clear picture of **what you have learned** (positive and/or negative experiences) in relation to the learning objectives of the BIP?

**Overall Evaluation**

* Participation: 20%
* f2f country presentations: 25%
* Group project & final presentation (face-to-face): 40%
* Individual reflection report (post-f2f): 15%