

With a view to the Circular Economy!



Euroregion Nestos-Mesta¹ in the framework of the project "**EnvironmentYou - Environmental Management Enhancement by Youth-run SMEs**" of the Cooperation Programme INTERREG V-A "Greece-Bulgaria 2014-2020",, which focuses on the development of specially designed eco-friendly promotion and organization processes while aiming at the successful dissemination and effective implementation of the Environmental Management Systems (EMS) in the agricultural production, **successfully organized the first in face-to-face International Exchange Study Visit in Drama on the 25th of June 2021.**

The study visit focused on the application of circular economy model in activities related to the agricultural sector. The agenda included field trips and scheduled visits to local agricultural enterprises where the circular economy-practices are applied in production and processing processes by recirculating all raw materials without generating waste outputs. The thematic field trips were also supported by well-focused presentation prepared by the Professors of the International Hellenic University, based in Drama. These presentations, specifically, were linked to the utilization of the cutting-edge applications of technology that apply eco-friendly practices in the production process.

The aim of the visit was to introduce the invited Greek and Bulgarian partners into the circular economy principles as well as to support the small and medium-sized agricultural enterprises (SME's) to adapt a production system of resources utilization where reduction, reuse and recycling of elements prevails. This productive model could be the steppingstone for the reshaping of the agricultural sector, orienting it towards a long-term sustainable future.

¹ The Euroregion Nestos-Mesta-Greek Section, which covers the regional unit of Drama, is a registered NGO in which the Municipalities of Drama, Prosotsani, Doxato, Paranesti and Nevrokopi participate. Its aim is to encourage and promote interregional cooperation, to enhance the exchange of experiences between actors, the business world as well as between cultural organizations in the cross-border area. The Euroregion supports all the initiatives that could improve the communication between the inhabitants of the region, the institutions, the organizations and the business world that has chosen the region of Drama as their headquarters.

In particular, the participants were welcomed at the "Wine Art Estate" by Prof. S. Mamalis, with his thematic lecture which was emphasized on the importance of cross-border cooperation in the management of our common natural resources and afterward the speech was given to the oenologist of the estate, Mr. A. Papadopoulos in order to present innovative wine production practices and aim on the optimization of the final product, along with the utilization of production residues in fertilization.



The above presentations were followed by the lectures from the professors of HMU Mr. G. Gounaris and V. Kambourlazzou, introducing the participants to the advanced technologies in the field of agricultural production with the latter completing the presentation with a drone-grape harvesting demonstration in the University's courtyard.

Last but not least, the visit was closed by Mr. P. Athanasiadis, General Manager of ASOP Ag. Athanassios presenting the successful example of circular production, processing and sales of pomegranate, since all of its by-products are converted into raw materials for other industries (juice is bottled, the seeds produce scent oil and are absorbed by the cosmetology industry and the fruit outer surface is used as the basic ingredient for producing livestock food of high nutritional value).



The next educational visits of the EnvironmentYou project to be organized in Greece will be hosted by the Hellenic National Youth Council and the Regional Development Fund of Central Macedonia. Indicative thematic to be addressed are the ecofriendly entrepreneurship of youth in the agricultural sector and the operation of the EMS eLearning and training platform by the farmers.

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