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# Students from the Western Balkans explore innovation, sustainability and the future of agriculture through CultivETing study visit in Italy

**Liguria, Italy, April 2026**

This press release is issued by the consortium of the Erasmus+ project *CultivETing – Cultivating Entrepreneurship in the Agrifood Sector through VET*, a Capacity Building initiative co-funded by the European Union that brings together partners from Europe and the Western Balkans to promote learning, cooperation, and exchange in vocational education and training (VET).

As part of the project activities, students and representatives from Albania and Kosovo participated in a five-day study visit to Liguria, Italy, focused on agriculture, rural development, sustainability, innovation, and the connection between education and working life.

Through visits to vocational schools, research centres, farms, cooperatives, and local businesses, participants experienced first-hand how modern agri-food systems operate in practice and how education can be more effectively connected with labour market needs.

The experience offered students direct exposure to innovative approaches in the sector, including precision agriculture, smart technologies, sustainable production systems, value-added local products, and agri-tourism initiatives. Participants also explored how small rural businesses and cooperatives contribute to local economic development, preserve traditions, and create opportunities for rural communities.

A central component of the mobility was the mentoring approach implemented throughout the programme. Students were supported through guidance and reflection sessions designed to help them connect their learning experience with future educational and professional goals.

Feedback collected after the mobility highlighted the strong impact the experience had on participants. Many students emphasized that the study visit changed their perception of agriculture, helping them see the sector not as traditional or outdated, but as a field increasingly shaped by innovation, technology, sustainability, and entrepreneurship.

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*"Innovation and sustainability are no longer optional - they are at the core of modern European agriculture," reflected one participant after the visit.*

Participants also highlighted the importance of learning directly from professionals, businesses, and real working environments. Several students noted that the mobility helped them better understand labour market expectations, practical applications of their studies, and potential career opportunities in the agri-food sector.

The study visit reinforced a key message of the CultivETing project: meaningful learning happens when education is connected with practice, innovation, and real community needs.

The activity forms part of the broader efforts of the project to strengthen vocational education systems and improve cooperation between schools, businesses, research institutions, and local communities across the Western Balkans.

About the project

*CultivETing - Cultivating Entrepreneurship in the Agrifood Sector through VET* (Project Number: 101129381) is an Erasmus+ Capacity Building project co-funded by the European Union and implemented by 13 partner organizations from Albania, Kosovo, Greece, Italy, Germany, and Belgium.

The project supports the development of entrepreneurial, practical, and labour-market-oriented skills in the agri-food sector by strengthening cooperation between vocational education providers, businesses, and local stakeholders.

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