



# **Project "Agro-tourism Business Academy – SME Support System"**

**Acronym: Agro Business Academy**

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is Co-funded by the European Regional Development  
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participating in the Cooperation Programme Interreg  
VA “Greece-Bulgaria 2014-2020”  
and is implemented with the participation of  
Eurointegra Association, Agrientrepreneurship and  
Prosperity and Development for Bulgaria  
Association.**

**[www.agrotouracademy.eu](http://www.agrotouracademy.eu)**

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## Video lessons for sommeliers

**Eurointegra Association, the lead beneficiary of the project has successful experience in the development of project proposals in the field of tourism and agriculture.**

**Together with sommelier experts, the team of the association conducted video lessons about white and red wines in the cross-border region Bulgaria – Greece. The video trainings include topics related to the ways of serving, approaches to offering wine, demonstrations of bottle opening and other subtleties.**

**The beautiful and sophisticated atmosphere that was created for the shooting period further contributed to the impact of the training materials.**

**With the assistance of the Prosperity and Development for Bulgaria Association, Beneficiary 2 of the project "Agro-Tourism Business Academy – SME Support System" lessons were prepared for rosé wines in the cross-border region.**

**The video trainings will support the development of the skills of entrepreneurs and the improvement of the conditions for entrepreneurship.**



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Producers from the transnational region of Greece and Bulgaria provided exceptional wines for conducting the trainings. Special varieties have their own history and terroir. It is these varieties that offer exclusivity of flavors and aromas that attract the attention of consumers of first-class goods. Suitable types of local foods for each type of

wine were also presented.

The second stage of filming video trainings took place in a studio environment. The final stage was the sound of the video lessons in Greek and English.

The video trainings are now available online, translated into three languages, dubbed and subtitled.

These are the first professional video lessons for sommeliers. You can check out the trainings here:



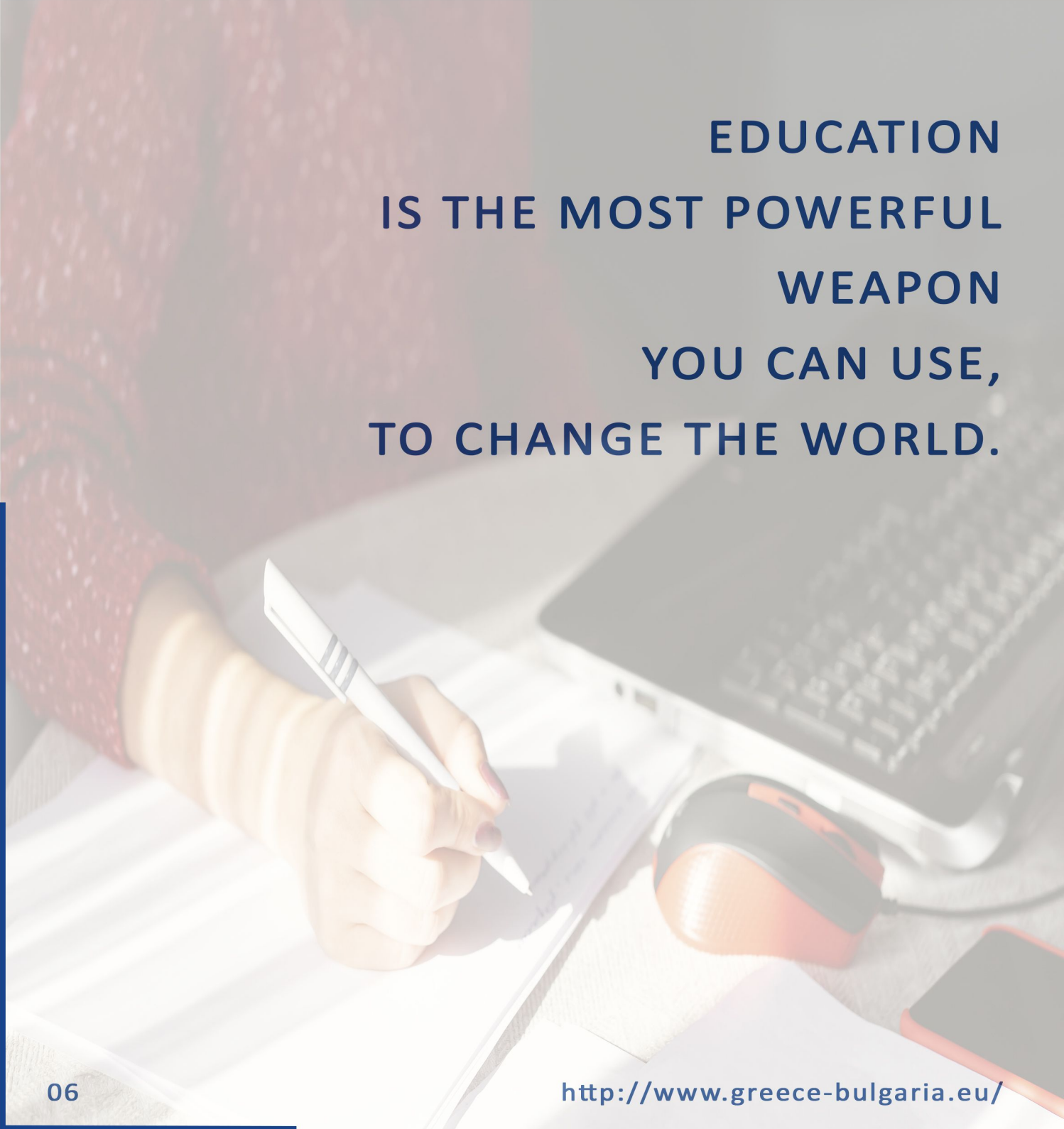
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Immerse yourself in the magic of the shooting process of the first video course for sommeliers.



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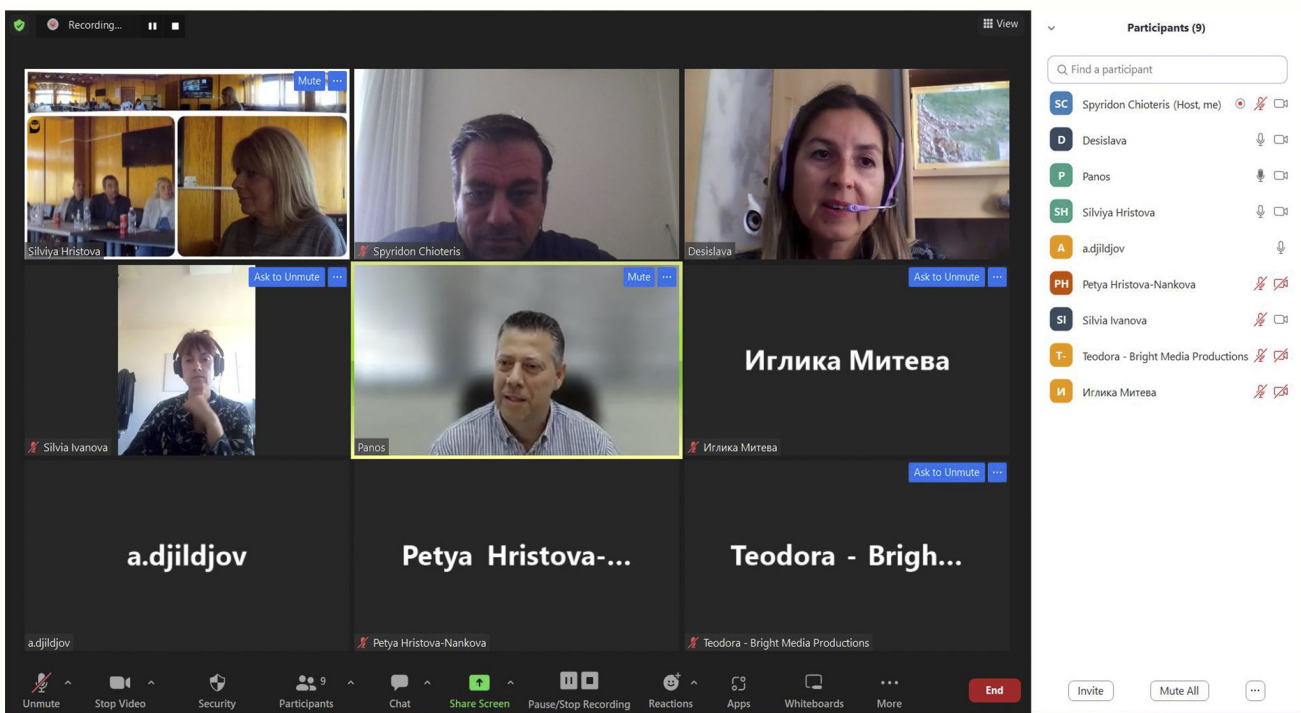
**EDUCATION  
IS THE MOST POWERFUL  
WEAPON  
YOU CAN USE,  
TO CHANGE THE WORLD.**

# Digital Press Conference

The first digital press conference, part of the project "Agro-Business Academy", was successfully held.

Among the participants were entrepreneurs from the Greek-Bulgarian cross-border region, the organizers of the event and beneficiaries of the project Association Eurointegra - Blagoevgrad, Association Prosperity and Development for Bulgaria - Blagoevgrad, AgriEntrepreneurship - Thessaloniki, representatives of the Regional administration of

Blagoevgrad and media representatives. The event was intended for businesses in the HORECA sector, farmers, the tourism sector, winegrowers and wine producers from the cross-border region Bulgaria – Greece, which covers Evros, Kavala, Xanthi, Rhodopes, Drama, Thessaloniki, Serres and Blagoevgrad, Smolyan, Kardzhali and Haskovo.



<http://www.greece-bulgaria.eu/>



## Агро-туризъм бизнес академия – система за подкрепа на МСП

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### DIGITAL PRESS CONFERENCE

#### Работни пакети и дейности към тях

	Работен пакет	Дейности	Дейности	Дейности
WP1	Управление на проекта и координация	Административно управление на проекта	Финансово управление	Отчетни дейности
WP2	Комуникация и разпространение. Дейности за промотиране на проекта	1. Организиране на дигитални ПРЕСКОНФЕРЕНЦИИ 2. Уеб портал на проекта	3. Дигитална финална конференция на проекта 4. Създаване на профили на проекта в социалните мрежи	5. Електронни брошури 6. Статии и публикации 7. Информационни банери 8. Проектни промоционални сетове
WP3	Диагностика и стратегическо планиране	1. Разработване на агробизнес проучване на съществуващи бизнеси от 3-те фокусни групи на целевата група	2. Образователни модули и уроци	3. Създаване на туристически агро маршрути
WP4	Създаване на Агро-Туризъм бизнес академия	1. Създаване на мобилно приложение	2. Създаване на Академия за агро –туристически бизнес	3. Дигитализация на учебния материал 4. Онлайн обучения на целевите групи.
WP5	Мерки за устойчивост и добавена стойност	1. Създаване на две експериментални полета в България и Гърция	2. Предоставяне безвъзмездно на посадъчен материал от местни сортове лози	3. Създаване на 3 професионални видео урока за сомелиери. Наръчник на сомелиера.

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## Questionnaire survey



In the past 2022. A year under the project "Agro - Business Academy" was carried out a survey among entrepreneurs in the Bulgarian part of the cross-border region Bulgaria – Greece. The collected data aims to identify the needs of the representatives of the target group of businesses and the need to support with information and training.

The survey builds a solid foundation for the next project activities related to the development of a roadmap and the creation of training modules, part of the Business Academy for Agro-Tourism.

The survey was personally sent to 80 participants, and thanks to digital channels it reached even more businesses, representatives of the target group. Entrepreneurs from different fields in Bulgaria described the current situation they are in. The largest share is of representatives of the HORECA sector, nearly 42% of the participants in the survey are in the field of hotel and restaurant business. Winegrowers and winemakers who participated in the survey were 32% and farmers were 25%.

The business of the majority of respondents has been operating for more than 11 years on the Bulgarian market. This means that there is sustainability, experience and established professional traditions. Over 20 years of stable business develop more than 16% of the participants. Of course, some of the respondents have been doing business for less than 10 years. The companies are located relatively equally in Southern Bulgaria in districts such as Blagoevgrad, Haskovo, Smolyan, Kardzhali and others.

The majority of respondents are between 31 and 40 years old. Between 51 and 60 years old are 35% of the entrepreneurs who completed the survey and 16% are between 41 and 50 years old.

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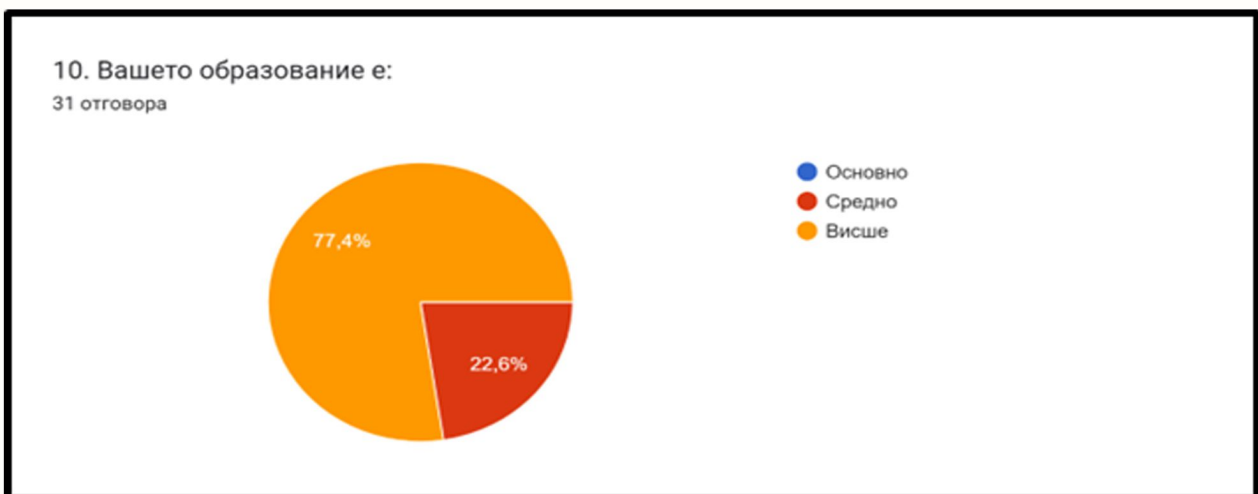
Relatively equal is the gender distribution – 45% for women and nearly 55% for men in the field. There is a strong impression that the majority of the participants in the survey have higher education.

The majority of Bulgarian businesses in Southern Bulgaria do not have partners in the cross-border regions of the Hellenic Republic, but serve Greek customers

and rely on them to expand the business.

The data reveals a good prospect for business development and new collaborations between entrepreneurs from the border region.

Nearly 90% of respondents see a good prospect of increasing customers and business ties with Greece.



## Problems facing business

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Some of the main challenges listed by the participants in the survey conducted by Agro Business Academy include topics such as the lack of adequate subsidies for winegrowers and winegrowers to help local businesses stand out from competitors in Europe; high interest rates and inflation; bureaucratic hurdles; lack of young staff in the field; Lack of sufficient information and others.

The analysis of the answers from the survey showed the presence of a very large set of problems for agro and tourism businesses, and the following topics can be deduced.

Higher costs due to increased workers' wages.

Competition from producers who produce at lower cost. High interest rates and lack of adequate subsidies for winegrowers and winegrowers to stand out among their European competitors.

Over 70% of respondents indicate that they are not familiar with the funding opportunities in the cross-border region, but need funding in order to increase competitiveness and enter niche markets.

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## Problems facing business

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Businesses state the greatest need for skills to develop and manage projects that they will have the opportunity to build during the training process at the Business Academy for Agro-Tourism.

The aim of the study is to identify the needs of the representatives of the target group of businesses and the need to support with information and training.

The combination of questions in the form of a survey as well as open-ended ones allow the most accurate data to be displayed and the current business needs to be taken into account.

The survey builds a solid foundation for the next activities under the project "Agro-tourism - Business Academy – SME Support System", related to the development of a roadmap and the creation of training modules.

The trainings are already prepared and accessible through the digital platform of the Business Academy for Agro-Tourism:

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Part of the study was related to organic farming, rural and wine tourism and entering new markets.

The majority of respondents (52.4%) are not aware of what organic farming and agricultural tourism are. 55% do not offer the opportunity for organic and agrotourism.

It is interesting that a huge part of the respondents are willing to develop a new market niche in organic farming and rural tourism. 67% of farmers' sites are closed for tours and tastings. A small minority (26.7%) indicate that their products can be purchased during a visit. On the other hand, wine tourism shows better activity. 76.9% of respondents indicated, that they are aware of what organic wine production and wine tourism are. 69% of the participants in the survey offer opportunities for organic wine tourism, but at the same time only 33.3% provide the opportunity for tasting. 91.7% confirm that they need the upcoming online trainings of the Business Academy for Agro-Tourism in order to develop sustainable business and enter new markets.



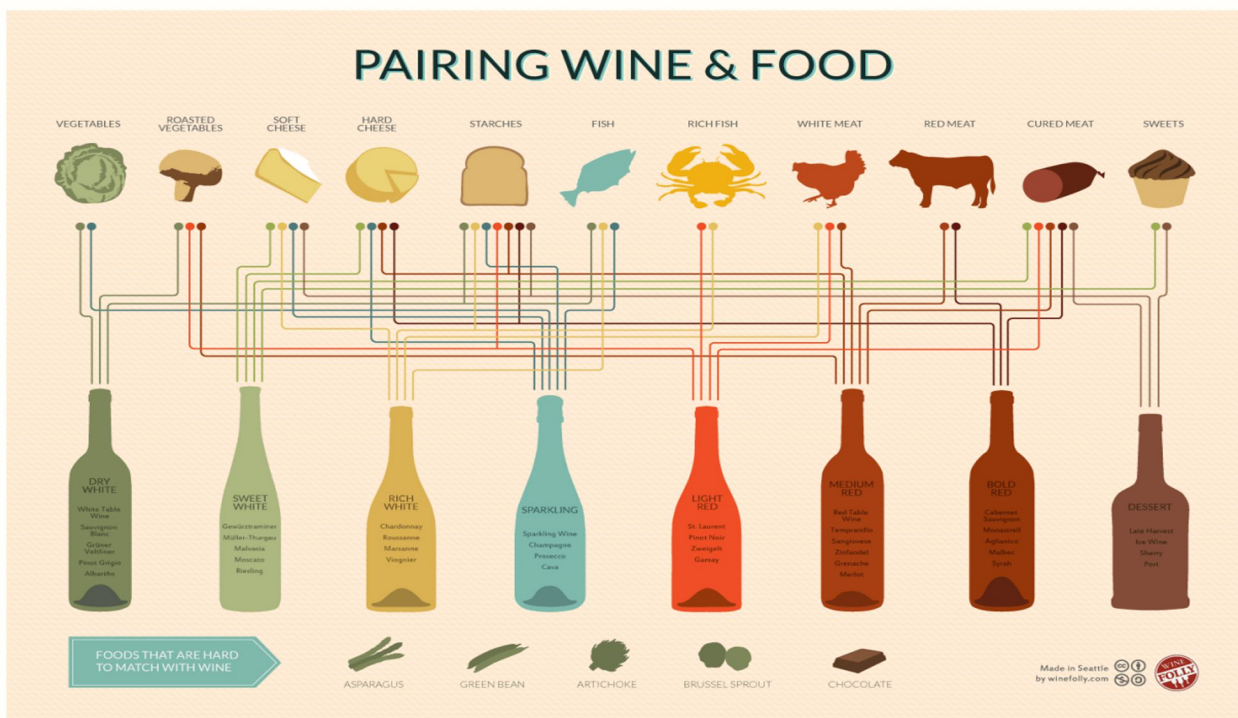
# Sommelier's Handbook

Immerse yourself in the magical world of wine and expand your wine horizons with the Sommelier's Guide! The publication is developed in three languages and is unique in its kind. So far, no other such resource has been issued.

"Agro-Business Academy" provides the unique opportunity for more and more people to learn from professional sommeliers and experts, expanding their wine expertise completely free of charge. The sommelier's manual includes:

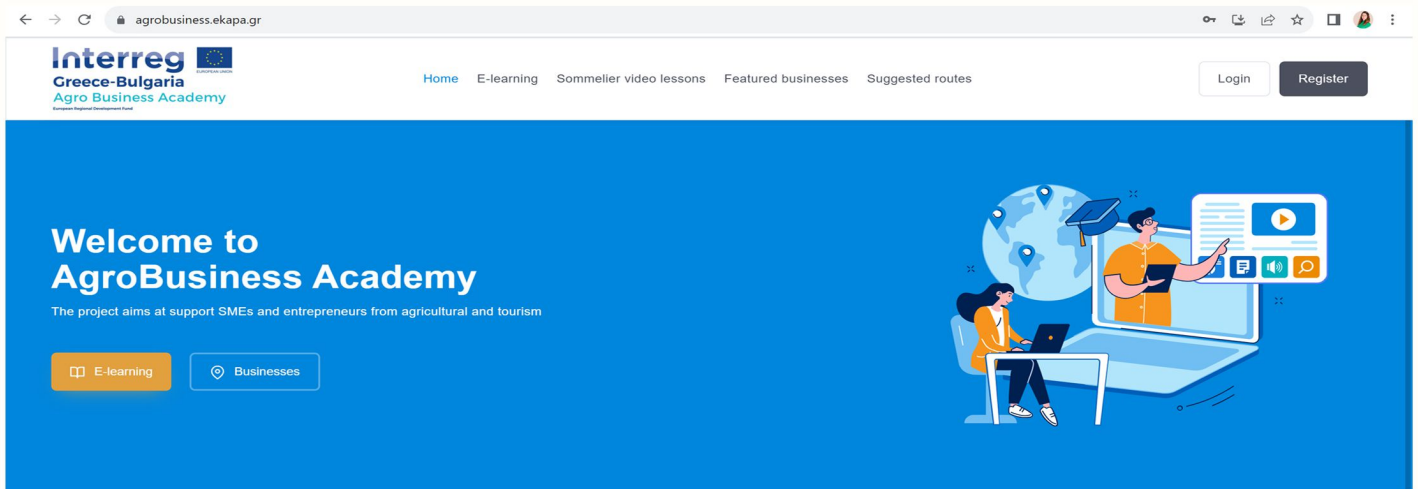
Basic knowledge of wine and wine regions; Wine tasting and evaluation techniques; Tips for combining wines with food; Professional recommendations from leading sommeliers; Study of the richness of local wines from the CBC region.

Get inspired by the wine world and create amazing gourmet experiences for yourself and your guests. Wine is more than a drink - it is art, culture and delight.



<https://agrobusiness.ekapa.gr/sommelier>

# Digital platform



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Within the project "Agro-tourism - Business Academy – SME Support System", the project website has been developed and launched, which plays a key role in providing information and support to SMEs in the agro-tourism sector of the cross-border region.

The main objective of the Agro-Business Academy is to create a complex and easily accessible support system for SMEs in agro-tourism, aimed at entrepreneurs, businesses and tourists in the cross-border region of Bulgaria and Greece. The website offers a variety of functions and services that support the development of tourism enterprises in this rapidly growing sector.

The Agro Business Academy is open to all entrepreneurs who wish to develop and strengthen their SMEs. Through the website [www.agrotouracademy.eu](http://www.agrotouracademy.eu) and the services in it, entrepreneurs have easy and convenient access to information, trainings and opportunities for partnership and funding, which supports them in the development and successful operation of their businesses in agro-tourism.

On the official website of the Agro-Business Academy you will find:

1. **Information center:** Up-to-date information on trends, legislation and best practices in the field of agro-tourism in the cross-border region.
2. **Training resources:** Training modules and videos that help entrepreneurs develop their skills in management, marketing, sustainable development and hospitality.
3. **Partnerships and networks:** A platform that connects businesses and tourists in the cross-border region of Bulgaria and Greece. The smart application provides information about the opportunities for Agro tourism and tourist routes in real time.
4. **Financial capabilities:** Access to information and video guides on financing and support for SMEs in agro-tourism in the cross-border region of Bulgaria and Greece. Information about available financial instruments, programs and grants that can support technology development and innovation in business in this particular region.

## Financing

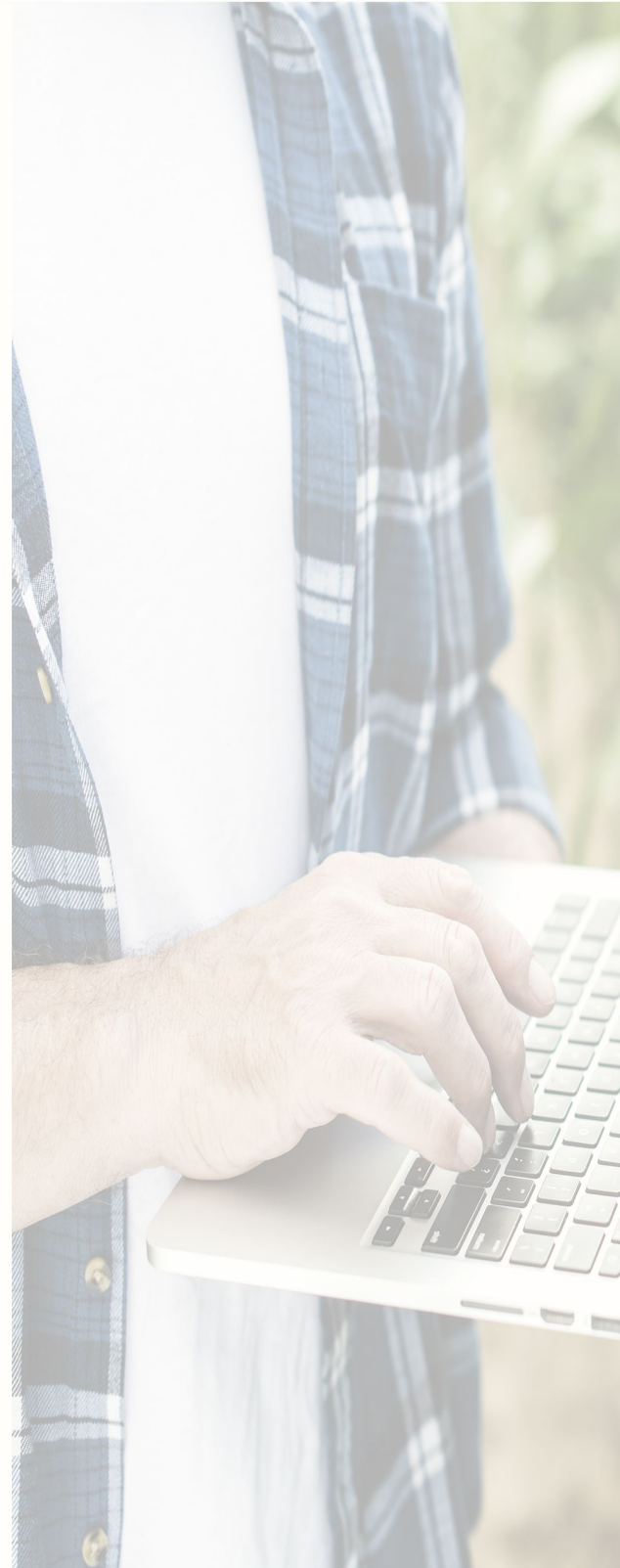
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This year and in the future, projects will be financed in the municipalities of Blagoevgrad, Svilengrad, Harmanli, Dimitrovgrad, Kardzhali, Haskovo, Smolyan, Gotse Delchev, Petrich, Samokov, Sandanski. Part of the priority axes are related to the promotion of ecological development, culture, natural heritage and sustainable tourism.

To support the growth and development of the business sector, Agro Business Academy offers innovative curricula focused on business funding opportunities. These modules, which will soon be available on the project site [www.agrobusinessacademy.com](http://www.agrobusinessacademy.com), will contribute to improving entrepreneurial skills and increasing business success.

One of the great benefits of the new educational modules is their accessibility. Participants will receive essential information and knowledge on business financing issues, entirely online. This makes training very convenient and time-efficient.

The modules have been developed by experienced experts in the field of entrepreneurship and business finance.



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**There will be a conference on wine and agrotourism in Thessaloniki.**

During the event will be presented the results of the project, as well as all projects funded under the program Greece - Bulgaria 2014-2020 with a focus on agriculture, tourism and wine.

Each project will be able to present the achievements and sustainability of the implemented activities. Representatives of the administrations of the two countries, the local structures of the municipalities and municipal tourist companies will be invited to participate. During the conference, a Wine Expo will be organized, where local wine producers will make demonstrations



of their production and will present the organic wines they have developed. Within the framework of the Conference, a one-day tour will be organized in the Greek part of the cross-border region. We will show some of the places that can be visited by lovers of agro and wine tourism.

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# INVITATION

**Turn your guilt  
in the stars of wine the exhibition!**

**Take part in the Wine Expo, which is to be held in  
Thessaloniki.**

**Participate absolutely for free!**

**Wine producers from the cross-border region Greece  
– Bulgaria are welcome.**

**During the event, a conference will be held in which  
participants can also present their wines to experts  
and connoisseurs.**

**If you are interested, please contact us at:  
[euointegrasofia@gmail.com](mailto:euointegrasofia@gmail.com)**

**<https://agrobusiness.ekapa.gr/>**

## **Beneficiaries**

### **Lead Beneficiary**

Eurointegra Association  
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### **Beneficiary 2**

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### **Beneficiary 3**

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**Thank you for your attention!**

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