*Press release no. 9/2025*

**Agrilevante: a hub for Serbian agriculture**

***The eighth annual Agrilevante international fair for agricultural technologies in Serbia and the Mediterranean area, was presented as part of the Agricultural Fair in Novi Sad. The themes of the exhibition were described by the Deputy Director of FederUnacoma, Fabio Ricci, during a seminar on the topic "Cooperatives and Sharing of Advanced Technologies in Agriculture".***

“Italy puts itself forward as a strategic partner by offering a model that combines innovation, efficiency and sustainability, promoting an integrated approach to agricultural production. At the heart of this vision is the development of supply chain collaborations, capable of distributing the value created more equitably along the entire agro-industrial chain”. These are the words with which the director of the Italian Trade Agency Office (ICE) in Belgrade, Antonio Ventresca, opened the proceedings of the seminar entitled “Cooperatives and Sharing of Advanced Technologies in Agriculture” which was held this morning as part of the Agricultural Fair in Novi Sad. During his speech, Director Ventresca spoke of some of the main challenges that Serbian agriculture is facing today, starting with the generational change, which requires an evolution in the way of organizing production spaces, plants and human resources. In addition to Director Ventresca, the event was attended by Luciano Catani, Scientific Attaché of the Italian Embassy in Belgrade; Claudio Mazzotti, General Director of the Cooperativa Agricola Braccianti di Campiano; Giordano Gori, Sales Manager at the Consorzio Agrario di Ravenna; Jelena Bizonj, President of the Association of Vojvodina Cooperatives; Ettore Fontana, President of Agriserbia, a company that is part of the Ferrero Hazelnut Company, and Fabio Ricci, Deputy Director of FederUnacoma.

To overcome the challenges outlined by the Director of the ICE office, it is necessary to focus on latest generation agricultural technologies, which can contribute significantly to generational turnover, to the increase in production yields, and to the rationalization of cultivation processes. Luciano Catani, reiterating what was said by the Italian Ambassador to Belgrade, Luca Gori, during the presentation at the Novi Sad trade fair, once again brought up the dynamism of economic relations between Italy and Serbia with particular reference to the agri-food sector. The sector, as has been observed, focuses on the excellence of Made in Italy equipment to promote agri-tech and sustainable agriculture.

From this perspective, agricultural cooperatives, by virtue of their specific organizational form, play a key role in promoting technological innovation in the primary sector, especially with regard to agricultural SMEs. The presentations by Claudio Mazzotti and Giordano Gori detailed the more significant aspects of this contribution and focused on the organizational specificities of the cooperatives, illustrating their advantages from a technical-operational perspective. Another case study was presented by Ettore Fontana who, speaking about his personal experience in Agriserbia, emphasized the importance of aggregations of agricultural producers. These – Fontana explained – play a leading role in ensuring quality and efficiency in the supply chains of hazelnuts for the confectionery industry. Agricultural cooperatives are also a point of reference for the primary sector in Serbia, with reference not only to the optimization of production processes but, as Jelena Bizonj clarified, to the large-scale use of latest-generation mechanical equipment.

Agricultural cooperatives in the Balkan country have thus contributed to the robust growth in sales of agricultural machinery witnessed in the seven years between 2016 and 2022. “In the period considered, the value of agricultural machinery imports more than doubled, going from EUR 86 to 266 million. The data relating to foreign supplies can be considered representative of the entire national market, since – stated the Deputy Director of FederUnacoma – almost all of the demand for agricultural technologies is satisfied through imports”. The incremental trend stopped in 2023 and 2024, however - according to the forecasts of the research company Exportplanning - this should be a transitory phenomenon. Starting this year, sales of mechanical equipment should increase until 2028 at an average rate of more than 4% per year. A significant share of domestic demand is satisfied by Italian companies which, with an export value of EUR 27.7 million in 2024, was in second place among Serbia's foreign suppliers, behind Germany (52.3 million). Tractors (8.7 million), harvesting machines (3.7 million), sowing, transplanting and fertilizing equipment (3 million) and livestock systems, were the Made in Italy agricultural technologies most exported to the Balkan country last year. “Italy and Serbia have a long and solid tradition of commercial relations also in the agricultural machinery sector. In this scenario - Fabio Ricci said - the upcoming Agrilevante event, the great exhibition of agricultural mechanics for Mediterranean agriculture, represents an important opportunity to further strengthen technical cooperation between the two countries". The 2025 event is scheduled to be held in Bari from 9 to 12 October this year and, is intended as a great platform for learning about the wide range of specific solutions for Serbian agriculture, and an ideal place to delve into the needs and priorities of Mediterranean agricultural economies, including in terms of training, as a “forum” for discussion on topics of common interest and opportunities for cooperation. The Bari event, which in 2023 saw the participation of 350 exhibiting industries from 20 countries and was attended by 95,000 visitors (of which 4,000 foreigners from 27 countries), is thus truly an event of international caliber. In addition to buyers, operators and technicians from the Mediterranean area, the Balkan and Middle Eastern regions, 120 foreign delegates representing 38 countries, including from Serbia, are expected to come to Bari. During the four days of the event, foreign delegates, whose incoming is organized by the Italian Trade Agency in collaboration with FederUnacoma, will be engaged in business to business meetings with the exhibiting industries that will allow the manufacturers and operators of the Balkan country to find the technological solutions best suited to the technological needs of the Serbian agricultural economy.

**Novi Sad, May 20, 2025**