



## **Training seminars under the "EnvironmentYou" Project were held in Smolyan**

On November 29 and 30, training seminars on topical issues concerning European and national environmental legislation, green economy, green entrepreneurship and environmental management systems in agricultural enterprises were held in the town of Smolyan. The format of the event was hybrid, with over 40 participants attending both days in person and via an online platform.

The seminars were organized by the Youth Forum 21st Century Association under the Project B2.6D.11 / 01.07.2019 “Environmental management enhancement by Youth-run SMEs” (Project Acronym - EnvironmentYou), funded by the European Regional Development Fund and by the national funds of the countries participating in the Cross-border Cooperation Program INTERREG V-A "Greece-Bulgaria 2014-2020". The main objective of the project is to contribute to the development of an environmentally responsible

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[www.environmentyou.eu](http://www.environmentyou.eu)

Project №B2.6d.11 / 1.07.2019 “Improving the environmental management of SMEs managed by young people” (EnvironmentYou), funded by Interreg V-A “Greece-Bulgaria 2014-2020” Cooperation Programme, co-financed by the ERDF and the national budget of the participating countries. The sole responsibility for the content of this document lies with the Youth Forum 21<sup>st</sup> Century and can in no way be taken to reflect the official opinion of the European Union, the participating countries, the Managing Authority or the Joint Secretariat.

business culture among young people in the cross-border region. The seminars were aimed at young agricultural entrepreneurs; owners, managers or staff of micro, small or medium-sized enterprises, registered or operating in the cross-border region with Greece; students or pupils from vocational high-schools in the region.

The seminar held on 29 November was dedicated to the topic "Environmental legislation and the implementation of environmental management systems - challenges and opportunities for Youth-run SMEs". The lecturer was Ognyan Atanasov, National Secretary "Health and Safety at workplace. Ecology." of the Confederation of independent trade unions in Bulgaria (CITUB).

"If you want your business to be successful, you need to focus on ecology and green transition," Mr. Atanasov said, and advised participants to get familiar with European environmental regulations. He said that CITUB will support in every way the processes and the businesses directly involved in them on the way to the gradually imposed changes.



In an interesting and accessible way, the lecturer introduced the participants to the current international developments and regulations related to the environmental future, explained the effects of climate change in the agricultural sector, the decisions of COP 26 - Glasgow and how the Green Deal affects the agricultural sector.

Funding opportunities for the agricultural sector were also presented to participants. These are funds available through the National Recovery and Resilience Plan, the Cohesion Fund and the Just Transition Fund. "CITUB will closely monitor and insist on the clear and transparent allocation of resources to enterprises under the various funds and programs." said Ognyan Atanasov.



A key issue that was discussed during the seminar was the introduction of environmental management systems in SMEs. "Unfortunately, small companies can hardly cope with the introduction of such systems", Atanasov said and shared the opinion that the larger enterprises could help the smaller ones in these

processes. He also welcomed the efforts and activities of the "Youth Forum 21st Century" in popularizing the topic among youth-run SMEs.



The seminar on 30 November introduced the participants to the topic "Green and circular economy, eco-innovation and green entrepreneurship". Lecturer was Valentina Vasilyonova, Vice President of the Federation of Independent Trade Unions in Agriculture and President of Section "Agriculture" at the European Federation of Food, Agriculture, and Tourism Trade Unions.



Ms. Vasilyonova said that contrary to popular perceptions, the agricultural sector is one of the fastest growing in the last six decades.

"As trade unions, we are absolutely responsible, active participants in spreading the concept of greater connectivity between processes and between individual economic activities and the deployment of local economic and social models that enable a decent life for every citizen," said the speaker.

The main highlights of the seminar were the "Farm to Table" strategy, part of the European Green Pact, and the slogan "Think Global - Act Local", calling for a paradigm shift and action at local level that provides solutions to global problems.

The participants in the training workshops received certificates of participation.



On December 2 and 3, two more training seminars will be held in Bansko on topical issues of European and national environmental legislation, green economy, green entrepreneurship and environmental management systems in agricultural enterprises.