*Press Release No. 7/2022*

**EIMA 2022, stronger Italian-Serbian cooperation**

***The 2022 edition of the great agricultural machinery exhibition to be held in Bologna from 9 to 13 November was presented in Novi Sad. Over a thousand Serbian operators are expected at EIMA, while exports of Italian agricultural machinery to that country grew by 27% in 2021. Dissemination of information and technical assistance are the fundamental supports for a quality leap in mechanisation in the Balkan country.***

Serbian agriculture has great possibilities for development but must focus on mechanisation and new technologies. The climatic conditions and soil quality are favourable in Serbia - it was emphasised during the ICE and FederUnacoma press conference held this morning as part of the Novi Sad fair - and they allow for a variety of productions ranging from arable crops to fruit and vegetables, as well as livestock and forestry.

In order to achieve the country's potential, however, a new generation of machinery is needed, capable also of operating with the support of advanced computer and satellite systems that improve yields and reduce the environmental impact of farming.

Alessandro Malavolti, president of FederUnacoma, the association representing Italian industries and organiser of the great world exhibition of agricultural mechanics EIMA, which will take place in Bologna from 9 to 13 November, dwelt on these aspects during the press conference.

The Novi Sad fair - said Malavolti - devotes much attention to mechanisation and innovative systems for agriculture, and hosts important Italian manufacturers interested in collaborating with the Balkan country. At the same time - added the president of FederUnacoma - there is growing interest in the Bologna exhibition from Serbian operators, who have attended recent editions with substantial delegations.

The number of Serbian dealers and agricultural entrepreneurs present at EIMA International 2018, before the stoppage due to the Covid pandemic, was 1,300, and the expectation is that this year's edition will return to the same levels. The Bologna exhibition offers a vast choice of technologies to Serbian operators - it was explained - with more than 50 thousand models of machinery, equipment and components subdivided into 14 Sectors of specialisation and 5 themed Showcases ("Components", "Digital", "Energy", "Green" and "Idrotech").

Moreover, after the impediments, including logistical ones, caused by the health crisis, trade between Italy and Serbia has regained momentum. If 2020 closed with a total value of Italian exports to Serbia of 19.2 million euro, of which 6.6 related to tractors and 12.6 to other machinery and equipment, in 2021 - according to ISTAT data on foreign trade - Italian exports were worth 24.4 million, a figure that corresponds to a growth of 27% compared to the previous year.

Italy therefore has useful technologies for Serbian agriculture, which complement well those already produced in the Balkan country, but the spread of mechanisation also requires information dissemination services and technical assistance, since it is more necessary than ever to adopt specific solutions for the needs of the country's different regions and to use mechanical means to their full potential.

To this end, the support and training structures already present in Serbia play a very important role. A specific report by the ICE office in Belgrade recalls that 16 institutes specialised in improving the quality of agricultural production currently operate in Serbia, while the 4 universities and 26 secondary schools of agricultural specialisation can cover the specific education and training needs for mechanisation.

Italy and Serbia are ready to collaborate also at this level - concluded FederUnacoma's Deputy Director General Fabio Ricci - creating links between training and research institutes of the two countries. In the thematic area of EIMA Campus - Ricci noted - the major research and training institutions at the Italian and international level will be present with a programme of courses and conferences centred precisely on the new mechanisation requirements, while the meeting of the Club of Bologna (an international assembly of agricultural mechanisation experts) will develop a work agenda concerning the different models of agriculture in Europe and the paths to bring continental production up to the highest quality standards.

**Novi Sad, 25 May 2022**