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**Agricultural machinery: growing market in the Mediterranean region**

***Tractor sales figures - presented today in Bari by FederUnacoma president Mariateresa Maschio - indicate a positive trend in southern Europe, the Balkans, North Africa and the Middle East. The Agrilevante exhibition as a vector of innovation for the entire Mediterranean region.***

The agricultural machinery market is growing throughout the Mediterranean area, and promises strong development in the coming years. This was the picture described by Mariateresa Maschio, the President of the Italian manufacturers' association FederUnacoma, during the press conference held this afternoon at the Bari exhibition centre, on the eve of Agrilevante, the major exhibition of agricultural machinery for the Mediterranean area.

In southern European countries (Spain, France, Greece and Italy) tractor sales have maintained high levels in recent years. The number of tractors sold in Mediterranean Europe - it was pointed out during the conference - is now equal to half of the entire continental market (91 thousand in 2021 out of a European total of 176 thousand, and 84 thousand in 2022 out of a total of 165 thousand). Substantial increases are being recorded in the Balkan area in particular: in the first half of this year, tractor sales in Bosnia Herzegovina exceeded 700 units, with a growth of 59% compared to the same period in 2022; in Croatia more than 600 units were recorded in the first half of the year, with a growth of 29% compared to 2022; and in Serbia and Montenegro a total of 1,250 units were recorded, equal to an increase of just over 9%.

Among African countries - where tractor imports cover almost the entirety of domestic demand - Morocco stands out in recent years, with import growth of 26% in 2021 and 24% in 2022; Tunisia, where purchases of foreign machinery grew by 39% in 2021 and 30% in 2022; and Egypt, which saw import growth of 23.9% in 2022. Middle Eastern countries include Iraq, where imports grew by 78% in 2022, and Israel, which saw increases of 21.7% in 2021 and 12.4% in 2022. "In the future, the agricultural machinery market is destined to grow uniformly throughout the Mediterranean region," said President Mariateresa Maschio, "because the European Union is aiming at an increasingly advanced model of agriculture that requires a radical replacement of the machinery fleet, and because in the Balkan belt, as well as in the countries of the Danube area, the aim is to reach the same standards as the main European countries". "Even in the North African area," the President added, "forecasting surveys see a consistent growth in machinery imports in the coming years: ExportPlanning projections indicate for Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia increases of around 5% per year in the four years from 2023 to 2026". "In this context, the Agrilevante exhibition plays a strategic role," concluded Mariateresa Maschio, "because it offers new-generation technologies, suited to the different agricultural models present in the Mediterranean, and capable of responding to the severe challenges of this century: demographic growth, climate change, and massive urbanisation that leverage manpower and arable land away from agriculture".

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