

Co-funded by
the European Union

Meeting at the University of Bari Aldo Moro (Italy)!

From 14 to 18 July 2026, an international training event was held at the University of Bari Aldo Moro in Bari, Italy, within the framework of the Erasmus+ KA220-VET project “OpenEAT — I eat to live or I live to eat.”



Photo 1. The University of Bari Aldo Moro — the venue of the international training event held within the framework of the Erasmus+ OpenEAT project.

Representatives of the Ukrainian project team, Taras Zhygailo and Nataliia Valentiuk, took part in the training event. Iryna Antonik is the Ukrainian coordinator of the OpenEAT project, responsible for coordinating the participation of Ukrainian partners and facilitating the development of international scientific and educational cooperation.

The project aims to develop professional competencies in the field of cereal and cereal product safety, improve educational approaches, and facilitate the exchange of European expertise in identifying and assessing risks associated with contamination of food raw materials. For Ukraine, this cooperation is particularly important in the context of wartime challenges, when the safety of agricultural products, the preservation of export potential, and compliance with European requirements are becoming strategically significant.

International Cooperation and the Exchange of Scientific and Practical Experience

The training programme brought together representatives of partner institutions from various European countries to discuss modern approaches to ensuring cereal product safety. Particular attention was paid to international and European regulatory requirements, food control systems, and the assessment of risks associated with the contamination of cereal raw materials.

An important component of the training was familiarisation with approaches to detecting and assessing potentially hazardous substances in cereal crops and processed cereal products. Key topics included monitoring pesticide residues, heavy metals, nitrogen compounds, and other contaminants that may affect food quality and safety.

Discussing these issues in the context of European legislation and the One Health approach contributed to a comprehensive understanding of the interconnections between environmental conditions, agricultural production, food safety, and human health.

For Ukraine, these issues are of direct practical relevance. Hostilities, infrastructure damage, and disruptions to production and logistics chains create additional risks for agricultural land, cereal cultivation, storage, and subsequent processing. Therefore, integrating European expertise into Ukrainian scientific and educational practice is an important step towards improving the agricultural product safety control system.

Exploring Innovative Approaches to Cereal Raw Material Processing

An important component of the training programme was a series of practical visits to Italian institutions and enterprises involved in agricultural research and cereal raw material processing.

In particular, the Ukrainian participants visited Andriani SpA Benefit Corporation in Gravina in Puglia, a company recognised for its innovative approaches to producing food products from cereal and other plant-based raw materials.



Photo 2. Andriani SpA Benefit Corporation — an enterprise specialising in the processing of cereal and plant-based raw materials.

Familiarisation with the company's experience provided an opportunity to gain a broader understanding of how raw material quality and safety requirements are integrated into production processes. For Ukrainian producers and researchers, this experience is valuable in terms of improving product competitiveness, enhancing production practices, and strengthening controls at different stages of the food chain.

Such visits contribute to a better understanding of how scientific developments, technological solutions, and food safety requirements can be integrated into modern food production.

Scientific Research and Practical Training

The programme also included a visit to CRSFA “Basile-Caramia” — the Centre for Agricultural Research, Experimentation and Training in the city of Locorotondo, Italy.



Photo 3. CRSFA “Basile-Caramia” in Locorotondo — a centre for agricultural research, experimentation and professional training.

Familiarisation with the experience of such institutions helps deepen understanding of the practical needs of the agricultural sector, expand professional networks, and identify promising areas for future cooperation.

For researchers at the Institute of Climate Smart Agriculture of the National Academy of Agrarian Sciences of Ukraine, integrating scientific research with the practical needs of agricultural production is particularly important. This is especially relevant for Ukraine, where there is a need to develop risk assessment methods, adapt production processes to wartime and climate-related challenges, and ensure appropriate levels of product safety.



Practical Significance of Participation for Ukraine

Participation in the international training within the OpenEAT project contributes to the dissemination of European expertise among Ukrainian professionals and creates opportunities for its further application in scientific research and educational activities.

The main practical areas in which the knowledge gained can be applied include:

- improving educational and methodological materials on the safety of cereal crops and processed cereal products;
- promoting modern approaches to identifying and assessing contamination risks in agricultural raw materials;
- enhancing understanding of European requirements for food control;
- developing cooperation between research institutions, educational establishments and representatives of the food industry;
- strengthening the focus on agricultural product safety in the context of wartime and climate-related challenges.

The knowledge acquired can be applied in professional training, the development of methodological recommendations, and the formulation of scientifically sound approaches to ensuring cereal product safety. Another important outcome of the international training is the expansion of opportunities for knowledge exchange and the integration of modern European practices into the professional education of Ukrainian specialists.

Developing International Partnerships and Educational Resources

The Erasmus+ OpenEAT project brings together partner organisations from several European countries and aims to develop and disseminate educational resources in the field of food safety. The participation of the Ukrainian partners in this cooperation promotes the integration of Ukraine's scientific expertise into the European educational area, facilitates the exchange of best practices and helps establish professional networks.

International cooperation within the project is an important component of advancing applied research, improving professional training and disseminating up-to-date knowledge on agricultural product safety.

The implementation of the Erasmus+ OpenEAT project contributes to strengthening international scientific and educational cooperation, disseminating European expertise and improving approaches to ensuring the safety of cereal crops and processed cereal products. The project's practical value lies in the potential to apply the knowledge gained to improve professional training, develop educational and methodological resources, and implement modern approaches to identifying and assessing contamination risks in agricultural raw materials.

The international partnership established through OpenEAT represents a valuable contribution to the development of agricultural science, the improvement of food safety and the alignment of Ukrainian educational and professional practices with European requirements. The experience gained provides a foundation for further knowledge exchange, the development of joint initiatives and the strengthening of Ukraine's capacity to ensure the quality and safety of agricultural products in the face of contemporary challenges.

Editorial note: The images provided are illustrative photographs of the institutions and enterprise, rather than verified photographs of the Ukrainian participants during the training visit. For final publication, it is advisable to use original photographs taken during the event, if available, and to credit the author or source of each image.

The Next Stage of International Cooperation: Training Meeting in France

The next important stage in the implementation of the international Erasmus+ OpenEAT project, “I eat to live or I live to eat,” will be a training meeting in France, scheduled to take place from 14 to 18 September 2026 at ANSES — the French Agency for Food, Environmental and Occupational Health & Safety. The event will continue the international exchange of scientific knowledge and practical experience aimed at improving approaches to ensuring the safety of cereal crops and processed cereal products.

Particular attention will be paid to European practices for assessing contamination risks in agricultural raw materials, modern analytical methods for detecting hazardous substances, laboratory testing, and the application of scientifically sound approaches to food safety assurance. An important focus will be on strengthening participants’ professional competencies and expanding opportunities to apply the knowledge and experience gained in scientific research, education and practical activities.

For Ukrainian agricultural science, participation in such international initiatives is particularly important. In the context of wartime challenges, disruptions to established production and logistics chains, and increased risks of agricultural product contamination, there is a need to strengthen laboratory control, improve risk assessment methods and develop professional training in line with European approaches. The experience gained will create opportunities to adapt best practices to Ukraine’s needs, update educational and methodological materials, and further develop international scientific and educational partnerships.

The training meeting in France will continue the OpenEAT partners’ joint efforts to foster a modern food safety culture — from monitoring the quality of cereal raw materials to protecting consumer health. Bringing together scientific expertise, laboratory experience and educational resources represents an important step towards strengthening European cooperation, enhancing the competitiveness of the agricultural sector, and improving Ukraine’s capacity to ensure food quality and safety in accordance with contemporary requirements.



Contact

For more information about the **OpenEAT project – I eat to live or I live to eat**, the activities carried out and the results obtained, we invite you to follow us online:

◆ Project Coordinator:

ROMPAN – Romanian Employers in the Milling, Bakery and Flour Products Industry

◆ Project website:

🔗 <https://rompan.ro/portfolio/openeat/>

VISIT TO BARI, ITALY

official website of ICSA NAAS (publication date 07/21/2026)

<https://icsanaas.com.ua/%d0%b2%d1%96%d0%b4-%d0%be%d0%b4%d0%b5%d1%81%d0%b8-%d0%b4%d0%be-%d0%b1%d0%b0%d1%80%d1%96-%d1%96%d0%ba%d0%be%d1%81%d0%b3-%d0%bd%d0%b0%d0%b0%d0%bd-%d1%80%d0%be%d0%b7%d1%88%d0%b8%d1%80%d1%8e%d1%94-%d0%b3/>