

VinAE: Vineyards network for co-creation and expansion of AgroEcological strategies to face viticulture challenges: a basis for cross-borders living labs

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Viticulture represents an important sector, fuelling an international trade in fresh grapes and wine. Italy, France and Spain currently lead this production, Portugal ranks within the top 10, while Türkiye ranks 5th globally in fresh grape production and 18th in wine grape production. Conventional or even traditional management practices frequently deplete natural resources, often promoted by misaligned incentive policies. These practices negatively affect soil health by increasing pollution and reducing biodiversity and, together with climate change, are threatening grape quality, yields, soil health, and overall sustainability in these regions. Thus, the transition towards more sustainable viticulture practices, in line with the Agroecology (AE) Partnership's Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda, is pivotal for addressing the pressing environmental, economic, and social challenges facing the grape and wine industry. In this context, VinAE, a three-year European Project on Vineyards and AE Practices in five main European viticulture regions, Spain, France, Portugal, Italy, and Turkey, has been funded in the Frame of AE Partnership. VinAE's aim is to expand agroecological practices to improve the resilience of vineyard agroecosystems in five vineyard regions of Spain (Ribeira Sacra, Ribeiro, Txakolí and Rioja), Portugal (Douro), France (Gaillac), Italy (Tuscany), and Türkiye (Anatolia). VinAE will create a transnational network of viticulturists, multidisciplinary scientists, and other stakeholders in the vine and wine sectors to foster collaboration and co-creation of innovative and context-adapted AE solutions. Moreover, VinAE aims to establish the basis for a cross-border Living Lab on AE practices in vineyards, with an initial focus on the Euroregion Galicia-North Portugal, and later extending it to other viticulture regions during the project. An evaluation programme, including agronomic, environmental, and socioeconomic aspects, will highlight the benefits of AE practices and support strategies the development of strategies to promote their wider adoption.