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**ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN RURAL AREAS OF WESTERN ROMANIA
 A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF EU-FUNDED AND NON-FUNDED
 ENTERPRISES**

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Abstract: This paper analyzes entrepreneurship in rural areas of Western Romania through a comparison between EU-funded and non-funded enterprises. The study evaluates the impact of European funding on business development using indicators such as turnover, number of employees, and investment capacity. The research is based on comparative analysis, secondary data, and local empirical observations. The findings show that enterprises benefiting from European funding generally achieve better economic performance, greater adaptability, and higher development potential compared to non-funded businesses. At the same time, non-funded enterprises face significant difficulties related to access to capital and business expansion. The study concludes that European funding plays an important role in supporting rural entrepreneurship and sustainable local economic development.

• **Introduction**

Entrepreneurship plays an important role in the economic and social development of rural areas, contributing to job creation, diversification of local activities, and improvement of living standards.

In the context of European policies focused on sustainable rural development, access to European funding has become an essential factor in supporting rural enterprises and increasing their competitiveness.

This study was conducted during the period 2025–2026 in the rural localities of Nițchidorf, Sacoșu Turcesc, and Buziaș-city, located in Timiș County, Western Romania.

The research focuses on comparing enterprises that benefited from European funding with those developed without financial support, in order to evaluate the impact of funding on business performance and development capacity.



• **Material and method**

The research was carried out during 2025–2026 in the rural localities of Nițchidorf, Sacoșu Turcesc, and Buziaș, Timiș County.

The study used a comparative research approach focused on analyzing enterprises that benefited from European funding and businesses developed without financial support.

The materials used in the research included financial and economic data collected from public databases, online company information, local observations, and promotional materials related to rural businesses and development projects.

The analysis considered indicators such as turnover, number of employees, investment level, and business development capacity. The methodology combined comparative analysis, empirical observation, and interpretation of secondary data in order to evaluate the impact of European funding on rural entrepreneurship and local economic development.



• **Results and discussions**

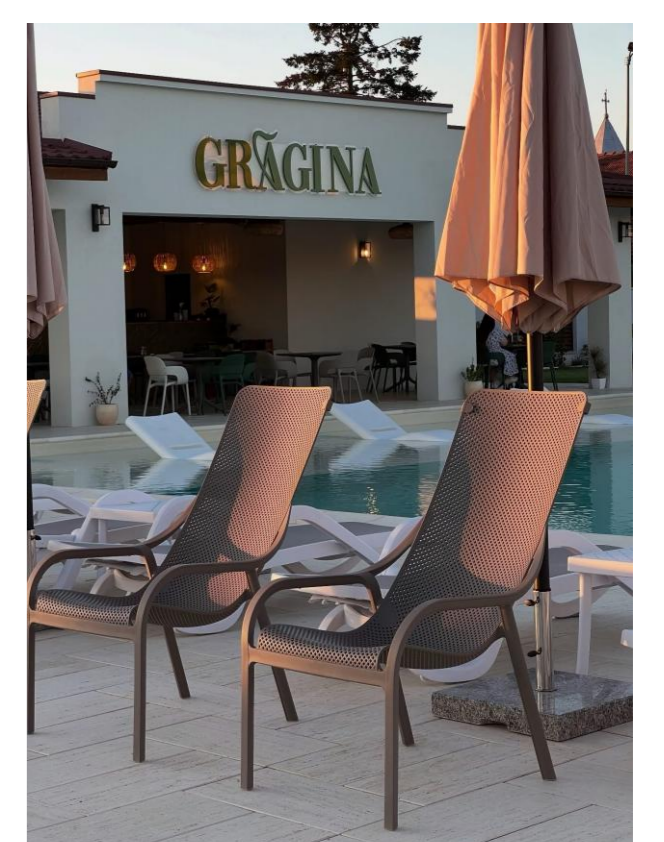
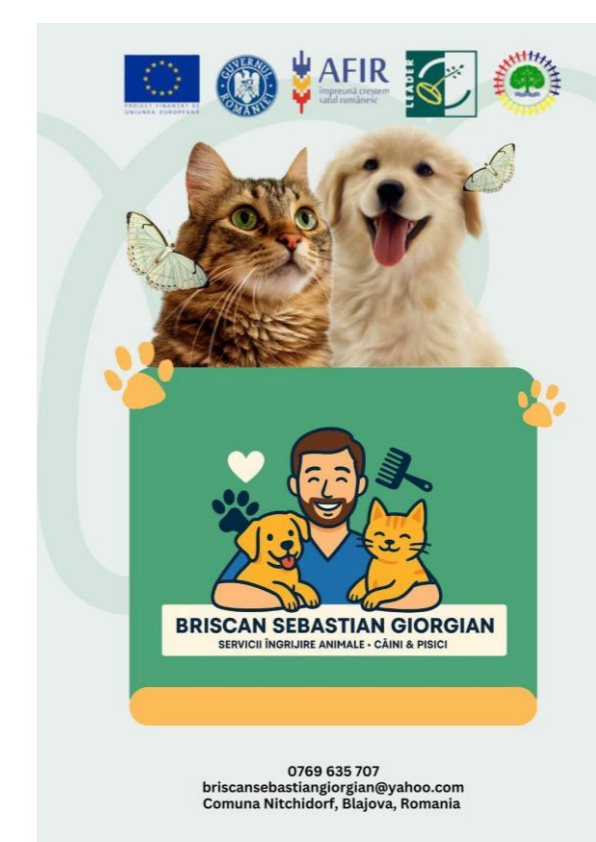
The comparative analysis revealed significant differences between EU-funded and non-funded enterprises in terms of economic growth and development capacity. Businesses that accessed European funding recorded a continuous increase in annual turnover, investment levels, and market visibility throughout the analyzed period.

The research showed that funded enterprises expanded their activities more rapidly, diversified their products and services, and improved their operational infrastructure.

At the same time, the number of employees increased annually, reflecting both business stability and the growing demand for local products and services. In several cases, enterprises managed to double their turnover within a few years after project implementation.

Another important aspect observed during the study was the positive organizational atmosphere created within funded businesses. Entrepreneurs focused more on promotion, innovation, customer satisfaction, and the delivery of high-quality products and services. These elements contributed directly to increasing competitiveness and strengthening the economic sustainability of rural enterprises.

At the same time, the study highlighted that some rural enterprises remain reluctant to access European funding, even though they observe successful examples and good practices in their communities. The main reasons identified were the fear of bureaucracy, complex administrative procedures, financial uncertainty, and concerns regarding long-term sustainability and project implementation obligations. In contrast, non-funded businesses showed slower growth, limited investment capacity, and difficulties in expanding their activities due to reduced financial resources.



• **Conclusions**

The study highlights the significant impact of European funding on the development of rural entrepreneurship in Western Romania. Enterprises that benefited from EU-funded projects demonstrated faster economic growth, increasing turnover, higher investment capacity, and a continuous rise in the number of employees. The research also shows that European funding contributes not only to business development, but also to improving service quality, innovation capacity, and market competitiveness. Entrepreneurs supported through European projects were more oriented toward promotion, modernization, and long-term sustainability. In conclusion, European funding represents an essential instrument for supporting rural economic development, stimulating entrepreneurship, and creating sustainable opportunities for local communities.