



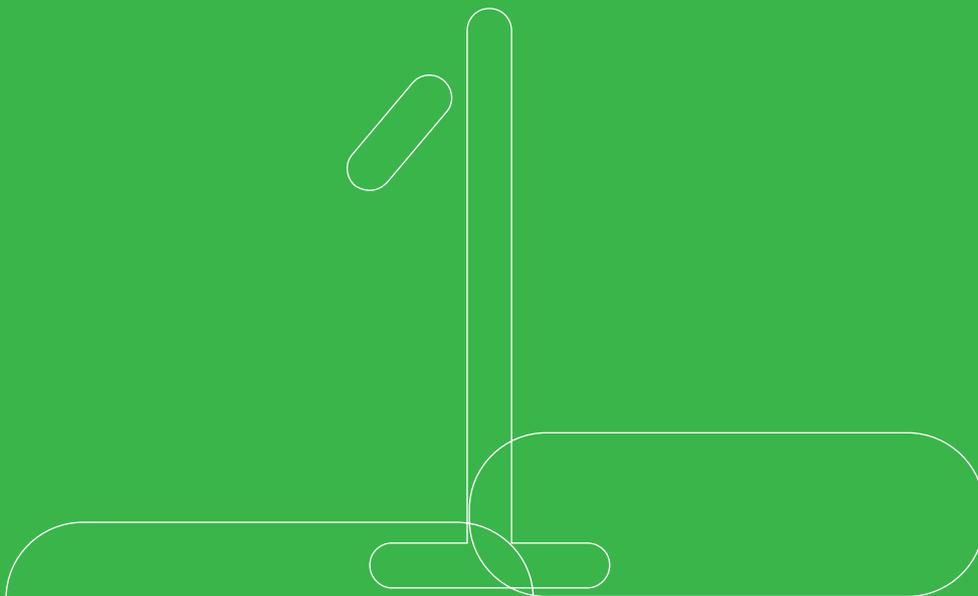
## FIRST ALBANIAN RURAL PARLIAMENT

28-30 September 2017

Tirana, Albania

PROGRAMME





The project “ALTER - Active Local Territories for Economic development of Rural Areas” is supported by European Commission



Institute for Democracy and Mediation  
Instituti për Demokraci dhe Ndërmjetësim

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# First Albanian Rural Parliament

Under the Auspices of the Speaker  
of Albanian Parliament,  
Mr. Gramoz Ruçi

# A European Project...

Articulated as an idea a year ago, the “Rural Parliament” was shaped into a project where everyone began to believe. It is now becoming an inclusive practice to promote and undertake the necessary reforms that strive for revitalized and reborn rural areas.

The Albanian Network for Rural Development (ANRD) initiative for a “Rural Parliament” as an instrument to support the European idea in rural development is not only an economic and social development project in rural areas of the country but at the same time it is also a vigorous project of local democracy.

Reliance on the public-private partnership, awareness and involvement of each citizen in the development plans of the Local Action Groups (LAGs), cooperation and networking among stakeholders, involvement of women and youth, and support for interaction among the local government units, economic entrepreneurships, and civil society will turn this venture into an irreplaceable sustainable development project. This is to ensure that in each area of the country tripartite partnership structures are established and functioning, capable of encouraging local communities to promote development and, hence, absorb EU assistance in the coming years.

The Rural Parliament seeks to promote and support efforts to capture the pace of time in rural development policies and practices through a bottom-up approach. Through ANRD, the Rural Parliament will reach out to the entire country and will soon be decentralized to four regional forums, which will also serve as regional rural parliaments. This two-day activity sets the stage for a regional synergy among public stakeholders, rural businesses, and civil society.

All of these bear witness that the ANRD welcomes the month of September 2019 and is working incessantly toward the goal of convening the second Rural Parliament, which will assess the achievements to date and will help to further inspire and promote them. The Final Declaration of the First Rural Parliament to be read out in the Hall of the Albanian Parliament on 30 September is our challenge for the next two years.

Getting back to our today's agenda, I would like to thank all the contributors to this initiative: First and foremost, without the excellent partnership with the Agricultural University of Tirana this activity would not have reached these levels, nor would it have this authority. Without the support of all donors and stakeholders, this initiative would remain merely a great idea. Finally, without the contribution of all ANRD staff and members, this initiative would be next to impossible.

As a concluding remark, allow me to share with you something personal from this experience. During almost 20 years of experience in leading positions in this sector, no management activity has ever been easier than this one. Indeed, this experience was, from the beginning to the end, open, informative, and inclusive. All stakeholders of this initiative shared their contributions, merits and responsibilities.

Thank and stay tuned to ANRD.

**Sotiraq Hroni**

Chairman of the Board  
Albanian Network for Rural Development

## Background

The 1st Albanian Rural Parliament (ARP) represents an advocacy, capacity building and networking event dedicated to rural development in Albania. The event - a joint effort by the Albanian Network of Rural Development (ANRD) consisting of twenty-two local CSOs in partnership with the Agriculture University of Tirana (AUT) - welcomes nearly 300 participants. ARP is the instrument through which the Albanian Network for Rural Development and Agriculture University of Tirana seek to influence the agenda of rural development in Albania. The partnership between AUT and ANRD will enable the achievement of such goals by strongly promoting rural development policymaking based on evidence and research.

The main beneficiaries of this advocacy effort are the national and local government institutions, as well as other public and private actors, civil society organizations, farmers, entrepreneurs in the field of rural development etc. The overall objective of this instrument (Rural parliament) in Albania is to advocate for the rural development and ensure that the rural agenda and its priorities will be strongly reflected in the local, regional and national policies. The first ARP aims to bring together rural development stakeholders with the objective to accelerate the country rural reforming process in approximating EU policy of Community Led Local Development (CLLD). To this end, ARP 1 will offer space for know-how transfer and sharing experiences on LEADER LAGs from different European countries and of those in the region. The JOINT DECLARATION agreed upon by participants in this event will seek to make governance of public institutions of the sector at the national and local level more proactive and accountable in promoting EU policies and practices in rural development.

## Brief history

- The idea to organize the first Albanian Rural Parliament came to light at ANRD's launching Conference on March 11, 2016. The conference "Albanian Network for Rural Development: Mainstreaming non-public actors into National Rural Agenda" was focused on the bottom-up founding perspective of the Network and challenges to develop cooperation between of non-state actors, private and civil society.
- The Kick off event of the 1st Albanian Rural Parliament was held on April 14, 2017, in the premises of the Agricultural University of Tirana. It brought together academics, civil society organizations and ANRD members, representatives of regional development agencies, other relevant actors and students of different study areas at the AUT. A platform on rural challenges and critical issues were agreed upon by participants;
- Six regional round tables were carried out with the purpose of consultation with all stakeholders at both level, regional and local, around the platform of rural development challenges in our country.

- Similar to other European and regional networks, ANRD intends to hold the Albanian Rural Parliament at two-year intervals, so that the actors of rural development advocate for policies and support from the government in addressing the country's rural development challenges.

## Participants

The ARP will bring together nearly 300 representatives from national and local public authorities, private sector, and civil society as well as formal and informal groups of local communities across the country.

The 61 municipalities will be represented by public officials, farmers, entrepreneurs, women and youth and different economic and social agents.; Government officials of national, regional and local authorities; regional development agencies, donors and academia, experts and students will participate in the proceeding of the Albanian Rural Parliament ; representatives of rural development networks in the Western Balkan Countries and Turkey and other interested individuals; Guests and international experts in rural development

## The format

The programme of the 1st Albanian Rural Parliament, comprised of plenary sessions, guest speakers, discussion panels, networking opportunities, workshops and working groups, offers a great opportunity to discuss, network, transfer know-how and exchange ideas and best practices on rural development - locally, regionally and internationally.

## Day 1|Thursday, 28 September 2017

Venue: Agricultural University of Tirana

### Building B, 3rd Floor

|              |  |                              |
|--------------|--|------------------------------|
| <b>09.00</b> | Arrival of the delegates & Registration of participants<br>Welcoming coffee              |                              |
| <b>10.00</b> | Introductory note  | Room: Behar Male, Building A |
|              | Welcoming & Greetings  | Room: Behar Male, Building A |
| <b>10.30</b> | PLENARY SESSION: Current debate on rural development. Key challenges and emerging issues |                              |
|              | Question and Discussion  |                              |
| <b>12.30</b> | Lunch  |                              |
| <b>14.00</b> | Simultaneous thematic workshops - A multi-stakeholder approach of rural development      |                              |

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|---|--|---|
| <b>Thematic Workshop 1</b><br>Value chains for rural development in Albanian local territories<br><br><b>(Room: 304B)</b>                           | <b>Thematic Workshop 2</b><br>The role of academia and research institutions in evidence based rural policy making<br><br><b>(Room: 305B)</b>                                  | <b>Thematic Workshop 3</b><br>The role of civil society in rural development & social inclusion of rural communities<br><br><b>(Room: 306B)</b> |
| <b>Thematic Workshop 4</b><br>Family Farming: solutions for sustainable rural livelihoods and more equitable development<br><br><b>(Room: 307B)</b> | <b>Thematic Workshop 5</b><br>Diversification of local economy (Rural entrepreneurship, agro-tourism, slow food etc.- challenges and opportunities)<br><br><b>(Room: 308B)</b> | <b>Thematic Workshop 6</b><br>Endogenous, bottom up and participatory local development<br><br><b>(Room: 309B)</b>                              |

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|--------------------|---|
| <b>15:30</b>       | Coffee break  |
| <b>16:00-17:30</b> | Know-how transfer and sharing experiences on LEADER LAGs - a stepping stone to LEADER implementation in Albania (Round 1) |
| <b>19.30</b>       | Dinner and networking   |

|   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <b>LEADER LAG Workshop 1:</b><br>LAG Posavje, SLOVENIA<br>Moderator: Janja Jordan<br><br><b>(Room: 304B)</b>  | <b>LEADER LAG Workshop 2:</b><br>LAG Srijem, CROATIA<br>Moderator: Albert Varga<br><br><b>(Room: 305B)</b>      | <b>LEADER LAG Workshop 3:</b><br>LAG Maiella Verde, ITALY<br>Moderator: Carlo RICCI<br><br><b>(Room: 306B)</b>  |
| <b>LEADER LAG Workshop 4:</b><br>LAG Prlekija, SLOVENIA<br>Moderator: Goran Soster<br><br><b>(Room: 307B)</b> | <b>LEADER LAG Workshop 5:</b><br>LAG Izvor, CROATIA<br>Moderator: Matija Zamljačanec<br><br><b>(Room: 308B)</b> | <b>LEADER LAG Workshop 6:</b><br>LAG Deliblatska Peščara<br>Moderators: Ivana Stefanović, SERBIA<br>LAG 321 Čoka, Boris Ilic, SERBIA<br><br><b>(Room: 309B)</b> |

## DAY 2 | Friday, 29 September 2017

Venue: Agricultural University of Tirana

Building B, 3rd Floor

|              |   |
|--------------|---|
| <b>09.30</b> | Registration of Participants  |
| <b>10.00</b> | SPLINARY SESSION - Room: Behar Male, Building A   |
| <b>11.15</b> | Coffee break  |
| <b>11.45</b> | Know-how transfer and sharing experiences on LEADER LAGs - a stepping stone to LEADER implementation in Albania (Round 2) |

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|--|--|---|
| <b>Workshop LEADER LAG 1:</b><br>LAG Posavje, SLOVENIA<br>Moderator: Janja Jordan  | <b>Workshop LEADER LAG 2:</b><br>LAG Srijem, CROATIA<br>Moderator: Albert Varga      | <b>Workshop LEADER LAG 3:</b><br>Leader initiatives in Göttinger Land, GERMANY<br>Moderator: Jan Hanisch                  |
| <b>(Room: 304B)</b>  | <b>(Room: 305B)</b>  | <b>(Room: 306B)</b>   |
| <b>Workshop LEADER LAG 4:</b><br>LAG Prlekija, SLOVENIA<br>Moderator: Goran Soster | <b>Workshop LEADER LAG 5:</b><br>LAG Izvor, CROATIA<br>Moderator: Matija Zamljačanec | <b>Workshop LEADER LAG 6:</b><br>LAG Deliblatska Peščara LAG 321 Čoka, SERBIA<br>Moderators: Ivana Stefanović, Boris Ilic |
| <b>(Room: 307B)</b>  | <b>(Room: 308B)</b>  | <b>(Room: 309B)</b>   |

**13.30** Lunch

**14.30 - 17:00** - Four simultaneous WORKING GROUPS – regional and local actors initiate discussions with regard to Leader/CLLD implementation according the four regional management areas  
Building B, 3rd Floor

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>WG1. Regional Development Area 1</b><br>(Shkodër-Kukës-Lezhë)<br>Moderator: Roland Bardhi | <b>WG1. Regional Development Area 2</b><br>(Tiranë, Durrës, Dibër)<br>Moderator: Shefqet Bruka   |
| <b>(Room: 305B)</b>  | <b>(Room: 306B)</b>  |
| <b>WG1. Regional Development Area 3</b><br>(Korçë-Elbasan-Berat)<br>Moderator: Petrit Dobi   | <b>WG1. Regional Development Area 4</b><br>(Vlorë-Fier-Gjirokastër)<br>Moderator: Evelina Azizaj |
| <b>(Room: 307B)</b>  | <b>(Room: 308B)</b>  |

**15.30** Coffee break

**17.00** **Wrap up**  
Finalizing the ARP Declaration

**19.30** Dinner and non formal networking

**DAY 3 | Saturday, 30 September 2017**

*Venue: Albanian Parliament*

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Concluding Remarks

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**10.00 Opening Remarks**

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**10:45 Reading the Joint DECLARATION of the first Albanian Rural Parliament 2017**

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Key messages

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**DAY 1  
THURSDAY,  
28 SEPTEMBER 2017**

**VENUE: AGRICULTURAL UNIVERSITY OF TIRANA  
BUILDING A, 1ST FLOOR, “BEHAR MALE” ROOM**

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**09.00** Arrival of the delegates & Registration of participants  
Welcoming coffee

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**10.00 Fjala Hyrëse**  
*Evelina Azizaj, Koordinatorë Kombëtare, Rrjeti Shqiptar për  
Zhvillimin Rural*

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**Welcoming & Greetings**

*Prof.Dr. Bahri Musabelliu, Rector of Agricultural University of Tirana  
Niko Peleshi, Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development  
Marius Lazdinis, Deputy Head of Unit, Pre-accession assistance, DG  
Agriculture and Rural Development, European Commission  
Maren Kneller, Head of Development, German Embassy  
Kirsten Birke Lund, Representative of the Steering Committee of  
European Rural Parliament  
Andi Seferi, Deputy Mayor of Tirana*

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**10.30 - PLENARY SESSION: Current debate on rural development.**

**12.30 Key challenges and emerging issues**

**Moderator: Drini Imami**

*Sotirag Hroni, Board Chairman of Albanian Network for Rural  
Development*

*Marius Lazdinis, Deputy Head of Unit, Pre-accession assistance, DG  
Agriculture and Rural Development, European Commission*

*Prof. Dr. Fatbardh Sallaku, Dean of Agricultural University of Tirana  
Senior representative of Department of Strategy and Donor  
Coordination at the Albanian Council of Ministers*

*Alina Cunk Perklič, Senior Representative of Ministry of Agriculture,  
Forestry and Food, Head of Coordinating committee for CLLD/  
LEADER, Slovenia*

*Dott. Carlo Ricci, Independent Expert*

*Goran Soster, Representative of PREPARE aisbl - Partnership for  
Rural Europe*

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## Background & Objectives:

Given that fostering rural development represents one of the key challenges for development policy in Albania, the panel will seek to set the current debate about rural development in Albania through examining its critical issues. This panel aims to elaborate with the participants the main challenges ahead rural development in Albania is facing. The so much needed the inter-sectorial and multi-stakeholder approach will be brought into focus. Furthermore, the panel will stress the importance of the involvement of non-public actors in influencing the agenda of rural development in Albania and wider in the region and EU. The Government efforts to advance rural agenda and future prospects in the sector will be presented. Challenges of scientific research in relation to policy making and rural development will be highlighted by an academic perspective. Such proactive discussions will set the agenda for the ARP proceeding. The panel presentations will aim to move the debate forward through addressing the following issues for discussion:

- ▶ What are the insights from current debate on rural development?
- ▶ Which are the key challenges that Albanian agriculture and rural development face in the context of EU approximation?
- ▶ What are the key challenges of scientific research in relation to policy making and rural development?
- ▶ What is the perspective of donors concerning rural development challenging and issues?
- ▶ What about the role of civil society in the current debate of rural development in Albania? To what extent the bottom-up advocacy can contribute?
- ▶ What are the key challenges of rural development policy and its effective implementation in Albania? Is rural development policy responding to key challenges and issues in rural development?
- ▶ What is government's strategy to advancing national rural agenda as regards CLLD/LEADER? Is there any concrete action to prepare the society build its capacities to absorb EU financial instruments?
- ▶ What are lessons learned from new EU countries? – Slovenian Case in regard to LEADER implementation. What we can learn from Slovenian experience in the implementation of the Leader approach?
- ▶ Why should LEADER/CLLD be recognized as a powerful development approach?

The presentations will provide current status of the topics, review other alternatives and offer emerging issues.

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Questions and discussions

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**12.30 Lunch**

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**14.00 SIMULTANEOUS THEMATIC WORKSHOPS - A multi-stakeholder approach of rural development**

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Building B, 3rd Floor

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## **Background & Objectives:**

These workshops will underline the importance of multi-stakeholder approach in rural development, by initiating debates regarding the pivotal role that each policy, social and economic player has in addressing the key challenges toward sustainable rural development. Participants in each of the thematic workshop will discuss and elaborate the potentials, capacities, and hindrances each actor face to clearly articulate and carry out its own role in rural development domain. The discussions should be constructive and positive through trying to turn identified challenges into opportunities for future actions.

Participants representing various stakeholders of rural sector will work together with mutual understanding to achieve the target in a joint learning process to build accountability for the role they have to play in approaching positive and sustainable development models for rural communities.

The workshops will focus on the following issues:

1. Value chains for rural development
2. Research in rural development
3. Civil society in rural development & social inclusion
4. Family Farming
5. Economic Diversification
6. Endogenous, bottom up and participatory local development



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|--|---|--|
| <p><b>Thematic Workshop 1</b><br/>Value chains for rural development in Albanian local territories</p>                           | <p><b>Thematic Workshop 2</b><br/>The role of academia and research institutions in evidence based rural policy making</p>                                  | <p><b>Thematic Workshop 3</b><br/>The role of civil society in rural development &amp; social inclusion of rural communities</p> |
| <p><i>(Room: 304B)</i></p>   | <p><i>(Room: 305B)</i></p>  | <p><i>(Room: 306B)</i></p>   |
| <p><b>Thematic Workshop 4</b><br/>Family Farming: solutions for sustainable rural livelihoods and more equitable development</p> | <p><b>Thematic Workshop 5</b><br/>Diversification of local economy (Rural entrepreneurship, agro-tourism, slow food etc.– challenges and opportunities)</p> | <p><b>Thematic Workshop 6</b><br/>Endogenous, bottom up and participatory local development</p>                                  |
| <p><i>(Room: 307B)</i></p>   | <p><i>(Room: 308B)</i></p>  | <p><i>(Room: 309B)</i></p>   |



## **Thematic Workshop 1**

Value chains for rural development in Albanian local territories

*(Room: 304B)*

### ***Discussants:***

***Drini Imami, Agricultural University of Tirana***

***Senior representative of Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development***

***Alban Zusi, Expert, Albanian Export Center***

***Josif Gorea, Agriculture trader***

***Vaip Salkurti, Agro-processor***

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***Moderator: Remzi Keco***

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***Rapporteur: Shpresim Domi***

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## **Short profiles:**

Prof. Assoc. Remzi Keco is lecturer affiliated in the Department of Agribusiness Management, at Economy & Agribusiness Faculty. The main focus in his work is the field of agribusiness management and public sector management. Remzi has a successful experience as general manager in the private sector and as a consultant for several well known companies.

Dr. Drini Imami is a lecturer at Faculty of Economics and Agribusiness, Agricultural University of Tirana. Drini has worked as a consultant for FAO, SNV, World Bank, GIZ, and EU projects etc. He has conducted research in several leading European research institutions and contributed to about 30 technical reports and 50 scientific publications.

## **Background:**

Improved value chain coordination is important to improve the efficiency and standards, especially in the case of exports to EU. Improved coordination requires well-designed support implying evidence based policy-making including intensive consultations such as this workshop.

## **The aim of the workshop:**

To discuss about current forms of agrifood value chain coordination (including both vertical coordination such as contract farming, and horizontal cooperation), challenges and needs for support. The panel will address the following questions:

- ▶ What are the current forms of horizontal and vertical coordination in the agrifood value chain sector?
- ▶ Why is there a need to improve horizontal cooperation?
- ▶ Why is there a need to improve vertical coordination?
- ▶ What are the support schemes needed and viable to promote horizontal cooperation and vertical coordination (eg. Contract Farming)?

## **Thematic Workshop 2**

The role of academia and research institutions in evidence based rural policy making

**(Room: 305B)**

### ***Discussants:***

***Engjell Skreli, Agricultural University of Tirana***

***Senior representative of Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development***

***Enver Isufi, Institute of Biological Agriculture***

***Geron Kamberi, Agency for Research, Technology and Innovation***

***Flamur Thaçi, Deputy Mayor, Has Municipality***

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***Moderator: Rezart Postoli,***

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***Rapporteur: Amalia Tola***

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### **Short profiles:**

Prof. Dr. Engjell Skreli is a professor at the Agricultural University of Tirana. He has earned the doctor degree in 1999 from the Agricultural University of Tirana in the field of collective action and a Master of Science diploma from the Mediterranean Institute of Montpellier (France) in the field of rural development in 1994. Engjell is lecturer at Agriculture and Food Policies, Agriculture and Food Policy Analysis and Research Methodology in Applied Economics at the Agricultural University of Tirana. Prof. Skreli has made a remarkable scientific contribution in the areas of collective action, vertical integration of value chain actors in agriculture and consumer preference analysis, proven by a significant number of scientific articles and participation at international conferences. He has extensive consultancy experience, working on a number of agencies such as UNDP, FAO, SNV, GIZ, etc.

Prof. Dr. Rezart Postoli is a lecturer at the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine at the Department of Clinical Materials. Rezart has run several research projects by finding short-term and long-term solutions to meet the needs of modern equipment. He has been continuously engaged as a scientific director and member of several scientific teams in various national and international programs. As a consolidated researcher he has published and referred in many national and international conferences. The high quality of his publications and referrals is further evidenced from the positive impact of its work. Prof. Postoli has quite long experience of cooperating with several Universities in Europe in the framework of various Programs.

## The aim of the workshop:

The purpose of the workshop is to give an overview of current research and how it contributes to agriculture and rural development policies, analyzing the supply and demand factors, research demand and relevant institutional factors. The workshop will further address demand and supply issues regarding research issues and the connection of the two, having into attention the importance of the institutional organization of the research institutions and others by addressing the following questions:

- ▶ Is there any research in the field of agriculture and rural development today? Respective policies, PhDs, articles, projects? Does it meet the needs of agriculture and rural development?
- ▶ Are there public funding for rural and agricultural research? Government budget, University budget?
- ▶ Which are the institutions that might need the AUT research products?
- ▶ Are there any requests/needs from public institutions and the private sector? Is there any fund or do they foresee funds for research in the area?
- ▶ What could be some research issues: Priorities of regional development, local development priorities, collective action, integration between value chain actors, innovation in agriculture, farm efficiency, sustainable rural development (economic, social and environmental)
- ▶ Is there a link between the request and the offer? AHEED project, memorandums. If not available, why?
- ▶ Current status and issues of institutional organization: AKTI, AUT, other service providers
- ▶ New public management and production of public goods - centralized public management vs. contract management

### **Thematic Workshop 3**

The role of civil society in rural development & social inclusion of rural communities

**(Room: 306B)**

#### ***Discussants:***

***Etleva Dashi, Agricultural University of Tirana***

***Erisa Cela, UN Women representative***

***Andi Kananaj, Agency for the Support of Civil Society***

***Matej Stepec, Rural Development Network, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food, Slovenia***

***Majlinda Hoxha, Agrita Vision, Diber***

***Elma Tershana, Youth Voice Initiative***

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***Moderator: Tatjana Dishnica***

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***Rapporteur: Gentian Mehmeti***

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### **Short profiles**

Prof. Dr. Tatjana Dishnica has a long and consolidated expertise in rural development, holding the position of Director of Agricultural Department, Committee of Science and Technology in Albania; Director of National Soil Research Institute; Director of Agricultural Research in Ministry of Agriculture (1995-2013). Ms Dishnica is a Member of Scientific Advisory Committee of CIHEAM (2013-2017). She has been National Coordinator of five Projects, founded by FAO and also some other projects funded by Netherlands government, Italian Cooperation, SNV, MADA, ect. Her main expertise lies as an expert in agricultural research & extension service, agricultural cooperation, climate change, ect. Currently Prof. Dishnica is a lecturer of (Sustainable soil and water management, Crop production and Environmental Education) at Agricultural University. She is also the Executive Director of a local organization, "Women in Sustainable Agriculture".

Prof.As.Dr. Etleva Muça actually is lecturer of Sustainable Rural Development at Agricultural University of Tirana. She has more than fifteen years involved in different activities and research studies in different sectors of the economy including the fields of rural development, environmental economics, and regional development. Being a graduated as agricultural economist, and specialized in sustainable Agriculture she has demonstrated her competency in these fields not only as University lecturer, but also as researcher. Etleva

has been working on local, regional and national level as key expert for several national and international Organizations such as FAO, USAID, GIZ, IDM, VIS Albania etc. Also she was part of group experts in assisting LAG-LEADER simulations projects in Albania.

## **Background:**

Though civil society in Albania has demonstrated a viable and dynamic role in representing the voices of impoverished people, they are seldom active in bringing transformative changes in the lives of rural communities. Civil society seem to be poorly represented and highly fragmented in remote and rural areas, with around 89% of CSOs based in Tirana and other main cities of the country and only 11% which operate in rural areas. The social and economical transformation which has taken place during the transition process in Albania has affected the rural areas and influenced particularly the status of most vulnerable communities such as youngsters and women, putting them at the edge of social and economic marginalities. Women's productivity in agriculture and other activities in rural areas are highly dependent on their opportunity to access information and advisory services. Given the prominent contribution of women in agriculture, the current gender focus in rural development and agricultural policies and programs is widely considered insufficient. While the same time, rural CSOs need to streamline their objectives in implementing projects that address more effectively the needs of most vulnerable and marginalised groups such as women, youth, disabled people or returning migrants and asylum seekers in these areas. This panel will indicate key takeaways and recommendations for rural CSOs to better address the social inclusion of vulnerable groups.

## **The aim of the workshop:**

To identify and highlight the important role, needs and perspectives that rural CSOs play in social inclusion of vulnerable categories with special attention to women and youth. To explore the opportunities of rural CSOs for networking, sharing of experiences and viewpoints on how to mobilise their efforts in addressing the needs of marginalised communities in rural areas. The panel will address the following issues:

- ▶ What is the current situation of CSOs sector in rural and remote areas (mapping geographical areas, thematic working fields) and what is their specific contribution in services targeting marginalised rural communities? What potentials could be utilized in this regard?
- ▶ What are the current community local led initiatives in regard to social cohesion and access of marginalised communities to basic services and rights? The way ahead for social inclusion of local people in rural communities?

- ▶ What are the links and existing forms of partnerships between CSOs, business and local institutions? How to consolidate such efforts?
- ▶ What are the challenges, tools, concrete roles and responsibilities of rural CSOs that need to be prioritised in order to embark LEADER/ LAG forms of partnerships?

## **Thematic Workshop 4**

Family Farming: solutions for sustainable rural livelihoods and more equitable development

**(Room: 307B)**

### **Discussants:**

**Fatmir Guri, Agricultural University of Tirana**

**Berthold Wohlleber, Senior Advisor, GIZ-SARED project (tbc)**

**Arben Kipi, FAO representative**

**Tomi Pikuli, AGRiNET**

**Viktor Malutaj, AgroPuka**

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**Moderator: Prof.Dr. Bahri Musabelliu**

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**Rapporteur: Orion Xhoxhi**

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### **Background:**

The agricultural sector in Albania is still penalized by some structural features (small scale of production, limited use of inputs, etc.) that are reflected in the limited productivity of land and work in the rural areas.

The analysis of farming systems in three representative regions of the country shows that the main farm types existing in the country are the following: 'Poly-culture mainly for market', 'Leisure farms', 'Arable crops', 'Fruit trees', 'Self-Sufficient' and 'Livestock specialisation'. The rural migration to urban areas will be an accompanying phenomenon of Albania in the future. Its size will depend mainly on the capacity of urban area to absorb new population coming from the rural areas. 'Arable crops' is the farm type household with a higher probability to migrate in the future. This farm type is characterised by the important share of non-agricultural incomes and the limited productivity of AWU. Other farm types that have similar characteristics (i.e. leisure farms and fruit trees) have a higher resistance to migration due to their workforce age or investment structure. The income structure of all farm types is based on a combination of the agricultural and non-agricultural incomes. Without this combination almost 31% of the farms surveyed cultivating 34% of the agricultural areas can hardly reach the extreme poverty income threshold level for their household members. The most productive farms types (land and AUW productivity) have a lower level of total income by household member and the less productive ones have a higher total income level by household member due to an important share of non-agricultural income. The average total incomes by household member overpass significantly the

extreme poverty and complete poverty threshold. These conclusions are in line with the studies done recently by the Albanian Institute of Statistics showing that rural areas have a higher resilience than urban areas and resist better to external shocks compared with urban areas (INSTAT 2013). It is utopic to believe that a tailored support for agriculture in rural areas will improve substantially the economic conditions and reduce the poverty level on the rural areas. The policy makers should consider a policy that aim to objectives: the increase of farms productivity (for farmers based on agricultural incomes) and economic diversification in the rural areas (for farmers based on non-agricultural incomes). The strategy followed by the Albanian government in supporting mainly the agricultural productivity and to a lesser extent the rural development (MoAFCP 2007(b)) may reproduce another rural migration to urban areas and increase the unemployment rate on the urban areas. The Albanian example shows that the policy makers should be aware that rural areas are not devoted exclusively to agriculture but to more diversified economic activities. Farmers are already are aware of that.

### **The aim of the workshop:**

To analyse the key characteristics of farming systems in Albania, their typology and their actual and potential role in the well-being of farming households. The panel will address the following issues:

- ▶ The analysis of the farming systems in Albania
- ▶ Farm structure and typology in Albania
- ▶ The analysis of the farm viability
- ▶ Farm economic performance
- ▶ Policy recommendations to increase of farms productivity and economic diversification in the rural areas

## **Thematic Workshop 5**

Diversification of local economy (Rural entrepreneurship, agro-tourism, slow food etc.– challenges and opportunities)

**(Room: 308B)**

### ***Discussants:***

***Edvin Zhllima, Agricultural University of Tirana***

***Enea Hoti, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development***

***Ardit Collaku, National Tourism Agency***

***Pier Paolo Ambrosi, Slow food movement***

***Jonel Kristo, Tourism Investment and Finance Fund***

***Petrit Dobi, Rural Association Support Program***

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***Moderator: Natasha Hodaj***

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***Rapporteur: Ledia Thoma***

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## **Short Profile**

Prof. Dr. Natasha Hodaj actually is the Head of the Department of the Economy and Rural Development Policies. For more than 30 years she is Lecturer of Environmental and Natural Resource Economics at Agricultural University of Tirana. She has a consolidated experience in dealing with social- economic implications of farm restructuring like rural employment, alternative income generating, social issues, input distribution, consumer services and farmer association. She has directed several projects and programs in fields of Agribusiness Management; Cooperation & Integration in Agriculture; Planning in Agriculture; Strategic Management in Agriculture. Meanwhile she is Expert of Council of Europe for social cohesion: employment, social policies, migration, citizenship and minorities.

Prof.Assoc.Dr. Edvin Zhllima holds a Master of Science in European Economics from University of Tirana, a Master of Arts in International and Development Economics from the University of Applied Sciences Berlin and PhD in Agrifood Economics and Policy from University of Bologna. Edvin is a lecturer of Macroeconomics, Institutional Economics and Development Economics at Faculty of Economics and Agribusiness, Agricultural University of Tirana. Edvin has worked as an expert in agribusiness and rural development for projects funded by UNDP, FAO, IFAD, SNV, USAID, WV, MADA, etc.

## **Background:**

Albania is a country largely engaged in agriculture activities. Transition brought socioeconomic changes, but still almost half of the population is rural and about 40 per cent of the country's work force is engaged in agriculture – mostly self-employed in small, semi-subsistence farms. However, farm activities are not sufficient to employ rural households and labor force participation and underemployment remain a major challenge. The economic diversification concept takes account of the size, presence of multiple specializations and linkages among sectors and industries within a region's economy to enhance potential for growth and to better resist any future structural changes or economic crises. The small size of the local market, the low access to skilled labor, fragmented firm structures with sparse distribution and remoteness as well as barriers to business services are main challenges for economic diversification.

## **The aim of the workshop:**

Mapping rural diversities in Albania: addressing the challenges and opportunities for the diversification of rural economy as key tool for the wellbeing of rural livelihoods and encouraging sustainable local economic growth. The panel will address the following issues:

- ▶ Assess the importance of rural diversification in rural areas and discuss the main value chains generating incomes and jobs.
- ▶ Contribution of rural diversification in informal economy, gender equality, natural source management and overall rural livelihood
- ▶ Identifying the main potentials for the diversification of rural economy and main challenges to be addressed for promoting diversification in order to tackle low labor force participation and inequalities.
- ▶ Lessons learned from the best practices in rural Albania (actually no records data on business models) for formulating sound local strategies and innovative actions on diversification of rural economy

## **Thematic Workshop 6**

Endogenous, bottom up and participatory local development

*(Room: 309B)*

### **Discussants:**

**Sotirag Hroni, Chairman, Albanian Rural Development Network**

**Shfqet Bruka, Senior Expert, Albanian Rural Development Network**

**Roland Bardhi, Project manager, MADA (Mountainous areas development Agency)**

**Mirjeta Gjongecaj, LAG Bjeshket e Nemuna**

**Anila Boshnjaku, Representative of WWF Adria in Albania**

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**Moderator: Jetona Myteveli,**

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**Rapporteur: Rozeta Mihali**

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## **Short Profile**

Jetona Myteveli has worked for several years in various fields of integrated local development in Albania. She has a broad and consolidated experience in local and regional development, especially in LEADER approach and participatory local development. Jetona has been engaged in several important projects' management in rural development. She has an extraordinary experience assisting the establishment and consolidation of the LEADER-like LAGs in the frame of SNV programmes. Jetona has worked as an expert in strengthening the capacities of regional and local government and non-governmental institutions, elaborating cross-sectoral regional development strategies and delivering capacity building programs in various areas, including community-led local development.

Mr. Sotirag Hroni is Chairman of the Board and Founder of the Albanian Network for Rural Development (ANRD) - a network of twenty-two civil society organizations established at the end of 2015. The establishment of the Network has crowned the efforts of the last 10 years bottom-up advocacy initiatives. He is a member of the organizing committee of PREPARE - a European organization working to strengthen civil society organizations in rural development and; a member of the IPARD II Monitoring Committee in Albania.

Mr. Hroni is a former diplomat and advisor to the Prime Minister and to the President of Albania. He has a rich experience of engagement with civil society over the past fifteen years, particularly in good governance and integrated local development, civic participation and the development of evidence-based policies.

Mr. Hroni is Executive Director of the Institute for Democracy and Mediation.

## **Background:**

Local Action Groups (LAGs) are three-partite partnership structures, between public-private sector, representing an original feature of the LEADER approach. The LAG has the task of identifying and implementing a local development strategy, making decisions about the allocation of its financial resources and managing them. In Albania, since 2009 different organizations like SNV, MADA, Oxfam, GIZ have been implemented several initiative aiming to establish and strengthen the capacities of EU-like LAGs. This workshop will provide a reflection and sharing platform from active international and national professionals and leaders of existing LAGs in Albania, and interactive discussions between participants. This workshop will provide a reflection and sharing platform from active international and national professionals and leaders of existing LAGs in Albania, and interactive discussions between participants. The panelist will bring their own reflection in the process of forming of LAG processes in Albania, sharing the success factors, and challenges related to the mobilizing relevant actors and bottom up approach, building trust and capacities, choosing the right legal structure and registration, and ensure sustainable structure that effectively address issue of rural development. Participants will discuss and will articulate concrete steps on the way forward of Albania towards EU LEADER approach, the best practices to be taken in consideration, and know how to handle challenges and ensure the active effective LAGs.

## **The aim of the workshop:**

To offer a general overview of LEADER/LAG implementation in Albania, in the framework of previous initiatives and to analyze challenges and opportunities toward its effective implementation in addressing local critical issues. Lessons learnt from previous LEADER-like implemented initiatives will be in focus, as well.

The panel will address the following questions:

1. What is the overview of previous LEADER-like initiatives and LEADER like LAG partnership structures?
2. What are the existing challenges in the implementation of LEADER in Albania? Legal framework, mutual trust among local actors, capacities of local actors to implement LEADER like initiatives?
3. The role, capacities and needs of local actors, public and non-public toward the establishment of three partite partnerships at the local level?
4. What is the impact of the LEADER approach in addressing the local socio-economic issues?

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**16:00-17:30** Know-how transfer and sharing experiences on LEADER LAGs - a stepping stone to LEADER implementation in Albania

(Round 1)

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**6 simultaneous workshops with international LEADER experts and LAGs managers**

**(Participants will be exposed to best practices from Italia, Croatia, Serbia, Slovenia and Germany)**

Building B, 3rd Floor

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**19:00 Dinne and networking**

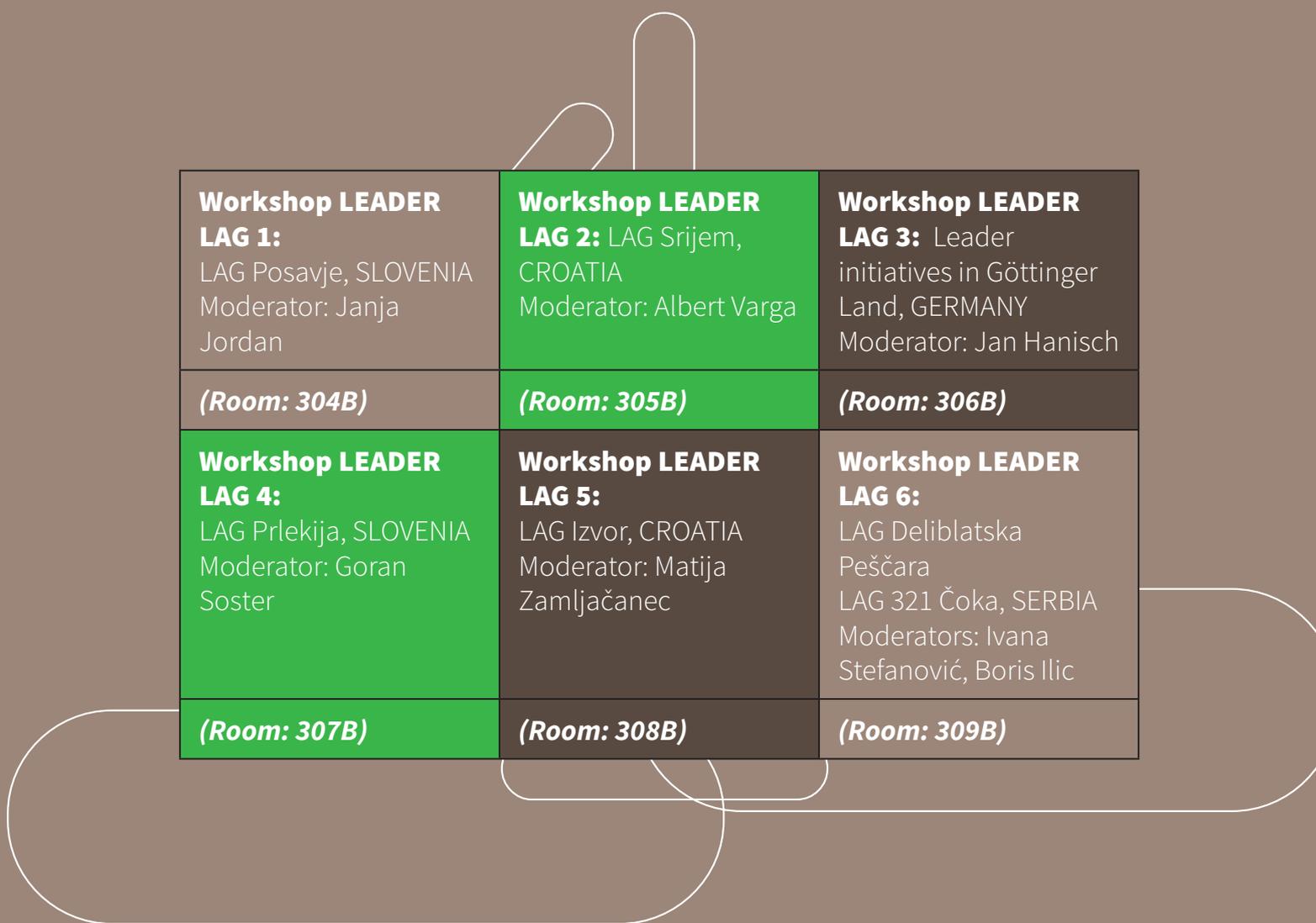
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## Background & Objectives:

ARP is designed (set out) as a platform for exchanging experiences and practices for strengthening policy and

improving practices in promoting sustainable rural development. Participants will be exposed to various thematic LAGs in the region and EU. LEADER is not all about sharing, cooperation and partnerships within each local areas, but it includes at a wider context sharing and win-win cooperation among other regional actors in order to leverage LAG peer learning exchange. It is important to stress that this panel will also try to widen experience and build up capacities of Albanian stakeholders on practicalities of CLLD implementation by experienced experts and models from Italy, Croatia and Slovenia. LAGs case studies and their lessons learnt will be used to convey to participants in a simple and concrete way all about LAGs and their impact on rural communities' life. The experience sharing will positively contribute to confidence building of local stakeholders to embark on concrete initiatives in LEADER implementation.

It is important to emphasize that one of the main goals of the panel is capacity building and raising knowledge of local actors regarding the implementation of the LEADER / CLLD approach by transferring experiences and positive models from countries such as Italy, Croatia and Slovenia , Serbia, Germany. The case study of LAG and lessons learned aim at transmitting to the participant in a very simple and clear (absorbable) information that reflects everything on LAGs and their impact on the life of rural communities. The sharing of experiences will positively contribute to increasing the confidence of local actors to undertake concrete initiatives in implementing LEADER in local communities.



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| <b>Workshop LEADER<br/>LAG 1:</b><br>LAG Posavje, SLOVENIA<br>Moderator: Janja Jordan  | <b>Workshop LEADER<br/>LAG 2:</b> LAG Srijem,<br>CROATIA<br>Moderator: Albert Varga      | <b>Workshop LEADER<br/>LAG 3:</b> Leader<br>initiatives in Göttinger<br>Land, GERMANY<br>Moderator: Jan Hanisch                     |
| <b>(Room: 304B)</b>  | <b>(Room: 305B)</b>  | <b>(Room: 306B)</b>   |
| <b>Workshop LEADER<br/>LAG 4:</b><br>LAG Prlekija, SLOVENIA<br>Moderator: Goran Soster | <b>Workshop LEADER<br/>LAG 5:</b><br>LAG Izvor, CROATIA<br>Moderator: Matija Zamljačanec | <b>Workshop LEADER<br/>LAG 6:</b><br>LAG Deliblatska<br>Peščara<br>LAG 321 Čoka, SERBIA<br>Moderators: Ivana Stefanović, Boris Ilic |
| <b>(Room: 307B)</b>  | <b>(Room: 308B)</b>  | <b>(Room: 309B)</b>   |

**Workshop LEADER****LAG 1:**

LAG Posavje, SLOVENIA

Moderator: Janja

Jordan

**(Room: 304B)**

LEADER LAG Workshop 1:

LAG Posavje, SLOVENIA

Jordan Janja is the president of the Local action group Posavje in the actual period 2014-2020. She holds a Master of science – Graduate School of Government and European studies. She has been president of the Commission for Urban Development in the Association of the Municipalities and Towns of Slovenia. She has been working for more than 10 years and in the last past years she has been the project Manager of the Commission for the revitalization of the town Krško, Project Manager of City Marketing Project manager at the project of the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development. She has worked as Financial support in the implementation of calls from the EU funds and the technical assistant in Supervisory board. Ms. Janja has been the initiator of the LAG cooperation project called “Smart Villages” and has been involved as head of Desk for EU Funds - experience and responsible for EU projects in Municipality Krško.

**The project: Smart Villages (Pametne vasi)**

Smart Villages project is implemented by four Local Action Groups: LAG Posavje, LAG Prlekija, LAG Obsotelje in Kozjansko and LAG Brkini in Kras. The project aims to develop smart village concepts and approaches contributing to increased quality of life and to economic development of rural areas.

Main focus: ICT and marketing, short supply chains, social services in rural areas, linkages between urban and rural areas, rural tourism.

Main approach: community led project. The project is in the very early stage of development. The LAGs intend to 1) to explore existing practices and concepts related to smart villages in Slovenia and wider 2) to analyse local needs for the development of new and innovative services in rural areas 3) to develop several concept, primarily targeting the use of digital technologies supporting the economic development and marketing (short supply chains, local food promotion, shared economy) and linkages between urban and rural areas in the area of social services (home care, e-mobility), followed by 4) training and pilot testing in cooperating LAG areas and 5) networking, dissemination and awareness raising activities. In parallel, a strategy for sustainable development of smart villages shall be designed. Target group: farmers and other local providers of products and services, SMEs, public institutions, elderly and other vulnerable groups.

LEADER LAG Workshop 2:

LAG Srijem, CROATIA

Albert Varga, finished his college education at the University of Split, University Department of Professional Studies - Information Technology. Since 2013, the beginning of the LEADER implementation in Croatia, Albert Varga has been a part of the Local Action Group Srijem. Previously, he worked as a book translator, programmer, web administrator, web marketing and search engine optimization expert and a music licensing manager. Also as a LAG's representative Albert is a part of and very active within both the Croatian Rural Development Network-HMRR and the Local Partnership for Employment of Vukovar-Srijem County. During his time in the Local Action Group Srijem, he has gathered valuable LEADER approach related experience, as well as rural development expertise. Recently, Albert was elected as President of the Croatian Rural Development Network (HMRR).

**Workshop LEADER**

**LAG 2:** LAG Srijem,  
CROATIA

Moderator: Albert Varga

**(Room: 305B)**

### **Local Action Group Srijem**

LAG Srijem was founded in 2010 as a multi-sector partnerships of the public, business and civil sector. At the time LAG Srijem covered the area of 8 municipalities and 2 cities. Municipality of Trpinja and Municipality of Borovo became a part of LAG Srijem since 2013. Due to the reputation of being one of the most successful LAG in Croatia in LEADER implementation during the IPARD program the City of Vukovar requested joining LAG Srijem in 2015. LAG Srijem is located in the easternmost part of Croatia, in the Vukovar-Syrmia County. Currently LAG Srijem covers an area of 771,48 km<sup>2</sup> and consists 3 cities and 10 municipalities with the total population of 43 053. LAG Srijem has been implementing the LEADER and the bottom-up approach since its beginnings in Croatia and have applied successfully on all LAG related public calls in Croatia. Currently, LAG Srijem have 86 members from all three sectors. Current Local Development Strategy of LAG Srijem 2014-2020 was developed during 2015 and 2016. The Strategy was adopted in June 2016 by the LAG Assembly. During the strategy development process we have defined four main priorities: A.1. Strengthening the competitiveness of small agricultural holdings; A.2. Local products development and market positioning; B.1. Building small infrastructure; B.2. Development of basic services.

## **Workshop LEADER**

**LAG 3:** Leader initiatives in Göttinger Land, GERMANY  
Moderator: Jan Hanisch

**(Room: 306B)**

LEADER LAG Workshop3:

LAG Maiella Verde, ITALY

Carlo RICCI - agronomist, enthusiast of typical products and local identity - works in territorial and rural development, engaged in the promotion and coordination of local projects in the Abruzzo territory (such as the GAL Maiella Verde, the School of Taste and 10 flavors to save) and consultation, as an independent expert, to regional, national and international level institutions. With international level institutions, Dott. Ricci cooperates as the sole reference expert for Italy, for the Contact Point of the European Network for Rural Development, on behalf of the European Evaluation Help Desk (for DG AGRI) and with the Support Unit of FARNET, European Coastal Zone network that promotes local development strategies funded by the FEAMP (for DG Mare).

Since the early 1990s, he has gained a solid experience in designing and implementing local development projects by participating in various initiatives (LEADER, but also the Territorial Pact, PIT and Equal) in the regions of Abruzzo and Lazio. Since 2000, he has also been involved in study, evaluation and programming as well as management of regional and rural development policies. In these fields he has worked with companies, agencies, public bodies and research institutions at the national (such as FORMEZ, INEA, ISFOL, Abruzzo Region and Development Study) and international level (such as OECD, European Observatory Leader etc.) and has collaborated on various initiatives on behalf of the European Commission among which are the ex post evaluation of Leader II Leader + Community Initiatives and the preparation of the Guidelines on CLLD Evaluation published in 2017. He has lectured at postgraduate courses, seminars and conferences (also invited by the European Commission) and published articles and papers as well.

### **Local Action Group Maiella Verde**

LAG Maiella Verde covers the area of 81 municipalities in the province of Chieti divided into three sub-areas: the Ortonese Chietino, Sangro Aventino and Vastese. The LAG established in 1992, is a limited liability consortium. It has a population of 129.656 inhabitants, covering a territory of 1.944,45 km<sup>2</sup>. The LAG partnership currently consists of 126 members (8 for the public component and 118 for the private one) representing the main institutional, economic and social components of the territory. The LAG Maiella Verde has managed Leader I, Leader II and Leader + programming. Through territorial cooperation, the LAG aims to promote local identity through the creation of a network of virtuous territories in the organization of the

acceptance of “slow” philosophy. Through transnational cooperation, the LAG aims to promote the tourist development of the local territories. The Local development strategy aims to improve the quality of the territorial offer through the qualification and strengthening the added value of typical local products landscape and rural environment, and the development of the accessibility and attractiveness of territorial systems. The main components of the LDS are: a) introduction of typical animal and plant bio-diversity elements within production and processing processes; b) Identification and development of local identity systems; c) improving the services of land use.

**Workshop LEADER  
LAG 4:**

LAG Prlekija, SLOVENIA  
Moderator: Goran  
Soster

**(Room: 307B)**

LEADER LAG Workshop 4:

LAG Prlekija, SLOVENIA

Goran Soster holds several important positions at different organizations working at European, national and local level. He is President of PREPARE Network (Partnership for Rural Europe) an European civil society organizations network and Vice-president of Slovenian Rural Network. He is also Manager of LAG Prlekija in Slovenia. Mr. Soster is the Director of “Prlekija Development Agency”, (PRA giz/Slovenia). His contribution in this endeavor relates to the establishment of local and regional development agency of Prlekija as non-profit organization; promotion of entrepreneurship, support institution for SME, advisory service, project management, one-stop-shop, human resource and partnership building, development plans, feasibility studies, development of new tourist products, ecology, rural development, local action group management. His well known contribution highlights his expertise as the Initiator of four Rural Parliaments in Slovenia. The fourth Slovenian Rural parliament was held on 22nd September 2017.

Moreover, Mr. Soster is board member of ELARD – European LEADER Association for Rural Development and member of the Steering Group of the European Rural Parliament. He has more than 18 years in institution building and management, facilitation and advising rural development programmes. His consolidated experience includes positions as project manager and advisor/senior expert in various national and international projects on rural development initiatives, various publications in organic agriculture: feasibility studies, consolidating rural networks, establishing local action groups.

LAG Prlekija is a local action group founded on the initiative of eight municipalities (Apače, Gornja Radgona, Križevci, Ljutomer, Radenci, Razkrižje, Sveti Jurij, Ščavnica and Veržej), which are located in two administrative units (Gornja Radgona and Ljutomer). The entire area of the LAG Prlekija lies in the development region of Pomurje, which is the least developed region of the country. The Prlekija LAG area counts 38,113 inhabitants and extends to 388.7 km<sup>2</sup>. LAG Prlekija was selected twice (in 2012 and 2013) as one of the five most successful LAGs in Slovenia.

LEADER LAG Workshop 5:

LAG Izvor, CROATIA

Matija Zamljačanec

Local action group “Izvor” is a community of responsible people who achieve higher quality of life through rational use of resources and balanced development of all parts of the community, while respecting existing cultural and traditional values.

Local Action Group “Izvor” is one of the main LEADER implementers of the European Union’s rural development policy in Municipalities that are members of Local Action Groups “IZVOR”. LEADER is a new innovative component within the EU’s rural development policy. The LEADER abbreviation has the meaning (Relationships between actions in the rural area) Leader comes from the French abbreviation “Liaison Entre Action de Development Rural”

Leader policy encourages thinking and solving development problems through new forms of partnership and linking activities. LEADER combines stakeholders to work together, produce goods, and provide services that generate added value in local area development. Main goals of implementing the LEADER principles are:

1. Population retention
2. Activating new sources of business
3. Improving the quality of life

General information about Local Action Group “Izvor”

Local Action Group Source consists of 2 cities and 6 municipalities. Cities Ludbreg and Varaždinske Toplice and municipalities Trnovec Bartolovečki, Martijanec, Sveti Đurđ, Veliki Bukovec, Mali Bukovec and Rasinja.

The Local action group „Izvor“ extends to 453.99 square kilometres, where lives 36,290 inhabitants.

Main activities of Local action group “Izvor”

Project proposal writing

IPARD measure - The LAG “Izvor” has issued 15 letters of recommendation for projects totalling 54 million HRK. 25 written and submitted project proposals for associations from the LAG area “Izvor” in the tenders published at the European, national and local level

For Cities and Municipalities from the Local Action Group “Source” submitted 27 project proposals for open tenders at the European and national level of total value of approx. 3 million HRK.

**Workshop LEADER  
LAG 5:**

LAG Izvor, CROATIA  
Moderator: Matija  
Zamljačanec

**(Room: 308B)**

**Workshop LEADER  
LAG 6:**

LAG Deliblatska  
Peščara  
LAG 321 Čoka, SERBIA  
Moderators: Ivana  
Stefanović, Boris Ilic

**(Room: 309B)**

LEADER/LAG Workshop 6:

LAG Deliblatska Peščara, SERBIA

Ivana Stefanović has worked in the field of rural development in Serbia since 2006. She was part of the group which established the first five Local Action Groups in Serbia, based on the principles of the LEADER Programme. Combining her educational background with the grass roots work experience, she was highly exposed to rural development policies, preparing local and regional policies, and then overseeing their implementation in specific rural areas and rural communities. In 2015 Ivana was the founder of National LEADER Network Serbia. Ivana's areas of expertise include: rural development policies; development of rural tourism; diversification of the local economy; project management and administration, public procurements.

LAG Deliblatska Peščara" is located on the border of the Deliblatska sands, which has the status of the Special Nature Reserve due to all its specific characteristics. The number of settlements is 17 and the number of local self-governments involved in the LAG is four. Priorities of the LAG are: a) Increase of agriculture and forestry competitiveness; b) Increase of quality of life in target rural areas and diversification of rural economy; c) LEADER competencies and management capabilities. Leader approach and methodology of local development through local action groups, has been applied in the territory of Alibunar municipality since 2007, thanks to the program of the Provincial Secretariat for Agriculture, Water Management and Forestry. In 2007, the Secretariat initiated and supported the creation of five pilot LAGs, the first in Serbia. Alibunar was one of those five, and since then Leader has been used as a methodology of development. In 2011 DEU has implemented LIS Project, and LAG Deliblatska peščara has created Strategy and LAG management structure in accordance to the rules. It went a step further in establishing the organizational structure and creating the program. The local development strategy arises as a result of the incentives of the LIS project, and the continuous five-year joint activities of the key actors, who are now forming the LAG Deliblatska sands. Since then, more than 25 projects have been implemented. All actors are committed to the development of their villages using the LEADER methodology. LAGs in Serbia are still waiting for the Ministry to set up their Program and Register of LAGs. There is no active program in Serbia dedicated to offer support for the established LAGs.

## LAG 321 Čoka, SERBIA

Boris Ilic is a local expert in the field of rural development in Serbia. He has long experience in project coordination and management in the Municipality of Čoka, Potiska. During the last four years Mr. Ilic has worked as the Director of Infrastructure in Čoka Municipality. He also has served as Coordinator of Local Action Group ČOKA, and is highly exposed to rural development issues, with a special focus on LEADER approach. Mr. Ilic areas of expertise include: LEADER approach; agro-business; export and import; business economy; project management;

LAG 321 Čoka: The partnership territory constitutes 8 the following municipalities: Čoka, Ostojićevo, Padej, Sanad, Jazovo, Vrbica, Crna Bara and Banatski Monoštor. The territory has 321 km<sup>2</sup> surface and 11,388 inhabitants.

The definition of vision took a long process and required inclusion of people from different sectors, through holding meetings and discussions. Through discussions and presentations, local people started to recognize possibilities and values of their local communities, offered concrete examples, nature and human resources, and concluded that local development should be achieved through careful use of territorial resources

The identified priorities for local development are: strengthening the competition of agricultural manufacturers, development of rural economy, upgrading the quality of life in rural environments, preserving life environment, coordinating rural development with praxis of the EU. The local needs addressed by the local development plan are identified through questionnaires, meetings and discussions of participants. Some of the immediate needs are education of agriculture's manufacturers, branding of local goods, supporting new workplaces. Therefore, the local priorities are increasing number of educating agricultural manufacturers, advancement entrepreneurship, reducing pollution, introduction of Leader approach in rural development.

**DAY 2  
FRIDAY,  
29 SHTATOR 2017**

**VENUE: AGRICULTURAL UNIVERSITY OF TIRANA**

**09.30** Registration of Participants

**10.00** Plenary session:

**AICS Senior Representative's address**

**AICS (Italian Agency for Development Cooperation) support to local economic and social development through bottom-up approach and LEADER-like initiatives**

Presentations of the six thematic workshops' results Coffee break will be served separately in each of the workshop

**Building A, Floor 1, Room: Behar Male**

| <b>Workshop 1</b>            | <b>Workshop 2</b>          | <b>Workshop 3</b>              |
|------------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Rapporteur:<br>Shpresim Domi | Rapporteur:<br>Amalia Tola | Rapporteur:<br>Gentian Mehmeti |
| <b>Workshop 4</b>            | <b>Workshop 6</b>          | <b>Workshop 7</b>              |
| Rapporteur:<br>Orion Xhoxhi  | Rapporteur:<br>Ledia Thoma | Rapporteur:<br>Rozeta Mihali   |

**11.15** Coffee break

**11.45** Know-how transfer and sharing experiences on LEADER LAGs - a stepping stone to LEADER implementation in Albania

**(Round 2)**

6 simultaneous workshops with international LEADER experts and LAGs managers

(The second round of workshops will aim to create opportunities for active interaction between participants and LAG/LEADER experts in order engage the audience in a positive feedback loop system, where best shared experiences will motivate participants to embark on concrete local LEADER initiatives).

**Building B, 3rd Floor**

| <b>LEADER LAG Workshop 1:</b>                    | <b>LEADER LAG Workshop 2:</b>                 | <b>LEADER LAG Workshop 3:</b>  |
|--|---|--|
| LAG Posavje, SLLOVENI<br>Moderator: Janja Jordan | LAG Srijem, KROACI<br>Moderator: Albert Varga | Iniciativa LEADER në rajonin Göttinger, GjERMANI<br>Moderator: Jan Hanisch |
| <b>(Room: 304B)</b>                              | <b>(Room: 305B)</b>                           | <b>(Room: 306B)</b>  |

|  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
| <b>LEADER LAG Workshop 4:</b>                    | <b>LEADER LAG Workshop 5:</b>                      | <b>LEADER LAG Workshop 6:</b>   |
| LAG Prlekija, SLOVENI<br>Moderator: Goran Soster | LAG Izvor, KROACI<br>Moderator: Matija Zamljačanec | LAG Deliblatska Peščara<br>LAG 321 Čoka, SERBI<br>Moderators: Ivana Stefanović & Boris Ilic |
| <b>(Room: 307B)</b>                              | <b>(Room: 308B)</b>                                | <b>(Room: 309B)</b>   |

**13.30 LUNCH**

**14.30-17:00** **Four simultaneous WORKING GROUPS** – regional and local actors initiate discussions with regard to Leader/CLLD implementation according the four regional management areas

Local nucleus, territorial potentials and cohesiveness of the area – Participants will be divided in four working groups according to the four regional management areas:

**Building B, 3rd Floor**

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|---|---|--|
| <b>WG1. Regional Development Area 1</b><br>(Shkodër-Kukës-Lezhë)<br>Moderator: Roland Bardhi<br><b>Room: 305B</b> | <b>WG1. Regional Development Area 2</b><br>(Tiranë, Durrës, Dibër)<br>Moderator: Shefqet Bruka<br><b>Room: 306B</b> |  |
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| <b>WG1. Regional Development Area 3</b><br>(Korçë-Elbasan-Berat)<br>Moderator: Petrit Dobi<br><b>Room:307B</b> | <b>WG1. Regional Development Area 4</b><br>(Vlorë-Fier-Gjirokastër)<br>Moderator: Evelina Azizaj<br><b>Room:308B</b> |  |
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**15.30 - Coffee break**

**16.00**

**17.00 - Wrap up**

**17.30 Finalizing the JOINT DECLARATION of the first Albanian Rural Parliament 2017**

**Working group: representatives of ANRD&AUT**

**19.30 Dinner and non formal NETWORKING**

**Ora: 14.30-17.00**

Four simultaneous WORKING GROUPS – regional and local actors initiate discussions with regard to Leader/CLLD implementation according the four regional management areas

Local nucleus, territorial potentials and cohesiveness of the area – Participants will be divided in four working groups according to the four regional management areas:

**WG1. Regional Development Area 1 - (Shkodër-Kukës-Lezhë)**

**WG 2. Regional Development Area 2 - (Tiranë, Durrës, Dibër)**

**WG 3. Regional Development Area 3 - (Korçë-Elbasan-Berat)**

**WG 4. Regional Development Area 4 - (Vlorë-Fier-Gjirokastër)**

## **Background and Objective:**

The four simultaneous workshops will aim to empower the ‘bottom up’ approach, based on the territorial potentials that rural territories are endowed (the endogenous development model), in order to encourage local and regional stakeholder to embark on initiatives toward positive development model and successful practices. The working groups aim to create space and opportunity among public and non-public actors for a proactive discussion regarding the implementation of the instrument of the EU development policies and practices - Leader/CLLD, as well as positive practices of this approach.

These discussions will follow up the experience sharing on LEADER LAG from different experts from the regions, such as Slovenia, Croatia, Italy and Serbia to offer participants the opportunity to make the best use of indigenous knowledge and local experiences (area-based potentials of socially cohesive territories) & their involvement in a positive feedback loop model (know how transfer and building new models on the lessons learned) in order to initiate and amplify meaningful and sustainable practices echoed by CLLD approach. Thus, the workshops will serve as catalyst tools to foster local initiatives toward tripartite partnerships, reflecting mostly LAGs model. The final output of the session and the nexus with the Declaration of Albanian Rural Parliament

Based on the outcomes of the four groups, the organizers will compile a preliminary map of the country where the different territories of future LAGs will be outlined and identify their possible development themes as well as the local nuclei under which they can initiate the establishments of LAGs.

This map will be attached to the Joint Declaration of the first Albanian Rural Parliament as an expression of willingness and readiness/intentness of local, public and non-public actors to engage in implementing the LEADER / CLLD approach across the country. The reason behind this, is to stipulate the new Government and donors to have into their attention the anticipation and provision of the legal framework that will enable the establishment and functioning of future LAGs and the proper technical support to assist the LAG establishment process (establishment of LAGs, trust among local actors, establishment of tripartite partnerships, formalization of partnerships) and drafting local development strategies of LAGs. Such a process should encompass and embrace the voice of all inhabitants in rural areas.

This endeavor embodies the mindset that the establishment and functioning of Local Action Groups is a process before it is an output of some activities, and as such it requires time, mutual trust and local leadership. In this regard, the credibility of various local actors as well as between actors is highly important. As such, this process requires long-term investment.

The whole effort is in line and supports the achievement of the objectives of the Cross-cutting Strategy for Agricultural and Rural Development 2014-2020, the measure: "Preparation and implementation of local strategies for rural development - "Leader" approach, as well as the fourth measure of the first package of the IPARD Program (2016-2020).

**DAY 3**  
**SATURDAY,**  
**30 SEPTEMBER 2017**  
VENUE: ALBANIAN PARLIAMENT

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**Concluding remarks**

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- 10.00** Opening remarks  
Gramoz Ruci, Speaker of the Albanian Parliament
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- Evelina Azizaj, National Coordinator of the Albanian Network for Rural Development
- DECLARATION** of the first Albanian Rural Parliament 2017, read by Martina Dedaj, representative of “The Spirit of Kelmend” consortium
- Student of the Agricultural University of Tirana
- Vasillaq Nikolla, representative of “Pro Permet” consortium
- Almira Xhembulla, Member of the Albanian Parliament; on behalf of the “Friends of Rural Parliament” Group
- 

- 10:45 Key MESSAGES**
- Niko Peleshi, Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development
- Romana Vlahutin, Head of European Union Delegation to Albania
- Edi Rama – Prime Minister (tbc)
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## Key concluding messages

The parliamentary session will address the key messages from government officials to farmers and grassroots organizations.

This concluding session will underline key foresights on what is needed next for implementing the LEADER/CCLD toward establishing functional model of LAG type partnership and their local development strategies as an effective instrument of sustainable local development of rural areas.

An important part of this session is the launch of the Friends of Rural Parliament Group – an advocacy and lobby group that support the Rural Parliament Initiative in the forthcoming meetings every two years. The character of the group is honorific and ad hoc, lobbying and advocating for effective policies in rural development, aligned with EU policy on Community-Led Local Development (CCLD). Members of this group are distinguished personalities of the social and political life of Albania, including current and former members of parliament, former ministers, diplomats and politician, academics and entrepreneurs.

The focus of the final session will be the reading of the Joint DECLARATION of the First Albanian Rural Parliament 2017 - a vision for rural communities and a set of recommendations addressing the development priorities of rural communities in Albania. The Declaration will be handed to government representatives present at the session as a way to ensure their commitment to further advancing the Rural Agenda.