

DECLARATION

Fair treatment for fulfilling Albanian rural women's aspirations

We, fifty participants, mainly women and girls rooted in rural areas of Albania, gathered here at Roskovec on 15 October 2020 under the patronage of the Mayor of Roskovec and the National Coordinator of the Albanian Network for Rural Development, supported by its member organizations. We would like to express our gratitude to the municipality of Roskovec and its staff for hosting and organizing the PRO RURAL WOMEN II event on the occasion of the International Rural Women's Day. We gathered and assessed needs and challenges we are facing and consulted on finding practical solutions as well as discussed on how public policies and instruments could provide effective support and assistance.

The unfavorable social and economic situation of rural women and girls is a worldwide concern. Rural women and girls in Albania represent the most vital part of agricultural and rural development sector and their contribution is invaluable. Rural women contribute to and sustain the well-being of their families, community life and beyond, even though their contribution is often underestimated and unpaid. It is a fact that rural women are poor, but compared to men in rural areas and women in urban areas they are even poorer. They experience lower access to farm ownership and management; they are undereducated and underrepresented in social, economic and political life.

Conscious that sustainable social and economic development of the country cannot be achieved without empowering women and girls in rural areas to fight poverty and social exclusion, we insist that setting the socio-economic empowerment of rural women and girls on policy-making agenda be a top priority.

We recognize that the hospitality and care women in rural areas have traditionally dedicated to visitors, friends and guests in their area, including senior representatives of the state and local institutions, require a reciprocal attention of relevant sector institutions to approach groups of organized women, active listen to their needs and aspirations, provide practical solutions, as well as offer aid and support;

Believing in the potential of public dialogue as a two-way communication that contributes to the functioning of local democracy and good governance, we consider the climbing from lower to higher levels of citizen participation's ladder - from information to consultation and dialogue - as crucial for understanding the real challenges of rural women and provide effective need-based support for them;

The national support scheme for agriculture and rural development, besides its limitations, as one of the main supporting instruments of the sector, needs to be revised by internalizing gender issues in the application process. Women applicants should enjoy gender bonus points in order to narrow the gender gap in their social and economic status. This requires a thorough review of the application process to overcome shortcomings and fully guarantee its fairness.

FINALLY, AS VISIONARY RURAL WOMEN WE HEREBY APPEAL FOR BETTER OPPORTUNITIES TO ENABLE US BE NOT ONLY GOOD MOTHERS BUT ALSO SUCCESSFUL ENTREPRENEURS AND ACTIVE MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY ASKING FOR AND BEING GRANTED A FAIR TREATMENT.

**PRO
GRAVE
RURALE**

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