



**Albanian Rural Parliament**

**3**

**Parlamenti Rural Shqiptar**

*Demokraci pjesëmarrëse*

*Participatory democracy*

# *Life springs from the village!*

## **Third Albanian Rural Parliament 2023**

11-13 OCTOBER 2023  
AT THE PREMISES OF AGRICULTURE UNIVERSITY OF TIRANA

Organized by: Albanian Network for Rural Development  
in partnership with its thirty-four member organizations  
and Agriculture University of Tirana

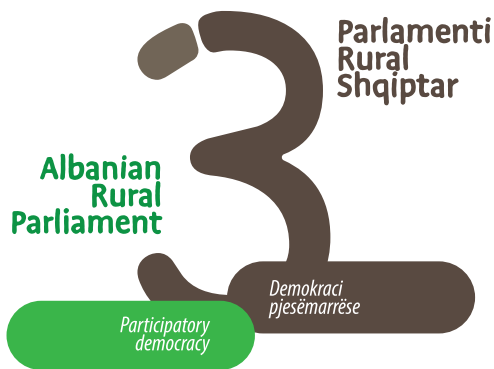
# PROGRAMME



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*Life springs from the village!*

**Third Albanian Rural Parliament 2023**



**THE 3rd ALBANIAN RURAL PARLIAMENT** - a national platform dedicated to capacity building, networking, and advocacy for sustainable rural development – takes place at the premises of Agriculture University of Tirana, from October 11 to 13, 2023. The 3rd Albanian Rural Parliament represents a collaborative effort between the Albanian Network for Rural Development (ANRD) and its thirty-four member CSOs, in partnership with the Agriculture University of Tirana (AUT).

This platform represents the most sustainable bottom-up advocacy effort, creating space for dialogue and cooperation, exchange of perspectives on important and current issues of rural and agricultural development, and providing recommendations toward revitalizing rural life and economy. The platform of this third edition will offer innovative ways and new approaches to reach a broad consensus on rural development priorities at the national level and to strengthen the civil and private sector's voice to benefit sustainable rural development.

The third Parliament comes with an upgraded platform, creating for the first time ever opportunities for young people from rural areas, young farmers and entrepreneurs to gather in their Youth Assembly: with the youth, for the youth, by the youth of the ANRD Rural Youth Hub themselves. Also, the 5th Edition of Pro Rural Women 2023 will be organized within the platform of the Rural Parliament to strengthen advocacy for an agricultural and rural sector, for communities, and a society with equal opportunities for all.

The theme of the 3rd Albanian Rural Parliament - **LIFE SPRINGS FROM THE VILLAGE** - sets the stage for meaningful dialogue and collaboration, to analyze the reality and get better acquainted with the needs and problems, to reflect on the vision and priorities as collective actions to further empower and uplift rural communities across the country. "Life springs from the village" serves as a powerful call to action for fostering sustainable rural development, as it reflects the profound truth that the development and progress of Albania originate from its rural areas. "Life springs from the village" highlights the importance of supporting rural economies, investing in infrastructure, and education and creating opportunities for the youth within their communities. It urges us to reevaluate the importance of rural communities and their economy in the context of the current challenges, including climate change, outmigration from rural areas and etc.

# Reflections on a Journey to Albania's Third Rural Parliament

Some eight years have passed since the establishment of the Albanian Network for Rural Development (ANRD), which seeks to promote the LEADER approach in Albania, focusing on supporting and building the capacities of public and private actors in rural areas, building partnerships in creating Local Action Groups (LAGs), as well as increasing the confidence of rural society to follow the path of European sustainable development policies and practices.

At one go, ANRD has also developed national advocacy for supportive and encouraging policies on the development of the LEADER approach as well as supportive financial policies and schemes for farmers and other engaged actors, to channel their confidence and motivation in this path. Supporting social capital has been and remains a priority for ANRD.

The 3rd Albanian Rural Parliament is an even more dedicated effort in empowering important social groups, and specifically builds on two important pillars for rural life and the LEADER approach, that of the Rural Youth Hub and the support of Pro-Rural Women initiative.

The rural parliament comes at a time when, due to bottom-up advocacy, the Parliament of Albania adopted the Law on Local Action Groups, thus creating a real opportunity for developing partnerships to strengthen local and rural cooperation.

Yet, the preparation of local actors, local self-government units, business, and civil society is still far from a sustainable investment to increase the confidence of actors in coming together for instigating changes. The Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development should place more efforts to open the processes to societal actors and boost collaboration among them. The support of farmers or rural tourist enterprises should be accompanied by raising awareness of local communities in evaluating them, say "guesthouses", as a quality instrument for strengthening the Local Action Groups of the area. This is also and contributes to sustainable development, because it is an investment in human capital.

ANRD comes to this national event more consolidated, with an increasing membership trend and an activity that crosses the borders of the country.

The network is present across the country and has established cooperation relations with all local self-government units. The goal for the future remains its consolidation as a resource center for the rural development of the country and the implementation of the LEADER approach.

I am pleased to point out that ANRD has increased its presence in many European organizations and activities. At the same time, it has been awarded several prizes, including the Green Flag from CIA Agricoltori Italiani, attesting to the great work it has done over the years in the sector of civil society empowerment and rural development in Albania. Administratively, the Network is now fully independent and leads and manages regional projects funded by the EU and other donors.

The Albanian Network for Rural Development is expanding and cooperating with public institutions in the country. In addition to the excellent cooperation with the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, communication with the Parliamentary Committee for Production Activity has also increased, which we consider to be a crucial indicator on the impact of the ANRD's work.

The Agricultural University of Tirana remains our main partner not just for the physical space of its premises, that it has kindly shared over the years, but also for the continuous support to and advice in our work.

In conclusion, allow me to wholeheartedly thank all donors that have supported the Albanian Network for Rural Development over these years, our collaborators across the country, and all the participants in this important activity.

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

# DECLARATION

The General Assembly of the Albanian Network for Rural Development convened on April 7, 2023.

We, the thirty-four member organizations of the General Assembly of the Albanian Network for Rural Development, convened on April 7, 2023 **are pleased to announce the start of preparations for the third National Rural Parliament to be held on October 11-13, 2023.**

The National Rural Parliament seeks to bring together a vast array of stakeholders, including local communities, local organizations, the private sector and policymakers, and Albania's 61 municipalities, to deliberate on the challenges and opportunities confronting rural development in our communities. The third Albanian Rural Parliament fully complies with the vision of the Crosscutting Strategy on Agricultural and Rural Development and Fisheries 2021-2027 and, particularly, with Policy 1 - Sustainable Development of Agriculture and Rural Areas - and the third overall goal of this policy.

The National Rural Parliament's platform draws attention to some other essential specifics of this goal: *Strengthening the (ecological), social and economic structure of rural areas; Promoting local development (by improving the livelihoods in remote and mountainous areas and adequately integrating local communities, supporting the development of extensive pastoralism), through employment and business development opportunities on and off the agricultural (and livestock) farm, as well as through community-led initiatives.*

**The platform of this third edition will offer innovative ways and new approaches to reach a broad consensus on rural development priorities at the national level, which are related at higher levels, and to strengthen the civil and private sector's voice to benefit sustainable rural development.**

*We are convinced that rural development is critical for achieving sustainable and inclusive growth* and improving the rural population's livelihoods. However, rural development faces many challenges, including poverty, limited access to essential services, lack of infrastructure, and the impact of climate change. Moreover, mass tourism that fails to respect the local population's cultural life and lifestyle is not providing the right energy for sustainable rural development.

*We believe that this platform will be an opportunity to exchange experiences, share knowledge and ideas* on how we can overcome these challenges, and promote sustainable rural development. By bringing stakeholders together, we hope to foster partnerships and collaborations that will enable

us to develop and implement innovative and local solutions to promote sustainable rural development.

*We commit to working together to create an inclusive and participatory Parliament, where the voices and perspectives of all stakeholders, particularly vulnerable groups, are heeded and taken into account.*

*We strive to sustain this platform for dialogue, exchange of best practices, and learning from each other's experiences to develop concrete proposals for sustainable rural development initiatives.*

*We call upon all stakeholders to join us in this sustainable rural advocacy effort and actively participate in this dialogue, networking, and advocacy platform.*

**Improving the quality of life of rural communities is the only option to make the Albanian countryside attractive to live, work, and build the future.**

**Life springs from the village!**

## INSIGHTS INTO THE EVENT AND PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

The 3rd Albanian Rural Parliament represents a collaborative effort between ANRD and its thirty-four CSOs, in partnership with the Agriculture University of Tirana. This initiative, driven by ANRD and its thirty-four member organizations, presents a unique platform within rural Albania. As grassroots civil society organizations, these member organizations establish a direct link between the local, regional, and national levels. Their extensive geographical reach spans the entire country, offering unparalleled access to local communities.

The partnership between AUT and ANRD in convening the third Albanian Rural Parliament helps bridge the gap between research and practice. The combination of AUT academic staff and ANRD member organizations in organizing the thematic workshops (rural talks) around eight main themes will blend the theoretical and research background with practical examples and grass-root experiences.

This three-day event is turning into a significant national gathering, bringing together public and non-public representatives from the 61 municipalities, regions, donors, academia, and central government bodies. The rural parliament creates space for interaction of relevant rural stakeholders to articulate their positions and roles in rural development, as well as the challenges they face to exert their agency and influence. As the overall platform of the ARP will focus on the real problems that persist in rural areas across Albania, it will search of feasible and practical solutions to farmers and rural residents' challenges, and in the end will provide a set of policy recommendations that address the development priorities of these areas.

The rural parliament platform supports the small and family farms by reflecting a strong concern about the future well-being of small farming communities. The gatherings like rural parliament aim at finding practical solutions which address these concerns, including the role of cooperatives, the diversification of farm and rural economies, management of pastures, investment in infrastructure, support for young farmers, gender equality etc. While the contribution of big farmers in the nation economy is recognized, the concern for the well-being of small farmers is righteous. As the challenges and constraints that adversely affect rural development in Albania and in particular small farming communities will be identified in the rural talk's sessions, the Joint Declaration of the 3rd ARP will reflect such concerns and advocate for the well-being of smallholders.

The platform of the 3rd Albanian Rural Parliament focuses on the reality of young people in rural areas amidst challenges and aspirations for the future. Given their important role and contribution to the sustainability of community life in rural areas, agriculture and food security, their migration is one of the biggest challenges and the main sustainability risk for the whole sector. Existing public policies have been ineffective in addressing



issues related to youth inclusion in agriculture, as well as the increasing trend of their migration.

In 2019, ANRD launched Rural Youth Hub, involving rural young people, enthusiasts, students, entrepreneurs, farmers who are enthusiast and motivated to play an active role and contribute to rural development processes and decision-making. This long-term group amplifies the voice of young people in rural Albania and influence rural decision-making, to make such processes youth oriented and closely linked with the currents needs and interests of rural youth. It promotes action by rural youth. The 3rd ARP programme introduces a novel aspect: for the first time ever young people from rural areas, young farmers and entrepreneurs gather in their Youth Assembly: with the youth, for the youth, by the youth of the ANRD Rural Youth Hub.

**Empowerment of women and girls in rural areas** has been at the core of ANRD bottom-up advocacy to advance women's interests and priorities and generate public supports for enhanced socio-economic opportunities. Women in rural areas are important actors in the agri-food sector and the main contributors to the agricultural and rural sector. However, the sector is not helping rural women to improve their social economic status due to the difficulties and challenges they experience that undermine productivity and entrepreneurial potential and generate unequal benefits for men and women in value chains in the agri-food sector.

For the fifth year in a row (2023), on the occasion of the International Day of Rural Women, the 2023 'Pro Rural Women' Edition will bring together rural women and girls to discuss concerns, priorities as well as concrete actions that should be encouraged and undertaken by institutions for the well-being of women and girls in rural areas. ANRD, its member organizations and our partners care about the wellbeing of women and girls in rural areas, so we will strive to sustain our advocacy work to acknowledge the invaluable role and contribution of women in agriculture and rural development and build society-wide solidarity to empower women and girls in rural areas.

ANRD further holds an important role as the **national partner for the European Rural Parliament and Balkan Rural Parliament**, two pan-European campaigns amplifying the voices of rural Europe. ANRD's involvement with these regional and European initiatives brings forth remarkable synergy. ANRD representatives actively participate in both ERP and BRP events, taking on roles as key speakers and presenters and active participants. This unique platform allows ANRD to not only engage a broader audience but also champion the concept of rural parliaments, reinforcing their role as important instruments for rural development.

The 3rd Albanian Rural Parliament envisages **plenary sessions, rural talks, discussions, keynote speakers, etc.** It serves as a crucial platform for policy makers, public and private institutions, civil society organizations, the donor community, academia and others to assess ongoing progress and

promote changes in policies and practices to ensure the development of the “Albanian Rural Agenda” through an inclusive approach that encompasses all rural residents, fostering their participation in shaping this transformative process.

**First National Assembly of Young People in Rural Areas:** The Present and future of youth in rural areas

The 1st National Assembly of young people in rural areas marks a significant event centered on the present and future prospects of rural youth. Within the framework of the 3rd Albanian Rural Parliament, this platform sheds light on the realities faced by young individuals in rural areas, both challenges and aspirations that shape their lives. Recognizing the fundamental role of young people in sustaining rural communities, agriculture, and food security, the Assembly places a spotlight on a pressing issue: youth migration, which poses a substantial risk to the sector's sustainability. The Assembly provides a dedicated forum to address young people unique concerns, perspectives, and aspirations.

**5TH EDITION OF PRO-RURAL WOMEN:** Rural women cultivating good food for all.

For the fifth year in a row, the 2023 edition of "Pro Rural Women" coincides with the International Day of Rural Women. This event serves as a platform for rural women and girls to come together, engaging in discussions about their concerns, priorities, and actionable steps that institutions should adopt to enhance their well-being. ANRD and its member organizations and partners, remains committed to advocating for the wellbeing of women and girls in rural areas. This sustained advocacy effort acknowledges the indispensable roles and contributions of women in agriculture and rural development while fostering widespread societal solidarity to empower women and girls in rural areas.

This special gathering, an annual tradition by ANRD, takes place on the second day of the ARP, celebrating the International Day of Rural Women. The energy of the Young Assembly and the empowerment of rural women turn ARP into an inclusive event that embraces all.

**LAUNCHING TWO SUSTAINABLE RURAL DEVELOPMENT AWARDS** – an initiative dedicating to honoring the exceptional legacy of two professionals who championed to sustainable rural development in Albania. ANRD aims to establish a legacy that fosters continued development and progress in Albanian rural communities by recognizing leaders and creating a network of changer makers and further amplifying their efforts on national and local level.

**A CELEBRATION OF ALBANIAN RURAL LIFE, CULTURE, AND DIALOGUE** that fosters a deeper connection with Albania's rural heart.

The ARP program provides an inclusive platform to collectively celebrate rural life and culture, offering a range of engaging activities including fair, open-air cinema, photo exhibition, and demonstration. This program extends an open invitation to all participants, inviting them to take part in celebrating the richness and diversity of Albanian rural area.

Local foods, masterly prepared by the women participants of the 5th Pro-Rural Women edition, will showcase territorial products of rural Albania.

The open-air cinema invites those enthusiasts to share their insights, fostering an open dialogue amongst participants as they engage into discussions following the screening of documentaries. Meanwhile, the Rural Albania photography exhibition takes participants on a visual journey through capturing the very essence of rural life in Albania. Adding to the experience, another corner of this program invites participants to engage in tasting sessions, where they can observe the artisanal preparation of local products. Women participants will proudly wear xhubleta and various local costumes, showcasing the vibrant local heritage of rural areas.

These elements come together to offer an enriching celebration of rural life and culture and an opportunity to foster connections and understanding amongst participants.

### CONCLUDING SESSION: SYNTHESIS AND KEY TAKEAWAYS

The concluding session aims to present a synthesis of discussions and insights shared throughout the ARP:

- Presentations and conclusions drawn from the thematic groups, youth Assembly and Pro-Rural Women event will be spotlighted. These conclusions represent the collective knowledge of diverse voices convened in the 3rd ARP in exploring critical issues.
- The concluding session unfolds with the key messages from high-level government representatives and other distinguished representatives who will share their forward-looking messages, including the key takeaways from this inclusive gathering.

This session summarizes the spirit of collaboration, networking and partnership building that defines the ARP, offering a shared perspective on the future path.

**JOINT DECLARATION** of the 3rd ARP encompasses a vision for rural communities and a series of recommendations aimed at addressing the development priorities of rural communities in Albania.

# PROGRAMME

## *Life springs from the village!*

THIRD ALBANIAN RURAL PARLIAMENT,  
OCTOBER 11-13, 2023



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

**9:30 – 10:00:** Registration of participants  
**10:00:** Opening of the Third Rural Albanian Parliament

09:00 – 10:00



### Welcome and Introduction

Opening remarks from the organizers

- **Ms Evelina Azizaj**, National Coordinator, Albanian Network for Rural Development
- **Mr Fatbardh Sallaku**, Rector, Agriculture University of Tirana

Greetings from institutional representatives

- **Ms Anila Denaj**, Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development (tbc)
- **Mr Boban Ilic**, Secretary General, Regional Rural Development Standing Working Group in SEE (tbc)

Special guest speeches

- **Mr Kim Smedslund**, European Rural Parliament Steering group member
- **Ms Karin Rau**, GIZ Project Manager, North Macedonia



10:30 - 12:00



### PLENARY SESSION

#### **Albanian Rural Realities: Challenges and development opportunities**

The 3rd ARP commences with a comprehensive plenary session with representatives from Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, Agriculture University of Tirana, Local Self-Government Unit, donor and international community, CSOs, farmers and rural residents etc. The objective is to set the contextual framework for the ongoing discourse concerning rural Albania. The discussion addresses the opportunities and challenges, thereby shaping the dialogue of the event.

**Moderator: Mr. Renaldo Salianji, Journalist**

- Representative from Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (tbc)
- **Ms. Aulona Gashi Veizi**, Vice Mayor of Vlora Municipality
- **Prof. Dr. Fatbardh Sallaku**, Rector of the Agricultural University of Tirana
- **Mr. Sotiraq Hroni**, Chairman of the Board, Albanian Network for Rural Development
- **Mr. Arben Shkodra** - Secretary General, Albanian Manufacturer Union
- **Ms. Marjana Koçeku**, Neomalsorja Agritourism, Dukagjin

**Local voices: Three Interventions from rural communities**

*The plenary debate will be drawn from real-life cases of the current rural realities. These illustrative cases will be delivered by participants of the Albanian Rural Parliament, representing diverse roles within rural development. Each of them will spotlight a 'specific case', an authentic rural scenario that is experienced by a particular community. These cases, though localized, resonate as concerns relevant to broader communities across rural Albania. Panelists will react to these brief interventions by offering insights from their institutional perspective, making efforts to explore actionable solutions to address such challenges in the future.*

12:00 – 12:20



**Keynote speaker: Mr. Hartmut Berndt**, German LEADER Association.

**The importance of the LEADER approach and the imperative of prioritizing this instrument for Albania**

*Mr. Hartmut Berndt serves as Chairman of the German LEADER Association, and Vice president of ELARD (European Leader Association for Rural Development). With two decades of experience as the LAG-manager in Göttingen, a central highland region in Germany, Mr. Berndt has actively contributed to rural development. As chairman of the German LEADER Association, Mr. Berndt is a member of national and European boards and the governmental council of experts for rural development.*

12:30 – 12:45



**Launching “Pier Paolo Ambrosi” Leadership in rural development award** - an initiative dedicating to honoring the exceptional legacy of Pier Paolo Ambrosi who championed sustainable rural development in Albania.

*The award will honor the memory of our beloved colleague, Pier Paolo Ambrosi, by recognizing and celebrating local stakeholders who have demonstrated leadership and made significant contributions to the sustainable development of rural communities across Albania. The award will be promoted jointly with VIS Albania at two-year interval, on the occasion of the Albanian Rural Parliament.*

This initiative aims to establish a legacy that fosters continued development and progress in Albanian rural communities by recognizing leaders and creating a network of changer makers and further amplifying their efforts on national and local level.

12:45 – 13:00



#### **PRESS CONFERENCE**

*A brief press conference to widely inform the public on this important gathering for agriculture and rural development*

- **Ms Evelina Azizaj**, National Coordinator, Albanian Network for Rural Development
- **Prof. Dr. Erinda Lika**, Vice Rector for Science and Projects, Agricultural University of Tirana
- Representative from Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (tbc)

12:45 – 14:30



#### **Lunch break and informal networking**

**Venue: Outdoor space in front of the Faculty of Biotechnology and Food**

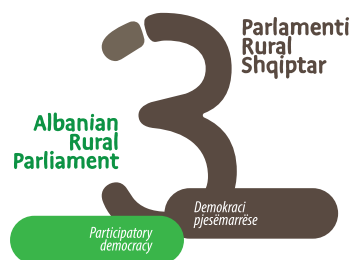
#### **First National Assembly of young people in rural areas: The Present and Future of Youth in Rural Areas**

*The 3rd ARP program pioneers an unprecedented opportunity: the creation of a Youth Assembly, which operates “with the youth, for the youth, by the youth” under the leadership of ANRD Rural Youth Hub. The Assembly provides a dedicated forum to address young people unique concerns, perspectives, and aspirations. (See the program below)*

14:30 – 17:45



**RURAL TALKS: Challenges, priorities and solutions for sustainable rural development** (See the program below)



## FIRST NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN RURAL AREAS

"With young people,  
for young people,  
by the youth themselves"

11 October 2023





14:30 – 17:45



## FIRST NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN RURAL AREAS

Venue: Agricultural University of Tirana Building A, 1st floor, Room: “Behar Male”

*The 1st National Assembly of young people in rural areas marks an important event centered on the present and future prospects of rural youth. Within the framework of the 3rd Albanian Rural Parliament, this platform sheds light on the realities faced by young individuals in rural areas, both challenges and aspirations that shape their lives. Recognizing the fundamental role of young people in sustaining rural communities, agriculture, and food security, the Assembly places a spotlight on a pressing issue - youth migration, which poses a substantial risk to the sector’s sustainability.*

14:30 – 15:00



## OPENING SESSION

Moderator: **Ms Rashela Shehu, Journalist**

### Welcome and Program Presentation for young participants

#### Keynote addresses:

- **Ms Martina Dedaj**, Rural Youth Hub, Chairwoman of the Rural Youth Hub Board
- **Mr Dritan Laci**, Representative, Agricultural University of Tirana
- **Ms Bora Muzhaqi**, Minister of State for Youth and Children (tbc)
- **Ms Valerie Covic**, Programme Manager, EUD Albania (tbc)
- **Mr Neil Evans**, Chairman of Rural Youth Europe (online)

*An energizing session to welcome and engage young participants.*

15:00 – 15:30



## Plenary Session: The present and future of youth in rural areas

*The plenary session aims at bringing together young participants from various rural areas across Albania to engage in productive discussion about the challenges facing young people in these areas and explore their future prospects.*

**Keynote speakers:**

- **Mr Matteo Bartolini**, National Vice President, Confederazione italiana agricoltori: Sustainable perspectives in local communities for youth
- **Mr Alqi Kushi**, Director, National Youth Agency
- **Ms Evelina Azizaj**, National Researcher: - Report on Albania. Presentation of regional study findings on the role of youth in rural areas conducted by SWG, supported by FAO and the German Federal Ministry for Food and Agriculture.
- **Mr Benito Prendi**, RTM: Rural Albanian youth project and its impact on youth engagement in agriculture and rural development
- **Mr Julvin Marku**, Young Rural Entrepreneur
- **Ms Xhesika Koka**, Municipality of Shijak

15:30 – 16:30



**Youth Interaction Session:** Comments, questions, and perspectives  
An opportunity for young participants to share their thoughts and engage in discussions.

16:30 – 17:45



**Rural Youth Dialogue: Challenges, Priorities, and Solutions** (*World Café Methodology*)  
*Exploring opportunities for youth involvement in agriculture and rural development by engaging discussions on various topics related to the present and future of youth in rural areas. These sessions will take place in a casual café-style setting to encourage open dialogues and idea sharing.*

14:30 – 17:45



**RURAL TALKS: CHALLENGES, PRIORITIES AND SOLUTIONS FOR SUSTAINABLE RURAL DEVELOPMENT**

Venue: Agricultural University of Tirana Building B, 3rd floor, Room: 303-309

*Simultaneous small group discussions will enable participants to engage in various topics of interest and foster meaningful conversations related to various themes of sustainable rural development.*

15:45 – 16:30

**COFFEE BREAK**

Venue: outdoor space, in front of Building A

## Two rounds of eight simultaneous workshops:

**1st round: 14:30 - 15:45**

**2nd round: 16:30 - 17:45**

“RURAL TALKS” - eight small group discussions employing the dynamic World Café methodology explore the key eight themes:

### **WORKING GROUP 1: LEADER APPROACH AMID CITIZENS’ HOPES AND FATIGUE.**

**Venue: Building B, room 303**

- Moderator Prof. Dr. Etleva Dashi, Agricultural University of Tirana
- **Key speakers: Julian Elezi, Pro Përmet; Anna Carboni, VIS Albania**

### **WORKING GROUP 2: AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE CONTEXT OF CLIMATE CHANGE CHALLENGES AND SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCE (AGROECOLOGY, EXTENSIVE LIVESTOCK, ETC.)**

**Venue: Building B, Room 304**

- Moderator: Prof. Dr. Erinda Lika, Agricultural University of Tirana
- **Key speakers: Stella Beghini & Rozeta Gradeci, representatives from COSPE Onlus**

### **WORKING GROUP 3: SMALL-SCALE FARMERS AND THEIR POSITION IN VALUE CHAINS**

**Venue: Building B, Room 305**

- Moderator: Prof. Dr. Ilir Kapaj, Agricultural University of Tirana
- **Key speaker: Shpetim Cura, World Vision Albania**

### **WORKING GROUP 4: PRESERVING TRADITIONAL CULTURE AND FOSTERING THE WELL-BEING OF PASTORALIST COMMUNITIES**

**Venue: Building B, Room 306**

- Moderator: Prof. Asoc. Dr. Romina Koto, Agricultural University of Tirana
- **Key speaker: Mr Olivier Maurin, Co-chair co-chair of the European Group in support of the International Year on Rangelands and Pastoralists; Representative from the “House of the Shepherds”**

### **WORKING GROUP 5: AGRITOURISM AND ITS INTERSECTION WITH AGRICULTURE, LIVESTOCK, AND OTHER SECTORS’ CHALLENGES;**

**Venue: Building B, Room 307**

- Moderator: Prof. Asoc. Dr. Shpresim Domi, Agricultural University of Tirana
- **Key speaker: Petrit Dobi, Executive Director, RASP (Rural Association Support Program)**

**WORKING GROUP 6: FOSTERING KNOWLEDGE, CAPACITIES, AND COMPETENCIES FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT; (ROLE OF LOCAL GOVERNANCE UNITS, GRASSROOT ORGANIZATIONS, RESEARCH AND ACADEMIC INSTITUTIONS)**

Venue: Building B, Room 308

- Moderator: Prof. Asoc. Dr. Fatmir Guri, Agriculture University of Tirana
- Key speaker: Tomi Pikuli, Executive Director of AGRINET; Enver Isufi, Executive Director of Institute of Biological Agriculture

**WORKING GROUP 7: UNPACKING THE “100 VILLAGES” PROGRAMME: LESSONS LEARNED FOR SUSTAINABLE RURAL DEVELOPMENT**

Venue: Building B, Room 309

- Moderator: Prof. Dr. Remzi Keco, Agriculture University of Tirana
- Key speaker: Albanian Development Fund

**WORKING GROUP 8: WOMEN’S ROLE IN THE AGRI-FOOD SECTOR AND GENDER-SENSITIVE VALUE CHAINS**

Venue: Building B, Room 312

- Moderator: Prof. Dr. Tatjana Dishnica, Agricultural University of Tirana
- Key speaker: Sabah Djaloshi, Executive Director, AgroPuka

The World Café methodology will be used as it allows to explore a topic from multiple perspectives and to ensure the possibility for everyone to participate and contribute to a conversation.

*“Conversation is at the heart of the new enquiry. It is perhaps the core human capacity for dealing with the tremendous challenges we face. To engage in great civilization we need to ask questions that matter. We cannot afford to spend our time on issues that can’t hold our attention, that don’t touch our hearts. The culture of conversation is a different culture, one that could make a difference in the future of our world”.*



## 5th EDITION OF PRO-RURAL WOMEN: Rural Women Cultivating Good Food for All

Venue: Agricultural University of Tirana  
Building A, 1st floor, Room: "Behar Male"

*For the fifth year in a row, the 2023 edition of "Pro Rural Women" serves as a platform for rural women and girls to come together, engaging in discussions about their concerns, priorities, and actionable steps that institutions should adopt to enhance their well-being. ANRD and its member organizations and partners, remains committed to advocating for the wellbeing of women and girls in rural areas. This sustained advocacy effort acknowledges the indispensable roles and contributions of women in agriculture and rural development while fostering widespread societal solidarity to empower women and girls in rural areas.*

10:00 – 10:15



### Welcome speech and Opening remarks

- **Ms Evelina Azizaj**, National Coordinator, Albanian Network for Rural Development
- **Ms Albana Koçiu**, Minister of Health and Social Protection (tbc)
- **Ms Stefania Vizzaccaro**, Director, Italian Agency for Development Cooperation
- **Mr Deni Guga**, Representative, UN Women, Albania

10:15 – 11:45



### Plenary Session: Challenges and needs of women engaged in the agri-food sector

- Moderator: Ms Erisa Kryeziu, Journalist
- **Ms Etleva Sheshi**, Director of Social Inclusion Policy and Gender Equality, Ministry of Health and Social Protection
- **Ms Tatjana Dishnica**, Executive Director, Women in Sustainable Agriculture
- **Mr Edvin Zhllima**, National Researcher: Report on Albania. Presentation of regional study on the role of rural women in rural areas, conducted by SWG with support from the BMZ through GIZ, from the BMEL.
- **Ms Selvije Lufo**, Entrepreneur, Administrative Unit of Velçan, Pogradec

11:45 - 12:00



**Launching “Liljana Isakaj” Rural Women’s Empowerment Award** – an initiative dedicated to honouring the exceptional legacy of our dear colleague, Liljana Isakaj who devoted her life to rural development and the economic empowerment of rural women. As an epitome for rural women, she paved the way for progress, leadership, and positive change within rural communities. This award will recognize individuals who have demonstrated extraordinary efforts in improving the lives and livelihoods of rural women. The award will be promoted jointly with ADAD malore each year on the occasion of Pro Rural Women Event. This initiative aims to establish a legacy that fosters continued development and progress in Albanian rural communities by recognizing leaders and creating a network of changer makers and further amplifying their efforts on national and local level.

12:00 – 13:45



Lunch break and informal networking  
Venue: outdoor space, in front of Building B-Faculty of Economy and Agribusiness

13:45 - 16:30



**‘Rural Taste’.** Fair of local products by women participants of the 5th edition of Pro-Rural Women Celebrate the diversity and richness of Albanian rural areas through local foods, products, traditional costumes, and folk music.

15:00 - 16:30



### **OPEN AIR CINEMA**

Screening of two documentaries/films focusing on the rural parliament themes: climate change, rural depopulation and youth migration, poverty and social exclusion, mismanagement of natural resources, weak infrastructure, extensive pastoralism, local culture etc. Discussion and exchange: The moderator shares thoughts/opinions about the documentaries and themes, followed by an open discussion with participants.

### **ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES:**

Rural Albania photography exhibition  
Tasting and demonstrations: Local products and their artisanal preparation



## CONCLUDING SESSION: SYNTHESIS AND KEY TAKEAWAYS

Venue: Agricultural University of Tirana  
Building A, 1st floor, Room: "Behar Male"

*This session summarizes the spirit of collaboration, networking and partnership building that defines the ARP, offering a shared perspective on the future path. The concluding session aims to present a profound synthesis of discussions and insights shared throughout the ARP. It unfolds the key messages from high-level government representatives and other distinguished representatives who will share their forward-looking messages, including the key takeaways from this inclusive gathering.*

10:00



### Opening address

- **Mr Agron Pëllumbi**, Chairman of the Commission for Production Activities, Trade, and Environment
- **Ms Evelina Azizaj**, National Coordinator, Albanian Network for Rural Development

10:15



### Conclusions and Recommendations

*Conclusions and recommendations drawn from the thematic groups, youth Assembly and Pro-Rural Women event are spotlighted. These conclusions represent the collective knowledge of diverse voices convened in the 3rd ARP in exploring critical issues of agriculture and rural development.*

- Conclusions from the thematic groups "rural talks".
- Conclusions from the National Youth Assembly in Rural Areas
- Conclusions from the 5th Edition of Pro-Rural Women 2023

10:45



### Key messages from high-level representatives

- **Key messages from sector representatives, government officials, and donors.**
- **Ms Anila Denaj**, Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development (tbc)
- **Mr Andrea Ferrero**, Team Leader of Sustainable Economic and Social Development Section, European Union Delegation to Albania
- **H.E. Mr. Edi Rama**, Prime Minister of Albania (tbc)

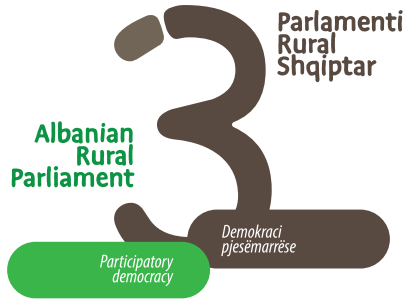
**Next step:**

The culmination of the 3rd Albanian Rural Parliament will result in the preparation of the JOINT DECLARATION. This declaration encompasses a vision for rural communities and a series of recommendations aimed at addressing the development priorities of rural communities in Albania. This document will be accurately drafted in the coming days after the 3rd ARP and widely disseminated with relevant stakeholders, ensuring their commitment to further advancing the Rural Agenda. Post the 3rd Albanian Rural Parliament, ANRD will actively engage in disseminating the outcomes, lessons, and results of this important advocacy initiative.

The third Albanian Rural Parliament is financially supported by:

- Rural-You project is financed by European Union in Albania and implemented by Volontari nel Mondo RTM, in partnership with ADAD Malore, Fondacioni Partneritet për Zhvillim, AgroPuka, Rrjeti Shqiptar për Zhvillim Rural - ANRD and Agia Giovani Imprenditori Agricoli – Agricoltura è Vita Agriagenzia (Cia - Agricoltori Italiani).
- The project “Strengthened networking in Western Balkans for socio-economic development of rural development” financed by GIZ North Macedonia through the project “Support to Economic Diversification of Rural areas in Southeast Europe” (SEDRA II)
- The intervention “Support the economic and social empowerment of rural women in the municipalities of Elbasan and Kolonjë” is being implemented by the Albanian Network for Rural Development within the Gender Rural Equality and Tourism (GREAT) project, funded by the Government of Italy and in partnership with the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development of Albania.





Financially supported by:



# Life springs from the village!

## Third Albanian Rural Parliament 2023

11-13 OCTOBER 2023

Albanian Network for Rural Development (ANRD) is a network of thirty-four local CSOs with consolidated profiles in rural development, established from the 'bottom-up' in 2105 (anrd.al) aiming at contributing to the sustainable development of rural communities in Albania. ANRD is a policy network in the domain of rural development emerged as a need to ensure effective policymaking on rural development through direct involvement of non-public stakeholders in the formulation and implementation of rural development policies.

ANRD strives to advocate for effective rural policies, which are closer to residents of rural communities; designed with the participation of local communities, understood and implemented with the people in the ground. ANRD and its member organisation share the same vision and have agreed to jointly work to advance the role of private sector and civil society in the country's rural agenda. The Network has embraced a bottom-up perspective and is applying a highly inclusive and national wide approach to improve societal capacities in preparing the country to absorb practices and models that will further integrate Albania into the European Union.

