



PRESS RELEASE

The 4th Albanian Rural Parliament brings together around 300 participants from across the country to discuss the future of rural areas on the path toward the EU.

Lezhë, 25-27 March 2026 - The 4th Albanian Rural Parliament was held in Lezhë and Mirdita, bringing together around 300 participants from 61 municipalities across Albania, including representatives of rural communities, farmers, youth, civil society organisations, public institutions, academia, and development partners. The event served as a shared platform for dialogue and collaboration on rural development in Albania. Organised by the Albanian Network for Rural Development (ANRD), in cooperation with the host municipalities of Lezhë and Mirdita, this edition focused on the theme: “Rural Albania on the path to the EU through partnerships, reforms, and cohesive territorial development”.

Over the course of three days, participants discussed the challenges and opportunities related to the European integration process and its impact on rural communities, highlighting the need for policies grounded in territorial realities and for stronger cooperation between institutions and local actors. In her opening remarks, ANRD National Coordinator Evelina Azizaj, reflecting on what European integration means for farmers, youth, women, and municipalities, underlined that the answer cannot come from a single actor: “Integration requires partnership. It requires genuine cooperation among all stakeholders. It is no coincidence that we are here in Lezhë - a place that historically symbolises unity and collective decision-making,” she stated.

The Rural Parliament began in Mirdita with a territorial event focused on fostering synergies for community-led local development (CLLD). This first day laid the groundwork for concrete collaborations and for strengthening local initiatives towards the establishment of Local Action Groups.

The plenary session on the second day, held in Lezhë, set the overall framework for discussions, reflecting on what EU integration concretely means for rural areas, municipalities, and communities. The panel emphasised the importance of inter-institutional coordination, strengthening local capacities, and ensuring active participation of communities in reform processes.

The thematic workshops, “Rural Talks,” placed community voices at the centre, addressing key topics such as local development through the LEADER approach, sustainable agriculture, women’s empowerment, innovation, family farming, rural economy, and pastoralism. These discussions generated concrete recommendations aimed at improving policies and programmes in the agricultural and rural sectors.

At the closing of the Parliament, key messages emerging from the discussions were presented and further discussed with participants, with the aim of promoting a more coordinated and inclusive approach to rural development in Albania.

The Albanian Rural Parliament continues to serve as one of the most important national platforms for dialogue, advocacy, and co-creation of policies in the rural sector, contributing to stronger partnerships and bringing Albania closer to European Union practices and standards.

For more information: <https://anrd.al/parlamenti-iv-rural/>

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