



AKKSHI

INTERNATIONAL SCIENTIFIC CONFERENCE

*Transhumance and
Pastoral Heritage:
Culture, Identity, and
Sustainable Futures*

30 MARCH
2026

Conference Program,
Library of the University
"Luigj Gurakuqi"



The project “Digital Horizons of Transhumance: Preserving and Promoting the Ethnocultural Heritage of the Albanian Alps for Sustainable Development” documents, digitizes, and interprets the living pastoral traditions. Led by the University of Shkodra “Luigj Gurakuqi” and supported by Agency for Scientific Research and Innovation (AKKSHI), the project combines field research, ethnographic documentation, and digital archiving to safeguard transhumance as an essential cultural and ecological practice of the Albanian Alps. The collected materials—ranging from interviews and audiovisual recordings to linguistic and anthropological data—enrich academic curricula and become part of a permanent digital archive hosted by the “Oso Kuka” Museum.

Throughout July 2025 – June 2026, the project develops a cycle of field expeditions, academic lectures, workshops, and an international conference on transhumance. Its outcomes strengthen scientific research, enhance public understanding of pastoral heritage, and support sustainable territorial development by positioning transhumance as a cultural asset with educational, touristic, and community value.

“Transhumance and Pastoral Heritage: Culture, Identity, and Sustainable Futures,” conference serves as a key platform for sharing results, exchanging expertise, and fostering collaboration around the future of pastoral cultures in Albania, the Western Balkans and beyond. By connecting ethnographic knowledge, environmental insights, cultural routes, and linguistic and anthropological research, the conference reinforces the project’s broader aim to position transhumance as a dynamic cultural asset and to foster collaboration that supports sustainable futures for pastoral communities across the Western Balkans and beyond.

The plenary session introduces three interconnected perspectives: the current challenges facing pastoral societies, the emerging role of the private sector and sustainable tourism and the inclusion of transhumance trails within European cultural route frameworks

Following the plenary, the program continues with parallel sessions in English and Albanian, offering rich multidisciplinary insights into pastoralism, mobility, landscape management, cultural memory, linguistics, ecology, and intangible heritage. Presentations in Room 1 (English) address topics such as Albania’s progress on UNESCO transhumance safeguarding, biocultural landscapes of the Alps, European cultural routes, cultural resilience in transhumant corridors, plant geography, ecological conservation, engagement through rural tourism, and the role of music and folklore. In Room 2 (Albanian), researchers examine pastoral culture through literary, linguistic, anthropological, and historical lenses, including oral poetry, ritual language, material culture, communication practices, xhubleta heritage, EU policy alignment, and the preservation of cultural identity through proverbs and expressions.

A side event showcasing contemporary transhumance through a book launch, the unveiling of a digital archive, and engaging discussions will connect tradition with present-day perspectives and inspire discussion in the space of “Oso Kuka” Museum.

09.30-10.00
REGISTRATION

10.00-10.45
OPENING SPEECHES

Prof.Dr. Tonin Gjuraj – Rector of the University of Shkodra "Luigj Gurakuqi"

Representative - National Agency for Scientific Research, Technology and Innovation (**AKKSHI**)

Sustaining Pastoral Heritage: Community Realities, Tourism Innovation,
and the Cultural Mapping of Transhumance

Flora Narkaj - Association "Pastoral Values – National Heritage"
Current Conditions and Challenges of Pastoral Societies

Bukurosh Onuzi – Associations "Ecologist for the Region-Kukës"
Pastoral Heritage as an Economic Asset: Private-Sector Engagement in Transhumance-Based Tourism

Roberta Alberotanza - Mediterranean University of Reggio Calabria. Italy
The Cultural Routes (Council of Europe) and Their Role in Preserving the Immaterial Heritage
of Pastoral Mobility

10.45-11.00
BREAK

11.00-13.00
PARALEL SESSIONS^[1]

ROOM 1
SESSION 1 (ENGLISH)

CHAIR: VALBONA KARAKAÇI,
RREZARTA DRAÇINI

1. Zef Gjeta - Institute of Plant Genetic Resources –
Agricultural University of Tirana
Agim Pepkolaj - Food and Agriculture Organization Office
in Tirana

Olian Dervishi - RESU – Reinforce Sustainability
**Progress of the Transhumance Safeguarding Plan in
Albania after its Inscription on the Unesco List**

2. Silvia De Ascaniis - Università della Svizzera Italiana
Adine Gavazzi - Università di Genova
**Alpine Patures as Biocultural Landscapes. A
Methodological Lens to Understand Transhumance**

3. Simona Messina - Cultural Route of the Council of
Europe «Transhumance Trails»
**An Outline of the Aspects and Goals of the European
Cultural Route Transhumance Trails**

4. Valbona Karakaçi - University of Shkodra “Luigj
Gurakuqi”, Albania
Hekuran Koka – Activist and Poet
**Cultural Resilience and Social Infrastructure
In The Luma–Nënshkodër Transhumance**

5. Francesco Spada - University of Uppsala
(Sweden); University of Tuscia - Viterbo (Italy)
**Plantgeographical Scenarios for the Origins of
Transhumant Pastoralism in Western Eurasia**

6. Rrezarta Draçini - University of Shkodra “Luigj
Gurakuqi”, Albania
**Language, Culture and Transhumance: An
Anthropological and Psycholinguistic Approach**

7. Jelena Krivčević - Regional Development Agency
for Bjelasica, Komovi and Prokletije, Montenegro
**Katuns as Living Heritage Landscapes: Rural
Tourism as a Driver of Youth Engagement and
Sustainable Transhumance in Montenegro**

8. Majlinda Laçaj - Historical Museum of Shkodra,
Albania
**Transhumance as a Source of Musical Folklore and
Its Revitalization in Modern Times**

[1] PRESENTATIONS MUST RESPECT THE TIME LIMIT
OF 8-10 MINUTES. THANK YOU!

11.00-13.00
PARALEL SESSIONS

ROOM 2
SESSION 2 (ALBANIAN)

CHAIR: ARBEN PRENDI,
FLORA GJONI

1. Martine Wolff - Université Paul Valéry Montpellier, Laboratory SENS, France
Pastoral Culture and the Ecological Emancipation of Transhumance Practice within Pastoral Culture in Northern Albania

2. Arben Prendi - University of Shkodra "Luigj Gurakuqi", Albania
Traces of Transhumance and the Pastoral World in Albanian Oral Lyric Poetry

3. Flora Gjoni - University of Shkodra "Luigj Gurakuqi", Albania
Bresena Kopliku - University of Shkodra "Luigj Gurakuqi", Albania
Transhumance as an Ecological Mechanism in the Conservation of Endemic Alpine Plants Under Climate Change Pressure: The Case of the Albanian Alps

4. Anisa Kosteri - University of Shkodra "Luigj Gurakuqi", Albania
Zamira Shkreli - University of Shkodra "Luigj Gurakuqi", Albania
Rite, Language and Cultural Memory in Northern Albanian Highland Society: The Memoirs of Father Kolë Berisha in "From Shkodra to Toplana"

5. Merita Hysa - University of Shkodra "Luigj Gurakuqi", Albania
The Material Culture of Albanian Transhumance Between Social Codification and the Erosion of Memory

6. Rezearta Murati - University of Shkodra "Luigj Gurakuqi", Albania
Naile Mala (Imami) - University of Belgrade, Serbia
Linguistic Landscapes of Transhumance in the Albanian Highlands

7. Altin Mema - University of Shkodra "Luigj Gurakuqi", Albania
Communication and the Cultural Heritage of Pastoral Communities in Lezhe

8. Rita Shkurtaj - Cultural Association "Xhubleta of the Albanian Alps", Albania
The Tradition of Transhumance in the Mountain Pastures of Malësia E Madhe

9. Besmir Beka - Mitrovicë, Kosovë
Transhumance as a Sustainable Practice: Aligning Pastoral Systems in the Western Balkans with European Union Environmental Policies

10. Armanda Xhani (Baça)
The Role of Proverbs and Idiomatic Expressions in Preserving the Cultural Identity of Rural Communities

17.00-18.30

CULTURAL PROGRAMME

**TRANSHUMANCE TODAY:
BOOK LAUNCH, DIGITAL ARCHIVE & CONVERSATIONS
HISTORICAL MUSEUM “OSO KUKA”**