

## Conclusions

### of the Ministers/ Heads of Delegations responsible for agriculture and rural development in South Eastern Europe

Convened in Pristina, Kosovo\*

October 01<sup>st</sup>, 2025

We, the Ministers of Agriculture and Heads of Delegations from the South Eastern Europe (SEE), gathered in Pristina on October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2025, on the occasion of the 19<sup>th</sup> Annual Ministerial Meeting, organized under the auspices of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Development of Kosovo\* and the Regional Rural Development Standing Working Group (SWG RRD),

Recalling the commitments made in Budva (2022), Jahorina (2023), as well as **Skopje Declaration** (2024), **Berlin Process Summit Conclusions** Tirana (2023), Berlin (2024), the **Green Agenda for the Western Balkans**,

Recognizing that **agriculture, food systems, rural development, and forestry are of strategic importance** for economic growth, quality of life, environmental protection, and stability in the Western Balkans,

Acknowledging that multiple global and regional challenges—including climate change, energy and food crises, biodiversity loss, demographic shifts, and market disruptions—demand stronger cooperation, solidarity, and innovation.

Guided by the commitment in the “Berlin Process” to work more intensively together in regional structures.

Reaffirming our collective aspiration towards **integration into the European Union**, and recognizing agriculture and rural development as vital pillars of the EU accession process.

Welcoming the objectives and actions towards an attractive, competitive and resilient farming and agri-food sector described in the European Commission’s Vision for Agriculture and Food.

Recognizing the longstanding role of **SWG RRD** as the key regional cooperation platform for agriculture and rural development in SEE.

Based on the discussions we pursue the following **Conclusions related to various policy aspects under the authority of Ministries of Agriculture** we agree to the:

#### **Advancement of the regional and EU integration process**

- Reiterate our determination to resolve all bilateral and/or multilateral conflicts related to the free movement of goods, services, people and capital, related to food and agriculture as well as our commitment to fully align our legislation with the EU acquis related to Chapters 11 (Agriculture and Rural Development), 12 (Food Safety, Veterinary and Phytosanitary Policy), and 13 (Fisheries and Aquaculture) by 2030.
- Pledge to make the best use of EU instruments, including IPARD, to modernize our agri-food systems and strengthen the resilience of rural economies.

#### **Green Agenda for the Western Balkans, Climate action and sustainable food systems.**

- Commit to progressively implement **Pillar IV of the Green Agenda for the Western Balkans**, transforming our agriculture and food systems towards sustainability, resilience, and competitiveness.
- Underline the urgency of integrating climate adaptation measures into agricultural investment policies and support mechanisms.
- Continue our efforts to adopt **national climate adaptation action plans for agriculture and forestry by the end of 2026**, supported by Strategic Road Maps and regional cooperation frameworks.

#### **Agricultural knowledge, data, and innovation**

- Pledge to facilitate public access to **high-quality agricultural, soil, and meteorological data** as a public good.

- Remain determined to strengthen regional collaboration on **satellite-based forest monitoring and inventory systems**, harmonized data collection, and reporting procedures.
- Reaffirm the urgency of establishing and implementing **Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation Systems (AKIS)** to accelerate green transition, digitalization, and knowledge exchange across the Western Balkans.

### **Advance sustainable forestry and natural resource management**

- Recognize forests as critical natural resources for climate mitigation, biodiversity, and rural livelihoods.
- Remain bind to regional cooperation on **forest fire prevention, reforestation, and biodiversity conservation**, while promoting the **Close-to-Nature Forest Management (CNFM)** approach.
- Encourage partnerships with international organizations for modernized, science-based forest policy and management.

### **Investments in climate-resilient agriculture and renewable energy**

- Encourage **investments in renewable energy, circular economy solutions, and resource-efficient technologies**, ensuring appropriate financing and non-bureaucratic regulatory frameworks.
- Remove non-tariff barriers for relevant inputs and technologies, harmonize regulation and ensure strict enforcement to enable regional market development.
- Continue to work with the EU, IFIs, and development partners to scale up financing for green investments in rural areas.

### **Fair income and economic perspectives for farmers**

- Reaffirm our commitment to **ensure fair income and sustainable economic perspectives** for farmers by strengthening their competitiveness on open markets. We will support modernization and sustainable farming practices, including the adoption of innovative technologies and market-oriented solutions, to improve productivity and resilience.
- Acknowledge the critical importance of inclusiveness and transparency will support mechanisms for continuous stakeholder engagement and consultation with ministries, farmers, agribusinesses, and civil society, to ensure that policies and measures are responsive to the sector's needs and priorities.

### **Rural communities, youth, and women**

- Stay abreast and continuously create policies that encourage **generational renewal of the rural areas**, enabling young farmers to access land, credit, and modern technologies.
- Dedicate efforts to the **empowerment of rural women** through innovative measures, inheritance reforms, tax incentives, and targeted support schemes.
- Reaffirm our determination to expand the **LEADER approach** in the framework of IPARD and national programs, ensuring that rural communities, Local Action Groups, and civil society play a decisive role in shaping local development.

### **Regional and international cooperation**

- Express our gratitude for the continuous support of the European Commission, EU Member States, and international partners including FAO, RCC, CIHEAM, GIZ, BMZ, BMLEH, and others.
- Welcome the continuation of the **Agricultural Policy Dialogue with the Federal Republic of Germany** as a valuable platform for political and technical exchange.
- Call for **sustained and reinforced political, financial, and technical engagement** of European and international partners to ensure implementation of the commitments outlined in these Conclusions.

### **Final Provisions**

We acknowledge the report of the Secretary General of SWG RRD on the results achieved in 2025 and commend the Secretariat and member institutions for their dedication.

We express our gratitude to the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Development of Kosovo\* for their warm hospitality and excellent organization of this Annual Meeting.

We call upon the Chair of the Berlin Process to present the Conclusions at the upcoming Leaders Summit.

We reaffirm that the conclusions adopted will be **reviewed and assessed at the next Ministerial Meeting in 2026**, and we pledge to take concrete actions for a **sustainable, competitive, and resilient agricultural and rural development sector in the Western Balkans**, firmly anchored in the European Union integration process.

\*This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.