



Agricultural Policy Forum

Prishtina **3th – 4th
June
2026**

Agricultural Policy Coherence in
South-East Europe:

EU Integration Dynamics, Institutional Reforms and Climate Adaptation

With support from



by decision of the
German Bundestag



Welcome to the **AGRICULTURAL POLICY FORUM 2026!**

The Agricultural Policy Forum (APF) 2026 is organised by the Regional Rural Development Standing Working Group in SEE in cooperation with the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Development of Kosovo*.

Under the theme “Agricultural Policy Coherence in South-East Europe: EU Integration Dynamics, Institutional Reforms and Climate Adaptation”, the Forum will bring together policymakers, experts, academia, and regional stakeholders to discuss key agricultural policy developments in South-East Europe within the EU integration process.

The APF 2026 will focus on policy harmonization, institutional reforms, climate change adaptation, biodiversity and forestry policies, generational renewal, and regional cooperation mechanisms.

Through the plenary session, thematic working groups and policy discussions, the Forum aims to strengthen regional cooperation, exchange experiences and best practices, and contribute to the preparation of the “Prishtina Agenda 2026” as a joint regional policy outcome supporting sustainable and resilient agricultural development in SEE.

** 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.*

PROGRAM

Tuesday, 02 June 2026

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|--------------|-----------------------------|
| 19:00 | On-site registration begins |
| 20:00 | Welcoming reception |

Wednesday, 03 June 2026

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|----------------------|---|
| 09:00 - 09:10 | Welcome address - Mr. Armend Muja, <i>Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Development</i> - tbc |
| 09:10 - 09:15 | Welcome address and introduction to the APF 2026 objectives and the program - Mr. Boban Ilic, <i>Secretary General, Regional Rural Development Standing Working Group in SEE (SWG)</i> |
| 09:15 - 09:35 | The EU Enlargement Process and the Common Agricultural Policy: Recent Developments and Future Prospects - Mr. Jesús González García, <i>Senior Expert, DG Agriculture and Rural Development, Neighbourhood, Enlargement and Pre-accession assistance Unit, European Commission</i> |
| 09:35 - 09:55 | Strong relations in EU-Accession and common trade - Germany's engagement in the Western Balkans - Mr. Olaf Schäfer, <i>Head of Directorate Export promotion and Trade, German Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Regional Identity</i> |

09:55 - 10:15	Agricultural Policy and Monitoring in the Context of EU Integration: The Western Balkans and Moldova (Chapter 11) - Mr. Emil Erjavec, PhD, <i>Professor for Agricultural Policy and Economics, Biotechnical University of Ljubljana</i>
10:15 - 10:35	Climate Change Adaptation in agriculture in the WBs - Mr. Ordan Cukaliev, PhD, <i>Professor, Faculty of Agricultural Sciences and Food - Skopje, Ss. Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje</i>
10:35 - 11:00	Coffee break and family photo
11:00 - 11:15	Generational Renewal in Agriculture: Policy Responses and Implementation Challenges - Mr. Charalambos Kasimis, <i>Professor Emeritus, Department of Agricultural Economics and Rural Development, Agricultural University of Athens</i>
11:15 - 11:30	Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation policy and Biodiversity and Forestry policy - Mr. Nenad Petrovic, PhD, <i>Professor, Faculty of Forestry, University of Belgrade, Serbia</i>
11:30 - 11:37	Integrating landscape fire management approach in the Western Balkans , Mr. Cvetan Nikolovski, <i>Team Leader of the LFMWB Programme, FARMAHEM</i>
11:37 - 11:50	Landscape Fire Management and Climate Change , Prof. Nikola Nikolov, <i>Head of the Regional Fire Monitoring Center (RFMC)</i>
11:50 - 12:05	Climate Change Adaptation in Wine and Viticulture sector - Mr. Lutz van Elk, <i>Expert, German Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Regional Identity</i>

12:05 - 12:20	Governing the AKIS - Connecting Actors, Fostering Cooperation - <i>Dr. Maria Gerster-Bentaya, International Expert, University of Hohenheim / IAK Agrar Consulting GmbH</i>
12:20 - 12:35	Advancing Policy Harmonization and Institutional Reform in Agriculture under the Berlin Process: Priorities for the Western Balkans - <i>Mr. Boban Ilic, Secretary General, Regional Rural Development Standing Working Group in SEE (SWG)</i>
	Introduction to the working groups topics
12:35 - 12:45	Lunch
12:45 - 14:00	Working groups (Coffee break 16:00 - 16:30)
14:00 - 18:00	Dinner
20:00	

Thursday, 04 June 2026

09:00 - 09:20	Presentation of working group results WG 1
09:20 - 09:40	Presentation of working group results WG 2
09:40 - 10:00	Presentation of working group results WG 3
10:00 - 10:20	Presentation of working group results WG 4
10:20 - 10:30	Discussion session
10:30 - 11:00	Coffee break

11:00 - 12:30	Formulation of “Prishtina Agenda 2026”
12:30 - 12:45	Official closing of the Forum
12:45 - 14:00	Lunch
15:00 - 19:30	Field trip
15:00 - 15:45	Departure to Blinaja
15:45 - 16:45	Visit to Hunting Area of Special Importance “Blinaja”
16:45 - 18:30	Departure and visit to farm ASK Food Company - production of fruits, vegetables, natural juice with brand “Receta e Gjyshes” Address: Livoç i poshtëm PN Gjilan XK, 60000 https://askfoods.com/
18:30 - 19:30	Departure and visit to Lura Agroturizem
19:30	Dinner at Lura Agroturizem Address: Makreshi i Epërm 16000 https://visitlura.com/
22:00	Departure to the Hotel

Friday, 05 June 2026

- **Departure after breakfast**

Topics:

- ◆ *The EU Enlargement Process and the Common Agricultural Policy: Recent Developments and Future Prospects*
- ◆ *Strong relations in EU-Accession and common trade - Germany's engagement in the Western Balkans*
- ◆ *Agricultural Policy and Monitoring in the Context of EU Integration: The Western Balkans and Moldova (Chapter 11)*
- ◆ *Climate Change Adaptation in agriculture in the WBs*
- ◆ *Generational Renewal in Agriculture: Policy Responses and Implementation Challenges*
- ◆ *Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation policy and Biodiversity and Forestry policy*
- ◆ *Integrating landscape fire management approach in the Western Balkans*
- ◆ *Landscape Fire Management and Climate Change*
- ◆ *Climate Change Adaptation in Wine and Viticulture sector*
- ◆ *Governing the AKIS - Connecting Actors, Fostering Cooperation*
- ◆ *Advancing Policy Harmonization and Institutional Reform in Agriculture under the Berlin Process: Priorities for the Western Balkans*

PLENARY SESSION SPEAKERS



Mr. Boban Ilic

Secretary General,
Regional Rural Development Standing Working Group (SWG) in
SEE

Secretary General of the Regional Rural Development Standing Working Group (SWG) in Southeastern Europe since 2010 and chair of SWG Assembly Sessions. In charge of execution and implementation of SWG strategies and policies; establishing and maintaining effective high level protocolary and diplomatic relations with government and international officials as well as maintaining effective liaison and developing co-operative programs with international organizations and agencies, in particular with international organizations dealing in agriculture and rural development. Responsible for initiation and preparation of regional development projects in Southeastern Europe.

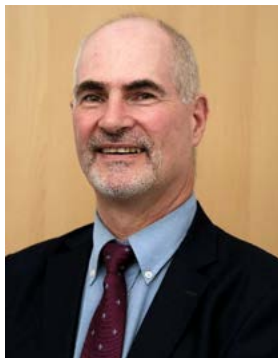
Over 20 years' experience in South Eastern Europe with public and private sector in developmental projects and programs in agro and food industries; food security and agricultural; rural development programs and reforms, principle advisory services for government agricultural policies; planning and reforms (legislation and implementation) related to the process of integration into the European Union.



Mr. Jesús González García

PhD, Senior Expert, DG AGRI, European Commission

Jesús González García is Senior Expert in the neighbourhood, enlargement and pre-accession assistance unit in DG AGRI. He currently deals with the agricultural aspects of the EU accession of Albania and Kosovo*, and EU relations with Southern and Eastern neighbourhood. Previous experience in the Commission includes agriculture and fishery markets, international relations in consumer issues, and chemical policy. Before joining the Commission, he was Associate Professor of Animal Production at the University of León, Spain, and Scientific Expert in the pharmaceutical industry. Mr González holds a PhD in freshwater aquaculture from the University of León.



Mr. Olaf Schäfer

Deputy Director-General for Agricultural Trade Policy, EU Affairs, International Cooperation- German Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Regional Identity

Olaf Schäfer was born on July 16, 1965, and completed his school education in Bochum in 1984. Subsequently, he studied law at the University of Bochum from 1984 to 1991. After successfully passing the First State Examination in Law in April 1991, he completed his legal traineeship (Referendariat) at the Regional Court of Bochum between 1991 and 1994 and passed the Second State Examination in November 1994.

Before joining the Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture (BMEL), Mr. Schäfer gained valuable experience as a scientific assistant. From January to August 1995, he worked for Dr. Christoph Konrad, a Member of the European Parliament. Subsequently, from September 1995 to April 1996, he served as a scientific assistant to Mr. Joachim Gres, a Member of the German Bundestag representing the CDU/CSU.

Mr. Schäfer began his career at the BMEL in 1995, initially working in animal welfare. Since then, Mr. Schäfer has served in different positions at the Agriculture Ministry, including the roles of Head of the Division “Cabinet, Parliament and Protocol Affairs” (2005-2009), Head of the Personnel Division (2009-2016) and Head of the Minister’s Political Staff (2017-2018). From 2019 to 2026 Mr. Schäfer has been Head of the Directorate “Climate Protection, Biodiversity, Bioeconomy and Fisheries”.

Since March 2026 he is heading the Directorate for “Export Promotion and Trade” at the Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Regional Identity (BMELH).

Olaf Schäfer is married since May 1999 and has one son.



Mr. Emil Erjavec

PhD, Professor of Agricultural Policy and Economics at the
Biotechnical Faculty, University of Ljubljana

Authored over 150 publications on agricultural policy, post-socialist transition and EU integration, agricultural sector modeling, and political economy. He has held leadership roles in national and EU-level research and advisory initiatives on agricultural policy and European integration, and has been invited to share his expertise with the EAAE and international organizations including the FAO, OECD, European Commission, and European Parliament.

**Mr. Ordan Chukaliev**

PhD, Professor, Faculty of Agricultural Sciences and Food
Ss., Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje

His main research area is climate change and its effects on agriculture, water productivity and irrigation water requirement. He also works on smart agriculture, digitalisation and automated processes in agriculture. Prof. Chukaliev has extensive experience in high level university management for more than 10 years as Vice-Dean and Dean of the Faculty of Agricultural Sciences and Food in Skopje and Vice Rector for International Cooperation of Ss, Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje. Also, he has remarkable international experience and presence, and he was working at the European Commission Joint Research Center (Ispra, Italy) from 2012 to 2014 and contributed to the MARS Crop Yield Forecast Bulletin, Caprese project and to the organisation of the JRC E&IA workshop on "Crop Yield Forecasting in SEE". Also, he has experience from more than 50 international projects as consultant, team leader, national team leader and researcher. Moreover, he is very experienced in preparation of the national and regional policy documents. He contributed to the development of the 4 national strategies for Agriculture and rural development, preparation of the two National Update Reports and four National communications to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. Also, he prepared the regional report for policy recommendations and capacity building for designation and implementation of the Areas with Natural Constraints in Western Balkan and regional report on policy recommendations on Agri-environmental policies and measures in the Western Balkan region. He was organizing number of national, regional and international conferences and workshops. He is author or co-author of more than 150 publications.



Mr. Charalampos Kasimis

PhD, Professor Emeritus, Agricultural University of Athens,
Greece

Mr. Kasimis has held various positions, including Director of the Institute of Urban and Rural Sociology at the National Centre for Social Research of Greece (1995–2000), Head of the Department of Agricultural Economics and Rural Development (2013–2014), Director of the MSc Programme “Integrated Rural Development and Management of Rural Space” (2010–2014), and Vice Rector of the Agricultural University of Athens (2014–2015). His research and academic interests focus on rural transformation and development, agricultural policy, and rural migration. In March 2015, he was appointed Secretary General for Agricultural Policy and the Management of European Union Funds at the Ministry of Rural Development and Food of Greece, a position he held until July 2019. Since 2021, he has been working as a senior expert on AKIS, agricultural policy, and rural development in the Western Balkans for SWG RRD.



Mr. Nenad Petrović

PhD, Associate professor at the University of Belgrade,
Faculty of Forestry

Since 2003 he is working at chair of forest management planning where is responsible for teaching activities on same name subject. Special focus of his research is on forest planning, forest policy and small scale private forest management. He worked as visiting professor at University of Sarajevo and University of Banja Luka and is active in implementation of several regional and international project. He speaks English, German and Spanish language.



Mr. Cvetan Nikolovski

MSc in Forestry, Farmahem, Team Leader of the SDC's Landscape Fire Management in the Western Balkans Programme (LFMWB)

With more than 25 years of professional experience in sustainable environmental management across the Western Balkans, he has served as a project manager, consultant, team leader, with expertise spanning silviculture, climate change, regional forest planning, landscape fire management and ecosystem restoration. His work is grounded in close-to-nature, integrated and multifunctional forestry and is distinguished by a strong commitment to regional co-operation, participatory approaches, and resilient landscape governance. Prior to his current role, he served for nine years as Programme Officer for Forestry within the Swiss-supported Nature Conservation Programme in Macedonia (NCP), where he contributed to pioneering regional forest planning and multi-stakeholder landscape approaches. Over the course of his career, he has worked with national institutions, civil society organizations and regional and international networks and organizations, including The Ecologist's Movement of Macedonia (DEM), CDNEE, SEEYN, Friends of the Earth Europe, the Federation of Young European Greens (FYEG), and Youth and Environment Europe (YEE).



Mr. Nikola Nikolov

PhD, Professor, Dean of the Hans Em faculty and Head of Regional Fire Monitoring Center (RFMC)

Nikola Nikolov is Full Professor and Dean of the Hans Em Faculty of Forest Sciences, Landscape Architecture and Environmental Engineering (HEF) in Skopje and Head of the Regional Fire Monitoring Center (RFMC). Also, he is coordinator of the Regional Southeast Europe/Caucasus Wildland Fire Network. The RFMC was founded in 2010 and hosted by Hans Em Faculty in Skopje - North Macedonia, it works under the umbrella of the Global Fire Monitoring Center (GFMC) and serves as a center of excellence of the regional network.

He has been part of many national and international projects related mainly with climate change, forest fires and forest protection and funded by SDC, FAO, USFS, UNDP, USAID, OSCE, JICA, Council of Europe, UNEP, SIDA etc.



Mr. Lutz van Elk

Expert, German Federal Ministry of Agriculture,
Food and Regional Identity

Since 1998 official at the Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Regional Identity and from that on in charge for questions regarding wine and wine-regulations regarding oenological practices, wine control, accompanying documents, inward and outward registers and trade with third countries. In contact with the Commission services and with the other Member States within the framework of the measures to strengthen controls in the wine sector.

German delegate at numerous EU-meetings since 1998; Council working Parties and Experts groups in the above-mentioned fields.

Member of the German delegation at the General Assembly of the International Organisation of Vine and Wine (OIV) and the EU coordination meetings to assess whether the changes made to the draft resolutions during the OIV commissions' meetings were still in line with the Union position in Mendoza (2014), Mainz (2015), Sofia (2016) Geneva (2019) and Chisinau (2025).

Since 2018 Participant at the meetings of the Regional Expert Advisory Working Group on Wine and Viticulture (REAWG) in the framework of the Regional Rural Development Standing Working Group (SWG) in South Eastern Europe.



Dr. Maria Gerster-Bentaya

International Expert, University of Hohenheim

Dr. Maria Gerster-Bentaya is an internationally recognized expert in Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation Systems (AKIS), agricultural advisory and extension services, and capacity development. With more than 30 years of experience as a researcher, lecturer, trainer, and facilitator, she has supported governments, development organizations, and agricultural institutions worldwide in strengthening advisory systems, knowledge exchange, innovation processes, and stakeholder engagement. Her work combines expertise in AKIS, adult education, knowledge management, and rural development, with extensive experience in designing and delivering training programs, facilitating multi-stakeholder learning processes, and promoting innovation in agricultural systems.

Working Group (WG) 1: Technical dialogue on Wine

18th REAWG Interim Meeting

PROGRAM

Moderator: Ms. Bogdanka Gjorshoska

Tuesday 03rd of June

14:00 - 14:10	Welcome remarks and meeting introduction <i>Ms. Bogdanka Gjorshoska, SWG</i>
14:10 - 15:00	Review of the activities (5 minutes per expert)
15:00 - 15:30	Short updates by national experts (5 minutes per expert), with a focus on activities related to climate change, adaptation measures and resilience of the wine sector <i>All participants</i>
15:30 - 16:00	Coffee break
16:00 - 16:20	Discussion on the effects of climate change on grape production, vineyard management, wine quality, water availability, soil conditions and pest/disease pressure <i>All participants</i>
16:20 - 16:40	Review and discussion of the Policy brief <i>All participants</i>
16:40 - 17:00	Final discussion and Policy brief conclusions for the Prishtina Agenda 2026 <i>All participants</i>
17:00 - 17:10	Closing of the meeting

Working Group (WG) 2:
Agricultural Knowledge Innovation System (AKIS)
14th REAWG Interim Meeting
PROGRAM

Moderator: Mr. Dušan Nešković

Tuesday 03rd of June

14:00 - 14:15 **Welcome remarks and introduction to the agenda and objectives of the meeting**

Mr. Dušan Nešković, SWG RRD

14:15 - 14:30 **Closing Chapter 11 (Agriculture and Rural Development) with Emphasis on AKIS Establishment: The Montenegro Experience**

- EU accession process and Chapter 11 experience
- Institutional reforms and policy alignment
- Initiatives and actions related to AKIS establishment
- Lessons learned and recommendations for the region

Mr. Mirsad Spahić, Montenegro

14:30 - 14:45 **Discussion**

14:45 - 15:40 **Moving forward: National AKIS Work Plans Implementation in 2026**

Country presentations (5–6 minutes each). Progress on governance, coordination priorities, national AKIS plans, Case Studies, Advisory Services strengthening, and innovation in Climate Change adaptation actions

- Albania – National Expert
- Bosnia and Herzegovina, Federation of BiH – National Expert
- Bosnia and Herzegovina, Republika Srpska – National Expert
- Kosovo* – National Expert
- Moldova – National Expert
- North Macedonia – National Experts
- Montenegro – National Expert
- Serbia – National Expert

15:40 - 16:00

Discussion

Moderated by Prof. Dr. Charalambos Kasimis, Professor Emeritus, Department of Agricultural Economics and Rural Development, Agricultural University of Athens

16:00 - 16:30

Coffee break

16:30 - 16:50

Governing the AKIS - Connecting Actors, Fostering Cooperation

Dr. Maria Gerster-Bentaya, Hohenheim University/IAK Agrar Consulting GmbH, Germany

16:50 - 17:00

Discussion

All participants

17:00 - 17:30

Governing AKIS in SEE – Future Priorities and Regional Cooperation

Presentation and moderate discussion by:

Prof. Dr. Charalambos Kasimis, Professor Emeritus, Department of Agricultural Economics and Rural Development, Agricultural University of Athens

17:30 - 17:50

Formulation of the AKIS REAWG contribution to the Prishtina Agenda 2026 in achieving goals of the green transition policy and knowledge and innovation exchange

All participants

17:50 - 18:00

Closing of the meeting

Mr. Dušan Nešković, SWG RRD

Working Group (WG) 3: Sustainable Forest Management PROGRAMME

Moderator: *Ms. Bogdanka Gjorshoska*

Tuesday 03rd of June

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|----------------------|---|
| 14:00 - 14:10 | Welcome remarks and meeting introduction
<i>Ms. Bogdanka Gjorshoska, SWG</i> |
| 14:10 - 14:30 | The EU Forest Strategy 2030 and implications for Forestry Related Alignment under Chapter 27
<i>Mr. Torsten Möllmann, Head of Services Division, HessenForst</i> |
| 14:30 - 14:50 | Climate Change Adaptation in Forestry in the Western Balkans – Current Challenges and Regional Perspectives
<i>Prof. Nenad Petrovic, Regional Expert REAWG</i> |
| 14:50 - 15:00 | Discussion |
| 15:00 - 15:30 | Regional needs towards fire resilient landscapes in the Western Balkans
<i>Prof. Nikola Nikolov, Head of the Regional Fire Monitoring Center (RFMC)</i> |
| 15:30 - 16:00 | Coffee break |
| 16:00 - 16:40 | Discussion related to integrating the WB6 landscape fire management into climate policies through coordinated regional governance and practical prevention measures
<i>All participants</i> |
| 16:40 - 17:00 | Final discussion and Policy brief conclusions for the Prishtina Agenda 2026
<i>All participants</i> |
| 17:00 - 17:10 | Closing of the meeting |

Working Group (WG) 4: Berlin Process: Regional Discussion on EU Integration of the Western Balkans, the Berlin Process, and Food Security Mechanisms PROGRAM

Moderator: Mr. Boban Ilic

Tuesday 03rd of June

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| 14:00 - 14:10 | Welcome remarks and meeting introduction
<i>Mr. Boban Ilic, SWG</i> |
| 14:10 - 15:00 | EU Integration of the Western Balkans and the Berlin Process: Current
Developments and Regional Perspectives
<i>All participants</i> |
| 15:00 - 15:30 | Food Security and Food Sovereignty in the Western Balkans
<i>Mr. Boban Ilic, SWG</i> |
| 15:30 - 16:00 | Coffee break |
| 16:00 - 16:30 | Mechanisms for Food Crisis Response and Regional Coordination
<i>Mr. Boban Ilic, SWG</i> |
| 16:30 - 17:00 | Recommendations for regional cooperation toward strengthening food
resilience in the Western Balkans
<i>All participants</i> |
| 17:00 - 17:15 | Final discussion and Policy brief conclusions for the “Prishtina Agenda
2026”
<i>All participants</i> |
| 17:15 - 17:20 | Closing of the meeting |