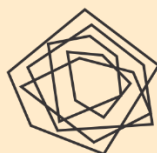


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3rd RURAL PARLIAMENT OF KOSOVA

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RURAL PARLIAMENT OF KOSOVA



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FARM & FORK
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DECLARATION
MANIFESTO

2026

Prizren, October 2026

Adopted at the conclusion of the Third Rural Parliament of Kosova, held on 15–17 October 2026 at the Innovation and Technology Park in Prizren, with the participation of 60 delegates from across Kosovo, as well as guests from Finland, North Macedonia, Colombia and Albania.

We, the representatives of civil society in the rural development sector and of Kosovo's rural communities, adopt this Declaration, as a joint statement of the aspirations, commitments and demands of rural communities. This Declaration is based on meetings with residents of rural communities, consultations with representatives of rural development organisations, and the discussions and recommendations of working groups during the Third Rural Parliament of Kosovo, held on 15–17 October 2026.

1. Diversity of Rural Regions

We value the diversity of Kosovo's regions and population, which reflects local cultures and traditions, a long history of human activity, and abundant natural resources. We consider this diversity an important opportunity to improve the well-being and living standards of rural communities.

2. Shared Values

We value the shared principles that unite the people of Kosovo, including democracy, equality, social welfare, the rule of law, respect for human rights and a spirit of cooperation. We are committed to promoting and protecting these values in order to build a peaceful, fair and inclusive society.

3. Quality of Life

The quality of life in rural areas is rooted in nature, villages and small towns, mountains and forests, landscapes, flora and fauna, a healthy environment, cultural heritage, and solidarity among rural communities.

We are concerned that these values and characteristics of rural areas face ongoing challenges, particularly as a result of the migration of the population, especially young people, to urban areas and abroad.

4. Rights of Rural Communities

We support the right of rural areas and communities to full recognition by the people and institutions of Kosovo, to a quality of life and standard of living equal to those of the urban population, and to full participation in political and decision-making processes.

We call on the Government of Kosovo to ensure that the needs and interests of rural communities are reflected in all policies and actions affecting their lives. Equal rights and opportunities must be guaranteed to all citizens, without discrimination on grounds of age, gender, language, ethnic origin, religious belief, political opinion, property, disability, place of birth or other personal characteristics.

5. The Need for Action

We firmly believe that the challenges facing rural communities must be addressed at the highest levels of decision-making, particularly by institutions responsible for developing and implementing public policies in the interests of Kosovo's entire population.

Rural areas provide food, timber, fibre, energy, water and other resources essential to life and economic development. Farmers, enterprises and other rural actors create shared value for Kosovo. Rural areas also contribute to addressing climate change, recreation, public health, and social, economic and cultural well-being.

For these reasons, rural communities deserve recognition, respect and continued support from institutions and society as a whole.

6. Leadership in Rural Development

We recognise our responsibility to provide leadership and act in the interests of the common good. Leadership in rural development must involve collective action at local, regional and national levels, underpinned by commitment, communication, cooperation, transparency and trust.

We call on public institutions, the private sector and civil society to work together to strengthen the capacities of rural actors and create the conditions for responsible, inclusive and sustainable leadership.

7. Concerns about the Underestimation of Rural Potential

Residents and communities in rural Kosovo are concerned that many regions face a lack of employment opportunities, low wages, population outmigration—particularly among young people—gender inequality, declining public services, poverty, a shortage of affordable housing, exclusion from social protection schemes, inadequate infrastructure and environmental degradation.

The diversity of rural areas, their natural resources, and their economic and human capacities must be recognised as development potential and as added value for Kosovo's economy and society.

We call for public policies to recognise the specific characteristics of each rural region and create equal opportunities for economic, social and territorial development.

8. Vision for the Future

Our vision for the future is a Kosovo with vibrant, inclusive, sustainable and economically diversified rural communities, supported by effective environmental management and respect for cultural heritage.

We believe that rural communities developed in line with this vision can make a major contribution to building a peaceful, fair, equal and sustainable Kosovo, and to developing a society that respects the environment and the well-being of future generations.

9. Partnership

Achieving our vision requires a genuine and equal partnership among citizens, rural communities, civil society and public institutions at central and local levels.

As rural communities and organisations, we recognise our responsibility to provide leadership and contribute to the common good. At the same time, we call on the Government of Kosovo and other public institutions to establish sustainable mechanisms for cooperation, consultation and decision-making with rural actors.

10. Assessing the State of Rural Areas

Conditions in rural areas change over time and require continuous, evidence-based assessment.

We call on the Government of Kosovo to conduct a comprehensive assessment of the state of rural areas, analysing demographic, economic, social and environmental challenges, as well as their contribution to the country's overall well-being.

The findings of this assessment should serve as a basis for developing and updating rural development policies, strategies and programmes.

11. Reversing the Decline of Rural Areas

Many rural regions are caught in a downward spiral characterised by population outmigration, particularly among young people, reduced services, weakening local economies and the gradual abandonment of rural settlements.

We call on all stakeholders, central and local institutions, the private sector and civil society to coordinate their efforts to reverse this trend.

This requires promoting rural living, strengthening public services, diversifying local economies, creating jobs and improving conditions so that young people can remain in their home communities, while those who have migrated have opportunities to return and invest in their communities.

12. Young People in Rural Areas

We believe that many young people are willing to remain in or return to rural areas and take responsibility for the future development of rural economies and communities.

Young people need attractive employment opportunities, education and vocational training, access to land, entrepreneurship support, suitable credit, and social, cultural and recreational activities.

We call on the Government of Kosovo, municipalities and civil society to develop and implement concrete measures to meet these needs.

We also support the establishment of Rural Parliaments for Young People as participatory mechanisms through which young people can raise their problems and challenges, propose solutions and influence policies that shape the future of rural areas.

13. Poverty and Social Exclusion

We acknowledge the progress made in combating poverty in Kosovo, but emphasise that many citizens continue to experience poverty and exclusion from social protection schemes and services.

Social and territorial cohesion are essential parts of our vision for Kosovo and Europe. We therefore call for sustained efforts to promote inclusion and full participation in society.

Particular attention must be paid to Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities, as well as other vulnerable groups, ensuring equal access to education, employment, public services and opportunities for economic and social development.

14. Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Rural Women

Women are a key pillar of rural development, particularly in agriculture, product processing, rural tourism, and the preservation of cultural heritage and local traditions.

We call on the Government of Kosovo and the responsible institutions to support the economic and social empowerment of rural women, ensure equality in the ownership and inheritance of land and family property, and create opportunities for their participation in leadership and decision-making.

Rural women must have equal access to financial support, grants, loans, advisory services, education, vocational training and opportunities to develop small and medium-sized enterprises.

15. LEADER and Community-Led Local Development (CLLD)

We strongly support the implementation of the LEADER approach and the Community-Led Local Development (CLLD) model, based on a territorial approach, partnership among the public sector, private sector and civil society, and the bottom-up principle.

We call on the Government of Kosovo and the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Development to take concrete steps to institutionalise and implement this approach in rural development policies.

In particular, we call for the development and adoption of a National LEADER Strategy that derives from and is consistent with the Law on Agriculture and the Agriculture and Rural Development Programme. The Strategy should define the objectives, priorities, institutional mechanisms, financial resources and implementation arrangements for the LEADER approach in Kosovo.

The Strategy should establish a clear and sustainable framework for the operation and strengthening of Local Action Groups (LAGs), ensuring the active involvement of local communities in identifying needs, developing local strategies and implementing development projects.

We also call for:

- Increased and sustainable funding for Local Action Groups and the implementation of local development strategies.
- The adoption and implementation of the regulations and procedures required for LAGs to operate effectively.
- The establishment of transparent and accessible mechanisms for financing local initiatives.
- Strengthening the capacities of LAGs and local actors in project planning, management and implementation.
- The involvement of civil society organisations, women, young people, farmers and rural businesses in decision-making processes.
- Expanded cooperation and exchange of experience with European networks and partners, with a view to adopting good practices and preparing for the implementation of European rural development standards.

We believe that a National LEADER Strategy linked to the legal and programming framework for agriculture and rural development will provide a stronger foundation for sustainable, participatory and territorially balanced development in Kosovo.

16. Rural Infrastructure and Services

Essential rural services, such as shops, postal services, schools, primary healthcare, public transport and social infrastructure, are vital to maintaining quality of life in rural areas.

Physical infrastructure and basic services are equally important, including drinking water supply, sewerage, electricity and the road network.

In many rural areas, these services are limited or inadequate, encouraging migration to urban areas and abroad.

We call on the Government of Kosovo, municipalities and service providers to invest in rural infrastructure and services and to involve communities in identifying priorities and solutions that respond to their needs.

17. Telecommunications and Digital Access

Access to quality telecommunications and internet services is essential for the economic, educational, social and cultural development of rural communities.

Because of distances and lower population density, many rural settlements face difficulties accessing fast and affordable internet services.

We call on the Government of Kosovo, funders and telecommunications service providers to ensure equal access to high-speed internet and digital services for all rural residents.

We also call for the promotion of digital skills, particularly among young people, women, farmers and rural enterprises, to expand their opportunities in education, employment, trade and innovation.

18. Local and Regional Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises

Rural areas in Kosovo are home to a considerable number of small and medium-sized enterprises that directly affect community life and contribute to the national economy.

We emphasise the importance of increasing the vitality and sustainability of these enterprises and of local and regional economies.

Support should be tailored to the potential and needs of each region and cover a range of sectors, including agriculture, forestry, product processing, rural tourism, renewable energy, services and information technology.

We call for measures that foster innovation, job creation, cooperation among businesses and economic links between rural and urban areas.

19. Small and Family Farms

We recognise the significant contribution of commercial farms to Kosovo's economy, but express concern about the challenges faced by small and family farms, particularly in remote rural areas.

These farms provide livelihoods for thousands of families, supply local markets with food and help preserve landscapes, ecosystems, biodiversity and cultural heritage.

We call on the Government of Kosovo, donors, civil society organisations and other relevant actors to support family farms through easier access to finance, professional advice, technology, markets and opportunities for cooperation.

We also encourage the development of cooperatives, social agricultural enterprises and other forms of cooperation that increase product value, diversify income and strengthen the long-term sustainability of family economies.

20. The Role of Small Towns in Rural Development

Small towns in Kosovo are vital economic, social and cultural centres for rural communities. They provide public services, education, healthcare, trade and opportunities for tourism development.

However, their potential is often insufficiently reflected in national development policies and programmes.

We support the development of policies that recognise small towns as bridges connecting rural and urban areas.

We call for stronger cooperation among rural and urban communities, organisations and authorities in order to realise shared economic, social and cultural potential and exchange experiences and good practices.

21. Climate Change and Natural Resources

We recognise the important role rural areas can play in addressing climate change and conserving natural resources. At the same time, we emphasise the need to support rural communities in adapting to climate impacts.

Forests, agricultural land, water and biodiversity are assets of strategic importance to Kosovo. Rural areas have potential for renewable energy development, including solar and wind power, in ways that respect the environment and provide direct benefits to local communities.

We call on institutions to take climate change, environmental risks and the needs of marginalised regions into account when developing policies, programmes and financial support schemes for agriculture and rural development.

22. Capacity Development and Rural Leadership

We recognise the importance of leadership at all levels and the responsibility of rural actors to identify needs and propose solutions.

However, rural development requires coordinated action at local, regional, national and European levels, underpinned by commitment, communication, cooperation and trust.

We call on the Government, the private sector and civil society to work in partnership to provide capacity-building, resources and support for rural leaders, fostering creative, sustainable, inclusive and accountable leadership.

Particular attention should be paid to young people and women so that they have genuine opportunities to assume leadership roles in their communities.

23. Networks, Associations and Civil Society Organisations

National networks, associations and civil society organisations working in rural development play an important role in promoting participatory democracy, cooperation and development based on community needs.

Their membership and activities include local organisations, village-level action groups, cooperatives, youth organisations, women's associations, farmers' organisations and other structures that provide services and promote cooperation among rural actors.

We call on the Government of Kosovo and other institutions to respect the independence of civil society organisations and support their work in rural development.

In particular, we call on the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Development to ensure that national rural development networks, especially the Network of Rural Development Organisations of Kosovo (NORDK), have equal access to consultations, policies, schemes and measures under the Agriculture and Rural Development Programme.

24. Partnership between Civil Society and the Government

We believe that effective rural development requires a genuine, transparent and equal partnership between civil society and the Government.

We call on rural interest organisations and groups to cooperate with public institutions, and on the Government, international organisations and relevant agencies to ensure the active participation of rural actors in policy development, implementation and monitoring.

This partnership should establish a sustainable basis for consultation, coordination and joint decision-making at all levels of governance.

25. An Enabling Environment through Development Programmes

Sustainable rural development requires support measures that take account of the specific characteristics, capacities and challenges of rural communities.

We call on the Government of Kosovo and the responsible institutions to consider and implement concrete measures, including:

- Simplifying and adapting grant eligibility criteria while maintaining transparency and accountability.
- Creating opportunities for up to 100% funding, without co-financing, for specific programmes of public interest and promotional initiatives in rural areas, where appropriate.
- Simplifying administrative application procedures and improving the relevant legal framework.
- Developing start-up grant schemes for young people and women in rural areas.
- Providing technical and advisory support to applicants through municipalities and relevant organisations.
- Supporting women's associations, youth groups, farmers' associations and organisations promoting rural tourism, local production and local economic development.

These measures should contribute to more equal access to funding and create new employment and entrepreneurship opportunities.

26. Education and Vocational Training

Rural communities need ongoing education and training opportunities to adapt to economic, technological, social and environmental change.

Education and vocational training play an important role in developing skills, fostering innovation and increasing citizens' participation in development processes.

We call on educational institutions and the responsible authorities to ensure effective access to educational services for rural communities, including scholarships for vocational studies, distance learning and training tailored to rural needs.

Particular attention should be paid to digital skills, entrepreneurship, sustainable agriculture, agroecology, the circular economy and new employment opportunities in rural areas.

27. Exchange of Experience and Practices at Regional and International Levels

Sustainable rural development in Kosovo can be accelerated through the exchange of experience and good practices among communities, organisations and institutions at regional and international levels.

We call for concrete opportunities for cooperation, knowledge exchange and joint initiatives among the Government, civil society organisations, donors and other actors within and beyond the European Union.

European rural development networks and platforms should make an important contribution to this process, in cooperation with the Network of Rural Development Organisations of Kosovo and other relevant organisations.

28. Advocacy and Action

We call on networks, organisations, cooperatives, women's associations, farmers' associations, young farmers' clubs and youth organisations to lead and support a joint advocacy and action programme based on this Rural Manifesto of Kosovo for 2026.

This process should be carried out in close cooperation with their members, rural communities, public institutions and development partners.

Priority should be given to promoting the recommendations of this Manifesto, incorporating them into public policies and monitoring the implementation of institutional commitments in rural development.

29. Our Commitment

We pledge to remain committed to achieving the vision, priorities and actions set out in this Rural Manifesto of Kosovo for 2026.

We believe that the rural development sector, rural communities, civil society organisations, the Government of Kosovo, municipalities and other public institutions, by working together in a spirit of partnership, transparency and shared responsibility, can ensure sustainable and balanced development of rural areas.

We reaffirm that rural development is not solely a matter of agriculture, but a cross-cutting priority linked to employment, education, gender equality, youth, environmental protection, infrastructure, public services, and social and territorial cohesion.

We therefore call on all institutions and stakeholders to treat the recommendations of this Manifesto as a basis for dialogue, planning and concrete action throughout 2026 and beyond.

Adopted at the conclusion of the Third Rural Parliament of Kosovo, on 16 October 2026, in Prizren, Republic of Kosovo.