

GREETING

Dr. Elda Xhumari
Deputy Minister of Environment of Albania

Distinguished President of the Albanian Academy of Sciences,

Distinguished President and representatives of the UEAA,

Dear academics, professors, researchers and guests,

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure and an honour to welcome you to Tirana on the occasion of the 13th General Assembly of the Union of European Academies for Science Applied to Agriculture, Food and Nature, and today's Scientific Symposium on "Sustainable European Agriculture and the Balanced Management of Natural Resources."

On behalf of the Ministry of Environment, I would like to congratulate the Albanian Academy of Sciences and the UEAA for bringing together such a distinguished community of scientists and experts around a topic that is both timely and essential.

The title of this symposium reflects a fundamental challenge of our time: how to ensure development and food production while preserving the natural resources on which both depend.

Agriculture and the environment are deeply interconnected. Healthy soils, clean and sufficient water, resilient forests, biodiversity and functioning ecosystems are not only environmental assets — they are also the foundation of sustainable agriculture, food security and long-term economic resilience.

This is why the concept of balance in today's symposium is so important.

We need to move beyond approaches in which environmental protection and economic development are seen as competing objectives. Our common task is to identify solutions that allow them to reinforce one another.

And science has a central role in achieving this.

We need strong links between research, innovation and policymaking. Scientific knowledge must help us anticipate risks, improve the management of natural resources and translate new technologies into practical solutions.

From artificial intelligence and precision agriculture to improved environmental monitoring and the bioeconomy, many of the subjects addressed during today's programme show how rapidly these fields are evolving.

For Albania, strengthening this connection between science and decision-making is particularly important as we continue to advance our environmental standards and our broader European integration agenda.

International cooperation is equally essential. Environmental and climate challenges do not stop at national borders, and neither should our scientific collaboration.

I therefore hope that this symposium will not only generate valuable discussions, but also create new partnerships, new research ideas and concrete opportunities for cooperation between our institutions and academies.

Let us continue to bring science closer to policy, innovation closer to practice, and development closer to nature.

I wish you a very successful symposium and productive discussions.

Thank you, and welcome to Tirana.