



REPUBLIC OF ALBANIA
ACADEMY OF SCIENCES
PRESIDENCY

Tirana, September 21, 2026

WELCOME ADDRESS

Acad. Skënder Gjinushi
President of the Academy of Sciences of Albania

Distinguished academic colleagues,

Distinguished President of the Union of European Academies for Applied Sciences in Agriculture, Food, and Environment (UEAA), friend of Albania, Professor Ioan Jelev,

Distinguished participants and guests,

On behalf of the Academy of Sciences of Albania, it is an honor and a pleasure to welcome you to Tirana. Hosting the General Assembly, the Steering Committee Meeting, and the Scientific Symposium of the UEAA is an important event for science in our country.

This moment takes on an even more emotional value and pride for our scientific community, as Albania, through our esteemed colleague, officially takes over the Presidency of the Union of European Academies for Applied Sciences in Agriculture, Food, and Environment today.

This presidency is not merely a privilege, but also a responsibility. At the same time, we view this role as a supportive voice for small countries, which have their own unique developmental and structural specificities. The network you have so carefully built over these 25 years forms a solid foundation for achieving excellent results at the European level.

Distinguished participants,

The Academy of Sciences of Albania attaches primary and strategic importance to cooperation with organizations operating at the European level. We firmly believe that science knows no borders and that facing the challenges of the times requires full continental coordination. We already have an excellent and highly consolidated experience of cooperation with ALLEA (All European Academies), as well as with other international organizations. Albania's inclusion in the UEAA is a natural continuation of this vision.

In recent years, our Academy has undertaken deep structural and legal reforms. These reforms have not only aimed to increase the incentive and promotional character of scientific research in Albania, but also aim to turn our institution into an active and primary coordinating center of science in the country, organically integrating it into the European Research Area. Therefore, we hope that this symposium and the forums of these days will help more actively include our Academy and institutes in major European projects. It is in our vital interest to be part of these large research networks.

Distinguished colleagues,

This commitment is so necessary in agriculture because of our country's nature. Historically and structurally, Albania remains a country where agriculture is a heavyweight sector of our economy. This sector contributes about 18% to 19% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and employs over 37% of the country's workforce. To put this in a comparative context, in the European Union, the average contribution of agriculture to GDP is several times smaller.

However, to speak frankly, a noticeable gap is often observed between thought and action. Every day, we consume agricultural products and emphasize their importance, but not everyone acts with the weight and support this sector needs, or with the growing role of science in its development. This is not only true in Albania, but also in Europe.

Sometimes it is forgotten that every tangible development on the farm – every increase in yield or sustainability – is necessarily preceded by a development in science. Without science, we would not be in the conditions we are in today. Modern agriculture is no longer simply about tilling the soil; today it combines biological sciences, genetics, advanced agrotechnologies, precise irrigation and fertilization schemes, and even robotics and artificial intelligence.

For this reason, there is an urgent need to increase funding for science. We hope that the UEAA will help us with advisory expertise for the creation of conditions and institutional bridges, especially in our initiative and goal to establish several new permanent scientific research units in biotechnology, under the "One Health" concept.

Dear friends,

Allow me to close this speech by assuring you that in this joint journey, the Academy of Sciences of Albania will be an unwavering supporter of the Union and all your initiatives. Our presidency will not be simply a mandate of representation, but a period of total commitment and close partnership with all your sister academies.

I wish you fruitful work at the Assembly and the Symposium, and as pleasant a stay as possible in our country. Enjoy Albanian hospitality!

Thank you very much!