



UEAA NEWSLETTER

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LATEST NEWS

Highlights from the XIIIth UEAA General Assembly and Scientific Symposium in Tirana, Albania

On September 21, 2026, the Academy of Sciences of Albania in Tirana became the focal point of European agriculture, food, and environmental science. The institution proudly hosted the XIIIth General Assembly of the Union of European Academies for Science Applied to Agriculture, Food and Nature (UEAA), alongside its Steering Committee meeting. The high-level international event brought together prominent experts in Hall “Aleks Buda” and online via a hybrid format, including delegates from Albania, Bulgaria, France, Greece, Italy, Kosovo, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Ukraine, and the United Kingdom. With two additional academies sending apologies, 19 European academies were represented.

The accompanying Scientific Symposium, moderated by Acad. Ilia Mikerezi (*Chair of the Commission of Agriculture and Veterinary Medicine at the Academy of Sciences of Albania*), focused on the theme: **“Sustainable European Agriculture and Balanced Management of Natural Resources.”** In his opening remarks, Acad. Mikerezi welcomed the international delegates and highlighted the role of bioeconomy through cutting-edge topics like Artificial Intelligence (AI) in agriculture, agronomic innovations, and resilient resource management.

A Historic Milestone and Strategic Vision for Albanian Science

In his welcoming address speech, the President of the Academy of Sciences of Albania, Acad. Skënder Gjinushi, marked the assembly's hosting as a moment of immense pride for the country's academic community. He highlighted a major milestone: Albania will officially assume the Presidency of the UEAA. *“This upcoming presidency is not only a great privilege but also a profound responsibility,”* Acad. Gjinushi stated. To put the symposium's importance in a socio-economic context, Acad. Gjinushi shared key figures showing agriculture's heavy weight in Albania: the sector contributes about 18–19% of national GDP and employs over 37% of the workforce. These metrics differ from those of European Union countries, where agricultural employment and GDP contributions are several times lower.

High-Level Institutional Support

The opening plenary session featured strong backing from domestic policymakers and regional academic leaders:

Mr. Fatmir Guri (*Deputy Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, Albania*) described his participation as a privilege and an opportunity to contribute to one of the greatest challenges of our era: building a sustainable European agricultural model rooted in responsible and balanced resource management.

Ms. Elda Xhumari (*Deputy Minister of Environment, Albania*) emphasized the unbreakable link between farming and nature, noting that healthy soils, clean water, resilient forests, and functional ecosystems are not just environmental treasures, but the very foundation of long-term food security and economic growth.

Celebrating over 25 Years of Scientific Synergy

The President of the UEAA, Acad. Ioan Jelev, extended warm greetings on behalf of all European academies. He looked back at the Union's origins, referencing the foundational meeting held in Bologna on November 13–14, 1999, themed "*European Academies of Agriculture towards the year 2000.*" Initiated by the historic *Accademia dei Georgofili* of Florence, that early vision has matured into today's consolidated network of scientific excellence.



Photos from the Opening Plenary Session.

Additionally, Acad. Assoc. Prof. Fatbardh Sallaku (*Rector of the Agricultural University of Tirana*) expressed his gratitude and noted that this partnership successfully positions Tirana at the center of European agricultural dialogue. Broader regional solidarity and cross-border cooperation were further highlighted by institutional greetings from Acad. Fejzulla Krasniqi (*Vice-President of the Academy of Sciences and Arts of Kosovo*), and Acad. Ihor Hrynyk (*President of the National Academy of Agricultural Sciences of Ukraine*), who brought a vital message of scientific exchange to the forum.

Cutting-Edge Technical Presentations

The symposium showcased a masterclass in modern agricultural innovations, policy shifts, and biosecurity:

Gene Editing & Cropping Systems: Acad. Michel Thibier (*Académie d'Agriculture de France*) delivered a highly anticipated “*Update on Gene Editing in Agriculture in the EU*”, followed by Simone Orlandini (*Accademia dei Georgofili, Italy*), who analyzed “*Agronomic Innovations for the Sustainability of Cropping Systems*”.

Horticulture & AI Applications: Dr. Marieta Nesheva (*Institute of Horticulture, Bulgarian Agricultural Academy*) provided valuable insights into the “*Evaluation of European Plum (*Prunus domestica* L.) Cultivars for Sustainable Fruit Production*”, focusing on environment-compliant yields. Acad. Baiba Rivža (*President of the Academy of Agricultural and Forestry Sciences of Latvia*) followed with an online presentation mapping out “*Artificial Intelligence in Agriculture: The Case of Latvia*”.

Bioeconomy & Climate Adaptation: Dynamic remote sessions included Steliana Rodino (*Scientific Director of the Research Institute for Agricultural Economics and Rural Development, Bucharest*) speaking on “*Balancing Sustainable Agriculture and the Environment through Bioeconomy Approaches*”, and Martin Krokstorp (*Krokstorp Farm / Royal Swedish Academy of Agriculture and Forestry*) sharing real-world data on “*Conservation Agriculture in Southern Sweden*”.

One Health Perspectives: Bringing the focus back to pressing local biosecurity challenges, Prof. Xhelil Koleci (*Agricultural University of Tirana*) closed the speaker session with a critical look at “*Major Livestock Diseases in Albania: Current Status, Challenges and One Health Perspectives*”.

The symposium concluded with interactive audience discussions and a Q&A session, successfully strengthening transnational academic networks and establishing a clear, collaborative roadmap for climate-resilient farming models across Europe.

Acad. Nazim S. Gruda Elected UEAA President

The afternoon commenced with the Steering Committee meeting, led by outgoing President Acad. Ioan Jelev (Romania) alongside Acad. Nazim S. Gruda (Albania/Germany). The committee efficiently processed structural milestones, including the approval of previous minutes and an institutional review of the busy June–September 2026 period. Moreover, Acad. Ioan Jelev delivered a comprehensive report on the transformative achievements of the UEAA during the 2024–2026 period, paving the way for the election of the new executive body.

Afterwards, Acad. Ioan Jelev suggested Nazim Gruda to be the next president of the UEAA. In his laudation, he highlighted the honoree’s professional achievements and personal qualities, drawing on their earlier cooperation. He recognized him as a leading international authority in horticultural science, whose work combines scientific excellence, interdisciplinary research, and sustained societal impact. He also emphasized his contributions to the UEAA’s mission and European integration, concluding with personal reflections on his leadership and impact. The

assembly voted unanimously to elect Acad. Nazim Gruda as the new UEAA President, marking the formal transition of the Union's Presidency to the Academy of Sciences of Albania.

Joining him at the helm of the executive team is Prof. Dr. Simone Orlandini of Accademia dei Georgofili (Italy), elected Vice-President. He was nominated by Prof. Gruda, who emphasized his achievements and the collaborative spirit. To ensure balanced, highly collaborative governance, the assembly also elected 12 regular members and 7 observer members to the Steering Committee, representing diverse European academies.



Photos from the Steering Committee and Assembly Meeting

Looking ahead, the committee and assemble initiated the formation of new working group to craft the UEAA's overarching strategic roadmap for the next 4–5 years—a vital planning initiative that the newly elected Vice-President, Prof. Simone Orlandini, will spearhead. One priority will also be supporting the Young Scientists' Platform.

Looking ahead to future assemblies, the General Assembly officially established the venue for the next major milestone: the 2028 UEAA General Assembly will be hosted in Florence, Italy, by the prestigious *Accademia dei Georgofili*—returning the Union to the very roots where its foundational vision was first discussed in 1999.

The historic day concluded with a solemn gala dinner. The evening celebrated shared European values and scientific dedication, culminating in the presentation of official UEAA medals for the past and the elected president and certificates of gratitude to members of steering committee who have made outstanding contributions to agricultural, food, and environmental sciences across the continent.



Photo: Acad. Ioan Jelev, received the Medal and Certificate



During the Technical Tour the Agricultural Technology Transfer Center in Lushnjë, Albania

On the second day, the assembly translated theoretical models into field reality with an extensive technical excursion through the region's agricultural heartland. International delegates began their

journey with a guided visit to the Agricultural University of Tirana's research facilities and campus. The delegation then traveled to the Agricultural Technology Transfer Center in Lushnjë to examine regional research methodologies first-hand. The visits included research presentations and demonstrations, including a project supported by GIZ (Germany), and concluded with a cultural visit to the Ardenica Monastery.

These activities also received media coverage, both in Tirana and abroad. Below are a few links:

[Academy of Sciences of Tirana, Albania;](#)

[Accademia dei Georgofili, Italy;](#)

[Bulgarian Agricultural Academy;](#)

[Academy of Agricultural and Forestry Sciences “Gheorghe Ionescu-Șișești”, Romania;](#)

[Academy of Sciences and Arts of Kosovo;](#)

[Académie Veterinaire de France.](#)

With a newly ratified action plan for 2026–2028, a mandate to empower smaller nations, and fresh strategic working groups underway, the UEAA leaves Tirana stronger, more unified, and firmly prepared to navigate the agricultural challenges of tomorrow.

[Contribution of the Albanian Academy of Sciences](#)

[Editor-in-chief: Ioan Jelev, Past-president of UEAA](#)