



Toward a regional platform on Agroecology Territories for Climate and Green Agenda in the Western Balkan Countries

***Considering** and reflecting upon the insights gained during the "Skopje Encounter" held on December 12th and 13th, 2023, which focused on the nexus of Climate Change and Biodiversity through various discussions involving participants from six countries representing the point of view of different type of institutions and agency;*

***Acknowledging** the critical interconnections between climate change and biodiversity, as recognized internationally through collaborative efforts, especially the joint workshop between the IPCC and the IPBES and the implementation of related programs and, in our continent, the European Green Deal initiative and notably its Farm to Fork and Biodiversity elements;*

***Recalling** the Sofia Declaration and the Green Agenda for Western Balkans, along with its subsequent Action Plan;*

***Recognizing** our diverse roles as knowledge and territorial brokers, technical and scientific researchers, advocacy groups, farmers, environmental and nature conservationists, sustainable food advocates, rural development actors, organizations, practitioners, and associations;*

***Committed** to ensuring a sustainable future for the next generation, enhancing the wellbeing of people and nature, and recognizing the necessity of a just transition through sustainable development of territories;*

Declaration

The participants hereby declare their agreement and commitment to the following:

1. **Recognition of Agroecology Territories:** these are recognized within Western Balkan area as sites for a comprehensive approach in the implementation of the Green Agenda for Western Balkans. These territories are to be elevated as an alternative and transformative strategy at local, national, regional Balkan, and European levels.

2. **Role of Civil Society in the Green Agenda Action Plan:** A commitment to actively participate as civil society in the implementation of the Green Agenda Action Plan.
3. **Mission for a Regional Platform:** The establishment of a regional network of Agroecology Territories for Climate is identified as a primary step. This network will:
 - a. Embrace "nexus-thinking" to enhance understanding of challenges, utilize scientific and technical research, identify trade-offs in climate change or biodiversity solutions, and participate in relevant discussions at national, regional Balkan, and European levels.
 - b. Implement "nexus-action" through the coordination of identified agroecology territories (sites) with existing or developing agroecological strategies.
4. **Formation of the Founding Network:** The network is envisioned as an inclusive group of agroecology territories, open to suggestions from participants for individuals, institutions, or territories that can strengthen the network's vision.
5. **Ongoing Collaboration and Resource Mobilization:** Participants agree to maintain relationships among themselves, including those unable to join but expressing strong interest, and to explore opportunities for acquiring necessary resources to realize the network's vision.
6. **The participants agree to**
 - (*) maintain the relations among them (and the persons and institutions that did not have the possibility to join us but expressed their strong interest for the move)
 - (**) to explore the possibilities to acquire necessary resources to implement the vision of the network
7. **Open Invitation**

This declaration is open for signature and implementation to all interested parties who share the vision and objectives outlined herein.

*The founding network is conceived as an open group of agroecology territories, [to refer to the previous def].
All participants have the possibility to propose individuals, institutions or territories that strengthen the network vision.*