LIFE ShepForBio

2nd online Discussion Forum with the Network of Pastoral Schools

Report

Contents

1. Introduction 3

2. Session 1: "What options for setting up a platform to share pastoral knowledge?" 3

3. Session 2: Discussing cross-regional and international initiatives and networks of pastoralism promotion 5

4. Conclusions and next steps 6

5. Annex: Resources shared during the meeting 8

1. Introduction

On the 22nd of February 2024, the Second Discussion Forum with European pastoral schools took place online. This event series connects pastoral schools and relevant actors, stakeholders and networks promoting pastoral practices across Europe, fostering the exchange of knowledge, best practices, and challenges among the attendants, with the ultimate aim to establish a network of European pastoral schools.

The meeting was structured around **two sessions**, firstly exploring opportunities to establish a **platform for the exchange of pastoral knowledge** as well as a network of schools. Secondly, the meeting discussed different **cross-regional and international initiatives active in the promotion of pastoralism**, allowing for various contributions from the participants.

In this document, you will find a summary of the presentations given by the speakers. After each session, you can find encapsulated contributions from the audience in the form of questions and answers (Q&A) or interventions. You can follow the code:

- **Q** = Question;
- **A** = Answer;
- **I** = Intervention.

The event reached in total 73 participants, of which 3 involved in the event organisation and 6 speakers. Tommaso Campedelli (D.r.e.am. Italia) and Beatrice Bellavia (Euromontana) organised and facilitated the meeting.

2. Session 1: "What options for setting up a platform to share pastoral knowledge?"

After welcoming the participants and presenting the agenda, Beatrice Bellavia (Communications and Project officer for Euromontana) gave the floor to Tommaso Campedelli, Coordinator of ShepForBio (D.R.E.AM. Italia) for an introduction about the project. Campedelli illustrated the rationale behind a survey launched in November: the first LIFE ShepForBio international conference in Florac made it clear that knowledge exchange and sharing was a crucial need at European level to bring pastoral schools and training centres together. Some participants proposed the set-up of a "knowledge-sharing platform" to encourage the emergence of a European network of pastoral schools and training centres. The survey was hence launched to collect opinions about its possible structure. **You can compile the survey here.**

A preliminary overview of the answers highlighted that the platform should work as a repository of training materials as well as a space for discussion and advocacy for pastoral activities. It should contain information and best practices around pastoral activities and education and promote relevant events. It should target both schools and other actors, relying mostly on public funds and resources from the pastoral schools.

Afterwards, **Juan Luis Gázquez Guerrero** (manager of Fundación Monte Mediterráneo) took the floor to introduce the Eu4Shepherds project. The full presentation can be found here. The project established a training platform available in multiple languages containing 11 different modules ranging from risk management to animal welfare and marketing. Each module is followed by a self-assessment tool. The platform will be completed for launch in a couple months and will remain public for three years.

For further information, you can reach out to juanluis@fundacionmontemediterraneo.com

Martina Slámová (Teacher and researcher at Technical University in Zvolen - UNESCO Department for Ecological Awareness and Sustainable Development) illustrated another example of a platform developed within the TRANSFARM Erasmus project. The full presentation is available here. The platform contains an E-Reference book with reports about the state-of-the-art in transhumance in 9 different countries and a Summary Report on vocational education and training for transhumance practitioners. Another section is dedicated to best practices from successful transhumance practitioners. Online training modules will be launched too with a self-evaluation tools. Finally, a workshop will take place on 23 March

For further information, and if you are interested in helping the project testing the modules and tools, you can reach out to slamova@tuzvo.sk

Contributions from participants (Q&A):

Q: How to practically address the issue of:

- Different languages
- And different working conditions in the involved countries? Do you have a system where you can compare the different job titles across countries?

A1: The TRANSFARM project faced language challenges, requiring expertise and fluency in English. Partners translated materials, but maintaining consistent terminology was difficult. They created a glossary initially lacking some terms, now open for updates.

A2: In the Eu4Shepherds project, the languages of the countries involved in the project are there. The platform was translated by the project partners.

Q: Were the workshops organised by TRANSFARM only between experts and scientists?

A: The workshops hosted experts from academia, participants from vocational training schools, students, practitioners from case studies, NGOs coordinating shepherds and transhumant practitioners, and governmental representatives. Numerous topics were discussed, requiring further meetings to delve into them.

Finally, **Luis Miguel Sanabria** (Economist and founder of Edintra Consulting) provided an overview and an update on the ongoing tentative establishment of a network of European shepherd schools with specific focus in the Mediterranean region. The full presentation is available here. Moving from the Braga meeting in 2022, Sanabria presented the short-term priorities and the next steps of the process. For more information about what discussed, you can contact lmsanabria@edintra.es

Contributions from participants (Q&A):

Q: The question inquired the percentages of trainees who become shepherds after two or three years post-training, the percentage of existing shepherds attending the schools mentioned, and the percentage of new attendees from diverse backgrounds.

A: Unfortunately, no consistent monitoring process is applied in the Andalusia shepherd school, if not in an informal way, unlike the Catalonia shepherd school which has a real monitoring system. More cooperation among schools could improve these mechanisms too.

3. Session 2: Discussing cross-regional and international initiatives and networks of pastoralism promotion

The second session dived deeper into several initiatives that promote pastoralism at a cross-regional or international scale.

Tamara Mitrofanenko (Senior Expert on Education for sustainable development at the United Nations Environment Programme Vienna Office) kicked off the session introducing the Carpathian Convention and its role in empowering traditional pastoral practices in the Carpathians. The full presentation is available here. The Working Group on sustainable agricultural and rural development integrated Pastoralism and Transhumance as a priority in different activities, as exalted by the partnership with the International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists 2026. Plus, an online meeting is planned on 12 March 2024 on the Empowerment of Pastoralist women in mountain regions. For further information you can contact tamara.mitrofanenko@un.org

The floor was then given to **Francesca Pasetti Bombardella** (Co-chair Regional IYRP 2026 Support Group Europe, Focal Point Spain for the Nomination Transhumance UNESCO ICH) who provided an

overview of the various steps leading to the declaration of Transhumance UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage and described the initiative IYRP 2026 with its rationale and planned focus activities. Finally, she briefly presented the Transhumances and Transitions UNESCO Club with its actions and structure, as well as the Erasmus Plus Project "Eco TransH" dedicated to international cooperation among students discovering transhumance practices. The full presentation is available here. For more information, you can reach out to fpasettib@gmail.com

Finally, **Lauren Mosdale** (Project manager at CIPRA France) presented the activities of the International Commission for the Protection of the Alps, with a special focus on the project "Dialogues on wolves – strengthening shepherds' networks in the Alps" aimed at creating an alpine-wide overview of shepherds. The initiative compiles a small Alpine Lexicon of Pastoralism in German French Italian and Slovenian and will develop a test training course for shepherds. The full presentation is available here. For more information, you can reach out to lauren.mosdale@cipra.org

4. Conclusions and next steps

The final round of closing statements highlighted:

- Enthusiasm for the next steps and further **collaborations for the activities planned for the IYRP 2026;**
- Outlines for steps forward at some national levels (e.g. Romania) for creating a network of trainers, and integrate pastoral practices in formal education programs, with particular attention to bridging the **gap between formal and informal education**;
- Reinforced attention to communication, promotion, transmission and international partnerships on pastoralism.
- About the importance of connections with policymakers, a big EU program "**Rural areas of Europe (Terre Rurali d'Europa T.r.E.)** is developing as a bottom-up project involving local communities, municipalities, regions and ministries of culture, agriculture and environment in five countries with the intention to open to all EU.

Contributions from participants:

I: The valorisation of pastoralism can become an **alternative to the development of ski resorts**. Further valorisation of mountain products is a common goal, along with counteracting mountain abandonement from the local populations.

I: Pastinnova involves 21 partners all over the **Mediterranean area**, focusing on pastoral schools as crucial innovations to support pastoralism. A survey conducted by PastInnova through interviews and stakeholder contacts underscores the growing importance of pastoral schools in

the Mediterranean. Today's discussion is pivotal for the future of pastoralism, aiming to promote the establishment of new pastoral schools and disseminate common ideas across Europe. **Engaging with EU policymakers is essential**, connecting projects like Life, Prima, and Horizon with policymakers to advocate for innovative pastoralism. Collaboration between Spain, Italy, and other partners like Rete Appia is emphasized to build a network and directly advocate for pastoralism's importance in the economy and other sectors, as outlined in a forthcoming report.

I: The Carpathian Biosphere Reserve in **Ukraine** is a scientific institution promotes sustainable development in the region with membership in the UNESCO World Network of Biosphere Reserves, protecting part of a UNESCO heritage site spanning 3,000 hectares of highland pastures with many sheeps grazing. The **nature of these pastures is seasonal**, they are integral to the ecosystem but faced challenges such as negative ecological consequences due to intensive farming and invasive species. To mitigate these issues, they advocated for **nature protection measures connected with pastoralism activities**, including regulating animal numbers per hectare to ensure ecosystem health. Other challenges include degradation of meadows, invasive species and floods. Despite economic challenges and the ongoing conflict, efforts have been made to maintain pastoralism as an important economic factor while preserving the mountainous ecosystem and to use the biosphere as a demonstration. The speaker stressed community engagement, educational outreach, and participation in conservation projects, underscoring the cultural and heritage significance of pastoral activities in the region. However, they noted a lack of formal training opportunities for shepherds, expressing a commitment to disseminating knowledge and advocating for educational initiatives within local communities.

I: **Romania** would benefit from a **national network of professional training providers** to be part of a European network of pastoral schools, and is ready to gather similar experiences from other countries.

I: Shepherds face a **shortage of workforce**, with hiring being too expensive in Italy. Many rely on volunteer platforms like Workaway and Wwoof, though they require follow-ups as volunteers are not trained. There is great value in having interns from pastoral schools, highlighting their training and motivation. This suggests a priority for the network described by Luis Miguel: implementing an **exchange program for both students and herders through internships**.

I: Cruciality for the creation of pastoral schools to include in the curriculum **local knowledge** and traditional sustainable practices along with engaging local experts practising pastoralism.

5. Annex: Resources shared during the meeting

Following direct requests from the meeting participants, here we list all the resources, initiatives and events that have been mentioned during the forum.

Eu4Shepherds	Project	https://www.eu4shepherds.eu/
Eu4Shepherds Tarining platform	Project outcome	https://training.eu4shepherds.eu/es/catalogue
TRANSFARM	Project	https://transfarm-erasmus.eu/
TRANSFARM E-reference book	Project outcome	https://training.transfarm-erasmus.eu/e-reference-book
PastInnova	Project	https://pastinnova.eu/
Dialogues on wolves – strengthening shepherds' networks in the Alps	Project	https://www.cipra.org/en/cipra/international/projects/current/dialogues-on-wolves-2013-strengthening-shepherds2019-networks-in-the-alps
Eco TransH	Project	https://ecotransh.com/
Rural lands of Europe - Terre Rurali D'Europa (T.r.e.)	EU Programme for an Integral Rural Development	https://iyrp.info/sites/iyrp.org/files/Madrid%20Meeting%20ICH%20IYRP%20Oct%202022.pdf
CIPRA France	Organisation	https://www.cipra.org/fr/cipra/france
Fundación Monte Mediterraneo	Organisation	https://www.fundacionmontemediterraneo.com/
Carpathian Convention	Network	http://www.carpathianconvention.org/
International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists 2026	Initiative	https://iyrp.info/
Carpathian Biosphere Reserve	Natural reserve	https://en.unesco.org/biosphere/eu-na/carpathian
Transhumances and Transitions UNESCO Club	Club	https://www.linkedin.com/showcase/club-unesco-transhumance-transitions/
Empowerment of Pastoralist women in mountain regions	Event	https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZEqcuuorz8oEtEBzjPjGy4WbgkatFsZG

		Ta5?_x_zm_rtaid=Vw7Y9EczR2mufgYxu-2IDw.1709117418730.848d8178fd340133ec5ace780a1fda6a&_x_zm_rhtaid=160#/registration
Working Group on sustainable agricultural and rural development (Carpathian Convention)	Group	http://www.carpathianconvention.org/wg-sard/
Edintra Consulting	Company	http://edintra.es/en/
Map of Alpine Pastoralism Actors	Mapping	https://www.atlas.alpconv.org/layers/geonode_data:geonode:ShepherdsNetworkCIPRA
Uncertainty and The Pastoral schools in the expanded European Region	Working Paper	https://dream-italia-euprj.eu/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/3.05.2023-WP-2023_33.pdf
Advanced course: Innovations for sustainable Mediterranean pastoral systems	Training (Summer school)	https://edu.iamz.ciheam.org/PastoralSystems/en/