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EU4SUPA NEWSLETTER

Issue 2 — July 2026

European Union for Sustainable Pastoralism | Erasmus+ KA220-VET

EU4SUPA Joins Europe's Mountain Community at the XIV European Mountain Convention, a leading forum on mountain territories to promote sustainable pastoralism, strengthen European cooperation, and contribute to discussions on the future of extensive livestock farming.

Sallanches, France 30 June – 2 July 2026

The EU4SUPA Erasmus+ project participated in the XIV European Mountain Convention, held in Sallanches (Haute-Savoie), France, from 30 June to 2 July 2026. Organized under the theme “From Pastures to Policies: Ensuring the Future of Extensive Livestock Farming in Mountain Territories”, and within the framework of the 2026 International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists, the Convention brought together policymakers, researchers, pastoral organizations, farmers and practitioners from across Europe to explore the challenges and opportunities shaping the future of mountain pastoralism. [From Pastures to Policies: EU4SUPA Joins Europe's Mountain Community at the XIV European Mountain Convention – Dream Italia.](#)



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PARTNERS



Living Lab · Salamón, Spain — Predators and Deterrent Systems organized by Cesefor

4 July 2026 · Salamón, Castilla y León

Shepherds, technicians, and researchers, set out to work in Salamón (León) for the 2nd Living Lab of the project, with a clear objective: to share real experiences on how to protect extensive livestock farming against major predators.

The session, following the presentations by Félix García ("Shepherd Dogs: Seven Centuries of Guarding Merinosque") and Laura Ortiz from Cesefor, was organized into 3 participatory work sessions:

 Session 1 · Mastiff and guard dogs: field experiences, used breeds, number of dogs per herd, and their real effectiveness.

 Session 2 · Fencing structures, night kennels, and other physical barriers: which structures work better and at what cost.

 Session 3 · Monitoring and recording of camera trap footage, data collection, and protocols for attacks and presence of predators.

Each group drew their own conclusions on the field, providing practical knowledge that only those who live the daily pastoral work can share. 



Organized by: @fcsefor @montemediterraneo · Collaboration: Salamón Neighborhood Council

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Living Lab Rhodope Mountains, Bulgaria "Pryadoy", a Living Tradition, organized by University of Plovdiv

5 July 2026 · Traditional dairy, Smolyan region

A day later and further east, EU4SUPA moved to a traditional Rhodope dairy in the Smolyan region, hosted by local farmers together with the Agricultural University of Plovdiv. The event centred on "pryadoy" — also known locally as predoy, sdoy, mandra, otbiv or zamyarvane — an authentic ritual practised in the Rhodope Mountains since ancient times.

At the start of summer, once several owners' flocks have been brought together into one herd on the high pastures, each shepherd milks their own animals within the shared flock. The yield is measured and recorded, determining how much milk each family will receive throughout the whole milking season — a traditional, community-based system of trust and fair sharing that has kept small flocks economically viable for generations.

Participants also discussed why this model matters beyond tradition: extensive grazing supports biodiversity and natural pasture regeneration, helps conserve local genetic resources in situ — such as the Karakachan sheep breed — improves soil health without overgrazing, and keeps alive traditional dairy-making skills, from the sheepskin milk vessel to handmade cheese. As in Spain, participants also raised the shared challenge of large carnivores and livestock losses.



Presented by Assoc. Prof. Atanas Vuchkov, Agricultural University of Plovdiv.

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What these Living Labs are building toward

- A permanent European Network for Sustainable Pastoralism, connecting shepherds, technicians and training institutions from Spain, Italy, Bulgaria, Romania and Austria.
- A 120-hour Sustainable Pastoralism training curriculum.
- A validated online training programme, on an active e-learning platform.
- A Pasture and Rangeland Labs Guide — a methodology to design and replicate Living Labs anywhere in Europe.
- Best Practices Documentation on sustainable pastoralism in participant regions to preserve and spread knowledge through audiovisual means.

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