

Introduction to the TRANSFARM European project about transhumance and sustainable land management

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Abstract:

The TRANSFARM project is co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union (KA220-VET, Cooperation partnerships in vocational education and training). It is taking place from December 2021 to June 2024. The objective of this article is to describe the project itself and to present the project partners. The aims of the project are introduced as well as activities for implementation. Links where to find further information about the project are provided.

Keywords: Case Studies, Erasmus+, European Agricultural Landscapes, Sustainable Land Management, Training Modules, Transhumance, Vocational Education and Training

Article:

What is TRANSFARM?

‘Vocational Education & Training for Transhumance Practitioners’ [TRANSFARM] is an innovative education project for practitioners. The acronym represents the contraction of Transhumance and Farming. Transhumance is a farming system that comprises seasonal movement with livestock between fixed summer and winter pastures. It is a prevalent but rarely noticed form of agricultural land use across Europe. Transhumance can be considered not only a sustainable way of land management; it also presents answers to urgent societal challenges. Attractive landscapes may help fostering rural tourism and development. Traditional farming systems can contribute to sustainable rural areas ecologically, economically, culturally and socially. Nevertheless, transhumance practitioners might be at risk of exclusion from life-long learning due to their place of residence, the movement inherent in transhumance and the often not easy to access place of work. Moreover, their daily working life has changed a lot through the last decades and transhumance practitioners are facing new challenges. Thus, the aim of TRANSFARM to develop Vocational Education and Training (VET) provides an important opportunity to access information and education for this profession.



Source: Hungary, Puzta, A. Kruse



Source: Western Norway, K. Potthoff

Remote location of workplaces may result in the exclusion of transhumance practitioners from life-long learning

Project's partners

The TRANSFARM project consortium comprises seven partners that cover different regions of Europe: Mediterranean region (Greece, Italy, Spain), Central Europe (Belgium, Germany), Eastern Europe (Slovakia) and Northern Europe (Norway). All partners are closely linked to rural areas and complement each other. In order to complete the partnership and to provide even more European data, associated partners from Poland, Norway and France are part of the project.

The Norwegian University of Life Sciences (NMBU, Norway) which is leading the project is a higher education institution comprising seven faculties. The overarching focus of research and teaching of NMBU is on sustainability.

The Technical University Zvolen (TUZVO, Slovakia) is a public education and research infrastructure. TUZVO is the biggest research and education infrastructure in Slovakia and focuses among other topics on cultural landscapes, landscape planning and management.

The Institute for Research on European Agricultural Landscapes e.V. (EUCALAND) (European Culture expressed in Agricultural Landscapes) (Germany) is a non-profit association. EUCALAND is a European network of experts, which deals with cultural and agricultural landscapes of Europe. It describes and collects data about, for example, the history, development and characteristics of agricultural landscapes as well as picture and map material in a European database. Developing the database is a continuing process (<http://feal-future.org/eatlas/>). Within TRANSFARM, EUCALAND enriches the national data with contributions from Czechia, France, Hungary, and Italy.

Hof und Leben GmbH (HuL, Germany) is an independent, private consulting company that concentrates on the counselling of family farms. HuL advises all types of agricultural farms and is, among other topics, specialised in farm successions – smoothly planned handover – as well as in the compatibility of secondary employment such as part-time farmer.

The Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (AUTH, Greece) is the largest university in Greece and offers training and research in fields such as the ecology and conservation management of

rangeland ecosystems. The Laboratory of Rangeland Ecology (LARE) has collected profound data, including maps about transhumance routes, history and cultural meaning of transhumance.

OnProjects (OnP, Spain) focuses on the counselling of enterprises, associations, public and other promoters in the administration, supervision and evaluation of publicly funded projects. OnP has a wide experience in VET and rural development related projects and provides data about transhumance in Spain.

The European Landowners Organization (ELO, Belgium) is a non-profit umbrella organisation representing the interests of landowners, farmers and foresters as well as rural entrepreneurs at the European level. Within TRANSFARM, ELO is responsible for dissemination, public awareness, and multiplier events.



Source: France, Pyrenees, A. Kruse



Source: Greece, Aetia Grevena, M. Karatassiou

Different types of animals are involved in transhumance

Aims of the project

The project is co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union (KA220-VET, KA220-VET, Cooperation partnerships in vocational education and training) and takes place from December 2021 to May 2024. It aims at developing training material that provides especially young farmers and rural entrepreneurs who want to start with and/or maintain transhumance with skills and knowledge to better address the changing challenges and new demands of their job.

To make the access to training easier, training materials will be available under a creative commons license allowing their use and distribution free of charges.

The first objective of the project is to provide an overview about the current situation of transhumance in the partners' countries. Information about transhumance is scattered, not readily available and not prepared for comparison.

The second project objective is to collect case studies of best practice that convey the experiences of successful transhumance practitioners from different European countries.

The third objective is to develop digital training material for transhumance practitioners consisting of e-learning modules, covering, for example, general information about transhumance in different countries and a database of case studies of best practice assembled in an easily accessible way for self-learning.

Project activities

In order to reach its aim, the TRANSFARM project is running a wide range of activities including research, compilation of data and case studies, elaboration of the training modules but also various dissemination activities.

The project partners are collecting data on transhumance in their respective countries in order to develop an overview at the European level, which will be accessible in **National Reports** produced within the project. Experience has shown that it is important that various stakeholders speak a common language; therefore, TRANSFARM produces a glossary translated into 11 languages, about terms related to

- Transhumance as activity
- People practising transhumance
- Transhumance animals
- Land on which transhumance is practiced, including buildings
- Transhumance landscapes and transhumance related landscape elements.

The **Case Studies** collected by the partners will enable transhumance practitioners to see various examples from different European countries and about different forms of transhumance facing similar challenges.

As a next step of the project, the **Training Modules** will be developed, tested and then made available to all farmers interested in starting with and/or maintaining transhumance.

Last but not least, all along project dissemination activities will be conducted, such as presence on social media, workshops, conferences and publications about the project.

Where to find information about the TRANSFARM project?

The project has a website and a Twitter account:

<https://transfarm-erasmus.eu>

@eu_transfarm