

OBJECTIVES

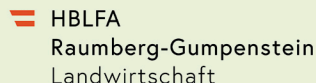
The main objectives of EU4Shepherds are:

- To improve and update the training offer for extensive shepherds taking into account current barriers (administrative and legislative, economic or logistical obstacles), threats (e.g. new climate scenarios and their consequences), and opportunities (ecological production trends, agro tourism, etc...) to ensure sustainable, extensive livestock management systems.
- To adapt the training methods (both for trainers and trainees) towards a work-based learning system in order to ensure the sustainability of the profession and of extensive livestock management in rural areas.
- To provide easy and widespread access to training, and to promote the use of digital tools for training.
- To promote recognition of the social, ecological and animal welfare values that shepherds give to our society, and their importance in challenging depopulation in rural areas, unsustainable food and material production, biodiversity loss and climate change.



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EU4
Shepherds



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EU4SHEPHERDS – INNOVATIVE TRAINING FOR SUSTAINABLE SHEPHERDS



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THE PROJECT

Extensive livestock management systems are crucial for the sustainable maintenance of important rural areas in Europe. These models form the basis of ecological, social and economic sustainability:

- They help to halt depopulation of rural areas and have a positive impact on animal well-being and human health when compared to other non-extensive models.
- These models supply consumers with quality food and material products in many European territories and promote the sustainable development of our society.

The future of such livestock exploitation models, currently under threat due to the effects of climate change, economic and administrative barriers, depends on the availability and capacity of extensive shepherds. The problem is that it is increasingly difficult to find well trained shepherds who have the knowledge, experience and flexibility to face all the aspects involved in extensive livestock shepherding. Shepherds are generally an ageing social group in Europe. It can be difficult for young people to access proper training, education and experience, and nowadays there is often less motivation to become a shepherd due to the low economic returns and rural working conditions.

EXPECTED RESULTS

The expected results of EU4Shepherds are:

- A European review of the situation of extensive shepherding in Europe.
- Strengthening shepherds' employability by adding updated technical knowledge, new managerial and business competences, and digital skills to their traditional knowledge and experience.
- Development of adapted training methodologies and digital tools to facilitate access to proper training.
- Increased number of professional shepherds as key allies to improve social and environmental conditions in marginal rural areas; promoting sustainable models with positive impacts on: climate change and biodiversity loss, social resilience (rural employment creation and promoting diversity in the workplace), and cultural status (social recognition of the value of shepherding as a profession).
- Promoting and reinforcing the link between pastoralism and rural development.
- Involving key actors in the promotion and implementation of the project results in a range of areas.

Innovative outputs for the improvement of training content and methods:

- A new curriculum with a complete and updated course for shepherds based around a European framework, including both technical and cross-cutting topics to ensure the sustainable economical, social and environmental maintenance of extensive livestock systems.
- A manual for the flexible implementation of the course incorporating a work-based learning approach, aimed at both trainers and trainees needs (a methodology for trainers).
- The development of an online training platform highlighting best practice methodologies and case studies, and allowing shepherds, livestock managers and trainers across Europe to share learning techniques and experiences.



The results of this project will allow EU4Shepherds to prepare a common framework for a future European Certificate for Shepherds.