



Agropuka Association  
Lagjja e Re, Nr.8  
Puka, Albania

Puka, 18 May 2022

**Dear Prime Minister,**

**We, a partner organisation to We Effect, write to you to express our deep concerns of the decision to dramatically cut Sweden's official development assistance.**

The war in Ukraine has underlined how severely vulnerable groups are affected in times of crisis. Already enduring the economic effects of the Covid-19 pandemic and the climate crisis, the people, especially the poorest, are now suffering from skyrocketing food prices. The world is in the worst humanitarian situation since World War II.

We, in Albania, bear witness to this. With this in mind, the historic and tragic decision to cut the development assistance will impact us in unprecedented ways. For us, the cut has drastic implications/effects. This means:

**More limited advocacy and lobbying for the needs and rights of members of the farmers' association, women and rural communities.**

The population in Northeastern Albania lacks power and influence. Participation in local decision-making is very low, leading to voices unheard of by the authorities. Advocacy concepts and practices are not common. People are not informed and educated to defend their rights and to act as free individuals. Our organization aims to bring the problems of farmers and rural support communities closer to the government through successful advocacy and lobbying practices. Fund reduction will exacerbate the situation by bringing in more limited advocacy and lobbying practices.

**Reducing the contribution of the organization in increasing the capacity of farmers to produce agricultural and livestock products that meet the needs and market standards.**

Our organization focuses on and supports the rural population of Northern Albania, an area with over 600,000 inhabitants, the poorest area of Albania, with an average income below the poverty line, or less than \$ 5.5 per capita per day. The war in Ukraine has negatively affected the economy of our country, especially agriculture in the North. Farmers can not afford to buy oil because its price to plough the land has increased by over 60%. Farmers are also being affected by rising prices for agricultural inputs, or seedlings. Reducing development support funds would interrupt our work in the middle, as well as significantly reduce the organization's support for increasing farmers' capacity to produce agricultural products.

**Reduction of training for farmers, business management and financial services.**

North-eastern Albania is the remotest mountainous area and the poorest region of Albania, with deep economic problems. Farmers have a low level of knowledge in relation to market operations, marketing of agricultural products, price / labor market policies, calculations cost and business planning. Training and advice on agriculture, livestock, agriculture mechanization and infrastructure are one of the main supporting objectives of the organization. The reduction of development support funds will lead to more limited support of the organization in addressing these issues, and consequently a lack of business capacity development of members of rural communities.

Dear Magdalena, as Sweden's prime minister and leader of your government, we know you are a strong believer in international solidarity. We can't thank you enough for the support your country has given in the past.

We now encourage you to stand with us in these desperate times and re-evaluate the decision to cut development assistance, to make sure that the consequences of the war in Ukraine and the climate crisis will be as limited as possible.

Show your full support to civil society organisations and people in poverty that we support. Your financial support is needed more than ever. It is a long-term investment in a more sustainable and just world.

We look forward to your reply.

Sabah Djaloshi

Agropuka Executive Director