

TRANSHUMANCE IS RECOGNIZED AS INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE IN SPAIN

In April 2017 the Spanish Government declared [the Transhumance as Intangible Cultural Heritage](#) of the country. The Act formalizes the resolution already taken in 2015 by the [General Direction of Arts and Cultural Heritage, Archives and Libraries](#) anticipating and steering this declaration of the Spanish Government.

The Transhumance, or moving livestock by shepherds to profit from natural local pastures is a practice developed for centuries in Spain. The grazing breeds included cattle, sheep and goats and their by-products consisted of meat, wool and dairy products.

The network of livestock roads, through which cattle were bred according to the temporal availability of fodder resources in each location, reached a length of 125.000 Km at the beginning of the XXI century, covering a surface of more than 400.000 ha. This grazing livestock activity has created an extensive system of social, economic and biological interrelations throughout the country.

The Act of the Spanish Government recognizes that the transhumant activity has originated a rich cultural and ethnographic heritage, as represented in festivals and traditions, in gastronomy and all the architecture related to this activity. Also manifestations of oral tradition, craftsmanship and techniques of traditional grazing, as well as the management of pastures regulated under customary law are key elements that the transhumant culture contributed to transmit in its mobility through the different and distant territories.

The Spanish Network of Livestock Roads has also been declared by the Council of Europe as European Natural and Cultural Route.

With these national and international recognitions, it is underlined in Spain the will to preserve this heritage and to use it in the future in terms of sustainable development from a cultural, economic, environmental and social point of view. In particular, the resolution of 2015 mentions that the actions to safeguard transhumance include both their traditional dimension and the different aspects of this modality of livestock development of livestock today.

The [Platform for extensive livestock and pastoralism](#) of Spain widely values this national recognition to the transhumance, which is part of its action to promote an environmental friendly cattle husbandry.



Transhumance is by its nature a form of organic livestock, whose economic logic is to take advantage of natural grazing areas for cattle, reducing the use of other foods. In addition, the passage of livestock increases the fertility of soils incorporating manure and other vegetables and generates positive effects for the flora, by contributing to seed dispersal. The passage of livestock contributes to the development of forests and helps to reduce the risk of wildfires as the animals feed on the inflammable material that accumulates in the soil. This activity also preserves biodiversity and protects many adapted species and breeds that risk to disappear.

Another aspect that places transhumance among the modern tendencies of livestock is the valorisation and modernization of the role of the shepherds as agents of an ecological and cultural development. The texts of the resolutions mention the set of knowledge related to pastoralism, which represent an important inheritance to implement ecological practices in the extensive cattle models.

The schools of pastors that take place in different regions of Spain are an example of initiatives that value this heritage of knowledge and update it from the technical, social and cultural point of view in order to generate interest in young people to assume this office in a modern perspective of attention to agroecology, biodiversity and food sovereignty.

From the international point of view, the Earth Summit held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 recognizes transhumant grazing and recommends its protection. United Nations are developing projects in support of grazing in many different countries and regions. FAO manages a knowledge hub on pastoralism. UNESCO has recognized as World Heritage the territories of different countries that included transhumance among the activities to be safeguarded. The European Union recognizes that livestock breeders have a role of protection and development of the environment, favouring extensive livestock farming and the use of traditional grazing systems in harmony with the natural environment.

Recognizing transhumance as a national heritage Spain is among the pioneer countries in the promotion of these new approaches to livestock in the framework of sustainable development.

To know more

[Real Decreto 2017 Trashumancia como manifestación representativa dl Patrimonio Cultural Inmaterial](#)

[Resolución 2015 Dirección General de Bellas Artes y Bienes Culturales](#)

[Plataforma por la ganadería extensiva y el pastoralismo](#)

[Ganaderia extensiva in Facebook](#)

[Trashumancia in the Botanico de Madrid website](#)



[Asociación trashumancia y naturaleza](#)

[Trashumancia in slowfood.es website](#)

[Trashumancia in ecologiaverde.com](#)

[Trashumancia viva in Facebook](#)

[Conltrashumancia.blogspot](#)

[European Forum on Nature Conservation and Pastoralism](#)

[Shepherds European network website](#)

[Escuela de pastores](#)

[Agropastoralism mediterranean UNESCO](#)

[Transhumance in Spain in Wikipedia](#)

