



**International Virtual Workshop: Women Rising in STEM – Leadership,  
Innovation & Confidence**



**6 March 2026 | 09:00–13:00 CET**

**Albanian Academy of Science is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.  
Time: Mar 6, 2026 09:00 AM Budapest  
Join Zoom Meeting**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88347232960?pwd=aA1wcJPmCikhuDYFSfUqBaXFWpD7ak.1>

**Meeting ID: 883 4723 2960**  
**Passcode: 378077**

**On March 6, in celebration of International Women’s Day, we hosted an inspiring international virtual workshop dedicated to women in STEM.**

The event brought together outstanding speakers who shared their journeys, research achievements, and valuable insights on leadership, innovation, and breaking barriers in science.

### **Goal and Impact**


The workshop aimed to inspire, empower, and connect women in STEM by highlighting research excellence, leadership pathways, and interdisciplinary innovation across countries and disciplines.

Through engaging discussions and personal stories, the event fostered meaningful connections and reinforced the importance of collaboration, diversity, and mutual support in advancing science.

**AWIN / Albanian Academy of Science / Nanobalkan**

### **International Virtual Workshop**

### **Women Rising in STEM: Leadership, Innovation & Confidence**

- ✓ **Women in STEM 2026**
- ✓ *Inspiring Talks on Leadership, Diversity & Innovation*  
 **March 6, 2026 | International Women’s Day**
  
- ✓ March 6, 2026, was not just a Workshop — it was a statement. A statement that women belong at the forefront of science, innovation, leadership, and discovery.
- ✓ **6 Marsi 2026 nuk ishte thjesht një Workshop — ishte një mesazh i fortë që gratë i përkasin vijës së parë të shkencës, inovacionit dhe lidërsipit.**
  
- ✓ **Core Message**  
**“Women support other women.”**

**“Women empower women – Men empower equality.”**

Under this message, the workshop brought together **inspiring voices from academia, industry, and global leadership**, creating a space for meaningful dialogue and shared experiences.

## **Impact and Inspiration**

Through powerful stories of **resilience, ambition, and impact**, the workshop highlighted that:

We are defined not only by our achievements, but also by how we uplift others.

## **Organization**

This international workshop was organized by:

- **Dr. Gjylje Hoti**  
Assistant Professor, BioSinFin Project  
University of Turin, Italy
- **Dr. Marinela Barçi**  
Principal Investigator, Belgium

In collaboration with:

- **Academy of Sciences of Albania**
- **AWIN (Albanian Women in Nanotechnology)**
- **nanoBalkan Regional Center**

✦ Organized in celebration of **International Women’s Day 2026**

## **Speakers & Timestamps**

Opening with a truly global spirit, the workshop brought together participants from all corners of the world, exchanging greetings across time zones and celebrating unity in diversity.

The International Virtual Workshop was officially opened by **Dr. Gjylje Hoti**, who emphasized the importance of authenticity and realism when sharing personal and professional journeys—regardless of origin.

She highlighted:

- the value of diversity and inclusion
- the essential role of mutual support

- the importance of collaboration between women and men in advancing science

Dr. Hoti underscored that women’s contributions to science grow stronger when supported by both women and men, reinforcing a culture of shared progress.

In the spirit of the event, her opening conveyed a powerful message:

*Through generosity, kindness, inspiration, and connection, we build a better future—one where women rise, and humanity rises with them.*

## Special Thanks To

### Special Guests

- **Prof. Arben Merkoçi (00:07:45)**  
**“Supporting Women Strengthens Science”**  
 A call to move from inspiration to **real scientific collaboration.**  
*ICREA Professor, ICN2, Spain; nanoBalkan Coordinator*
- **Dr. Ardian Jusufi (01:12:37–01:27:40)**  
**“Diversity Enables Discovery – Reflections on Inclusion and Resilience in Academic Practice”**  
*Group Leader, University of Zürich, Switzerland*  
*(This segment is not included in the published YouTube video)*
- **Dr. Visar Vela**  
*Founder, PhD Circle, Zürich, Switzerland*  
*(Special support as part of the audience)*

### Invited Speakers

- **Dr. Katrin J. Yuan (00:13:33–00:32:45)**  
**“The Intelligence Crisis: Why Your AI Strategy Is Only Half-Blind Without Women”**  
*CEO, Board Member; Chair of the AI Future Council, Swiss Future Institute AG, Switzerland*
- **Prof. Majlinda Vasjari (00:32:45–00:44:10)**  
**“Nanoscience and NanoAlb Initiatives”**  
*Professor, University of Tirana; NanoAlb Coordinator, Albania*
- **Dr. Phaedria Marie St. Hilaire (00:44:10–01:04:26)**  
**“Imperfect, Ambitious and Reinvented: The Cost of Chasing Perfection”**  
*Consultant, Coach & Board Member, Copenhagen, Denmark*

- **Prof. Majlinda Daci** (01:05:40–01:12:40)  
**“From Adversity to Impact: Choosing Science, Choosing Leadership”**  
*Professor, University of Prishtina, Kosovo*
- **Dr. Marinela Barçi** (01:12:40–01:28:30)  
**“Mission and Vision of Albanian Women in Nanotechnology 2026”**  
*Principal Investigator; AWIN Co-Founder, Belgium*
- **Prof. Pierangiola Bracco** (01:30:00–01:43:30)  
**“Materials That Move Lives: A Career in Biomedical Polymer Research and Beyond”**  
*Full Professor of Industrial Chemistry, University of Turin, Italy*
- **Dr. Jemma Arakelyan** (01:43:30–01:54:23)  
**“For the Benefit of Cancer Patients: Navigating a Career Between Clinic, Lab, and Community”**  
*CEO at the Institute of Cancer and Crisis, Deputy CEO at Immune Oncology Research Institute, Clinical Researcher at the Laboratory for Synthetic Chemistry and Chemical Biology (LSCCB), Hong Kong, China*
- **Dr. Anastasia Anceschi** (01:54:23–02:04:18)  
**“From Polymers to Textiles: A Path Toward Circularity and Sustainability”**  
*Researcher, University of Turin, Italy*
- **Dr. Sajal Arwish** (02:04:18–02:11:29)  
**“Polymer Electrolytes for Li-Ion Batteries: A Step Towards Better and Safer Energy”**  
*Ph.D. Researcher, Physical Chemistry Research Institute, WWU, Germany*
- **Dr. Swathi Naidu Vakamulla Raghu** (02:11:45–02:23:00)  
**“Turning Curiosity Into a Career: My STEM Path”**  
*Junior Group Leader “Chemistry and Structure of Novel Materials (CSnM)”  
University of Siegen, Germany*
- **Dr. Bajramshahe Shkodra** (02:23:00–02:31:03)  
**“Electrolyte-Gated FETs Based on Nanomaterials for Label-Free Biosensing”**  
*Postdoctoral Researcher, University of the Bundeswehr Munich, Germany*
- **Prof. Carmen Popescu** (02:31:03–02:55:26)  
**“We Are Not Defined by Our Titles and Achievements but by the Ability to Inspire and Uplift Those Around Us”**  
*Ph.D. GLOBAL PHARMA APPLICATIONS SPECIALIST HPS/TS&D/NORAM  
Roquette Pharmaceutical Innovation Center, USA*
- **Dr. Nora Limani Bektashi** (02:55:26–03:05:00)  
**“Brick by Brick: My Journey in Science and Life”**  
*Researcher, Mother Teresa University, North Macedonia*

- **Dr. Khoela Bame** (03:05:00–03:18:00)  
**“Rewriting the Timeline of Brain Degeneration and Repair Through Mitochondrial Biology”**  
*PhD, Neuroscientist, Dartmouth College, USA*
- **Dr. Chitkala Kalidas** (03:18:00–03:37:41)  
**“Science and Global Impact: Leadership, Resilience and Collaboration Across Borders”**  
*Senior Vice President & Global Head of ESG, Bayer, New Jersey, United States*

## Organizing & Supporting Committee

- **Prof. Arben Merkoçi**  
*ICREA Professor, ICN2; Spain, nanoBalkan Coordinator*
- **Prof. Majlinda Vasjari**  
*Professor, University of Tirana; NanoAlb Coordinator, Albania*
- **Dr. Gjyljije Hoti**  
*Assistant Professor, BioSinFin Project, University of Turin, Italy*
- **Dr. Marinela Barçi**  
*Principal Investigator, Belgium*
- **Prof. Valbona Aliko**  
*Professor, University of Tirana, Albania*
- **Prof. Anila Hoda**  
*Professor, University of Tirana; Academy of Sciences of Albania*
- **Prof. Albana Halili**  
*Professor, Western Balkans University, Albania*
- **Prof. Mimoza Basholli Salihu**  
*Professor, University of Prishtina, Kosovo*
- **Dr. Ida Kokalari**  
*Professor, Western Balkans University, Albania*
- **Prof. Albana Veseli**  
*Professor, University of Prishtina, Kosovo*
- **M.Sc. Tea Mankollari**  
*Student, Western Balkans University, Albania*

## Moderation

Special thanks to the session moderators for their excellent guidance and coordination:

- ✓ **Prof. Valbona Aliko** (00:11:07)
- ✓ **Prof. Albana Halili** (01:30:00)
- ✓ **Prof. Mimoza Basholli Salihu** (02:11:45)
- ✓ **Dr. Ida Kokalari** (02:55: 26)

## Additional Contributions

- **Dr. Anastasia Anceschi**  
*University of Turin, Italy*  
→ Speaker flyer design
- **Prof. Fabrizio Caldera**  
*University of Turin, Italy*  
→ Video workshop editing
- **Klea Misha**  
*Academy of Sciences of Albania*  
→ Organization of the Zoom meeting and session recording
- **Prof. Kledi Xhaxhiu**  
*University of Tirana, Albania*  
→ Support in the formal organization and coordination of the workshop

## Final Reflections

- ✦ *Let's rise together.*
- ✦ *Le të rritemi së bashku.*
- ✦ *Let's inspire the future.*
- ✦ *Le të frymëzojmë të ardhmen.*

The workshop concluded with powerful messages emphasizing the importance of **continuing this initiative** and strengthening mutual support—both in offering and receiving help when needed.

The sharing of personal stories—especially from participants balancing careers and motherhood—added a deeply emotional and human dimension to the event.

**Prof. Arben Merkoçi** highlighted the importance of transforming inspiration into **concrete scientific collaborations**, encouraging participants to contribute meaningfully and move forward with motivation and purpose. His remarks reinforced the values of **unity and collective progress**.

**Dr. Gjylje Hoti** concluded the workshop by expressing her sincere gratitude to all participants and encouraging everyone to keep this initiative open as a space for **positivity, collaboration, and shared growth**. She emphasized the importance of:

- moving forward with confidence

- building meaningful connections
- engaging with inspiring minds

She also reflected on the powerful messages shared by the speakers, noting that behind every success story lies a journey shaped by:

- resilience
- diversity
- kindness
- generosity

These qualities, she emphasized, define not only successful careers but also **strong and impactful human beings**.

She further highlighted that this workshop demonstrated how truly inspiring and successful women support one another beyond borders, origins, and cultures—proving that what matters most is not where someone comes from, but who they are.

Let us keep our efforts unified and continue moving forward together.

## The Human Dimension

What truly defined this workshop:

- Stories of **resilience behind success**
- Women balancing **science, leadership, and motherhood**
- A strong culture of **support, kindness, and mentorship**

Success is not only achievements—it is how we uplift others along the way.

## Community & Collaboration

The workshop fostered:

- new international connections
- future collaboration opportunities
- stronger visibility for women in STEM

## Closing Message

**Dr. Gjylje Hoti encouraged participants to:**

- stay connected
- keep sharing
- build together

We are fortunate to learn from individuals whose journeys were not easy—yet who lead with resilience, generosity, and purpose.

## **Celebration**

- ❖ Happy International Women's Day
- ❖ Gëzuar Ditën Ndërkombëtare të Gruas

On this occasion, we extend our warm wishes to Albania, Kosovo, and North Macedonia:

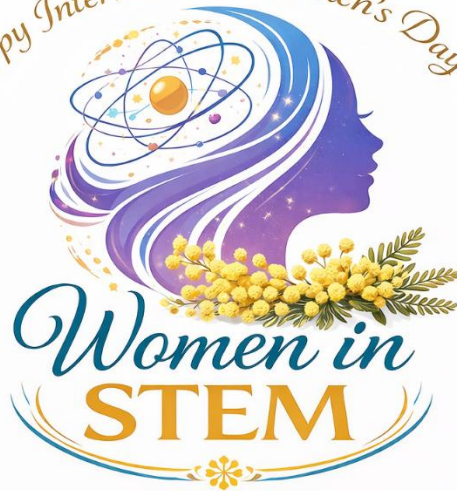
- ❖ Happy Teachers' Day (March 7, 2026)
- ❖ Happy Mother's Day (March 8, 2026)

## **Acknowledgement**

Thank you very much to all speakers, organizers, and participants for making this event impactful and inspiring.

#WomenInSTEM #WomenRising #Leadership #Innovation #InternationalWomensDay

*Happy International Women's Day*



*Through generosity, kindness, inspiration,  
and connection, we build a better world —  
a future where women rise and humanity rises  
with them.*

*For women give birth not only to life,  
but to ideas, progress, and inspiration  
that shape every aspect of society.*



