

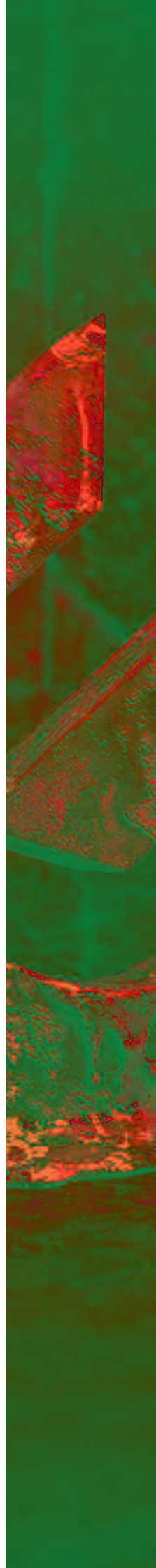
# GREEN FEST

Portfolio 2025

Mitrovicë

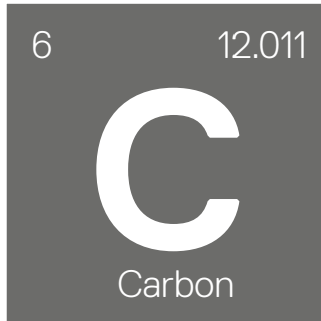
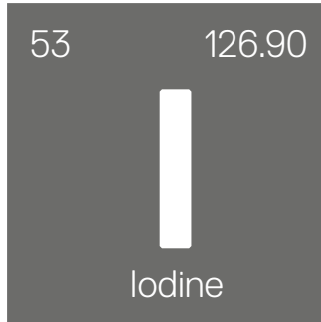
# “Toxicity” Focus on SDG 15

Life on Land

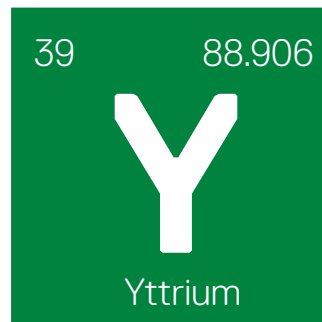


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Edizioni XV  
**13-17 GushT**





# GREEN FEST XV

Green Fest is an annual event that aims to raise awareness about sustainable development and the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through the mediums of arts and culture.

This year, the festival focused on the 15th SDG (Life on Land), which is to protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss.

This year's theme of the festival was "Toxicity". Green Fest aims to encourage citizens to come together and work together to build a peaceful environment, a better and more sustainable city and world for all of us.

Throughout the festival, there were a variety of cultural and artistic events and activities, including music, art exhibitions, and educational workshops. These events aimed at showcasing the ways in which culture and the arts can be used to raise awareness about the urgent need for action on climate change and to inspire individuals, communities, and societies to take steps towards a more sustainable future.



# TOXICITY

*What is toxicity,  
and where does  
it begin?*



Is it found only in polluted rivers and poisoned soil, or does it also exist within the systems that allowed things to reach this point? Has toxicity survived because of our actions, or because of our indifference and our refusal to see?

Toxicity refers to the level of harm that a substance, behavior, or environment can inflict on living beings and ecosystems. At its core, it carries the presence of damage, harming the body, clouding the mind, draining the spirit, and disrupting entire systems. It poisons not only nature but also the way we live, the decisions we normalize, and the inequalities we pretend not to see.

As scholar Rob Nixon puts it, toxicity is a form of slow violence that is often invisible, often unspoken, and accumulates over time. It strikes the most vulnerable first and leaves lasting marks in our waters, in our cities, and in our bodies.

With the theme “Toxicity,” Green Fest XV challenged this toxic sense of normal. Not to provoke fear, but to reveal what is usually hidden. Not to create despair, but to ask:

***What does it mean to detoxify as individuals, as communities, and as a planet?  
Is the Earth toxic, or have we become toxic to the Earth?  
Can art make toxicity visible? And if it can, can it also begin to heal it?***

This year, through our artistic and recreational programs, we aimed to bring the unseen into focus: to witness it, feel it, and take the first steps toward healing.



# | Educational Program



The educational program created space for dialogue and hands-on learning around toxicity—from industrial legacies and waste to everyday exposure risks. It featured a variety of workshops and discussions designed to engage citizens of all ages:

## **Environmental Journalism Workshop**

equipping young people with tools to report and communicate environmental issues.

## **Terrarium Workshop for Kids**

teaching children about ecosystems and the importance of clean, healthy environments through interactive play.

## **Art for Kids Workshop**

introducing children to creative expression linked with environmental awareness.

## **Green Talks**

discussions with experts and activists addressing toxic pollution, its impacts, and sustainable solutions.

Green Talks topics of this year were: Heavy metals with toxic potential, The truth of chemical pollution, Psychological well-being in industrial cities, Toxic pollution effects on the river Sitnica







# | Artistic & Cultural Program



Opening Ceremony – Local Dance and Cultural Showcase

Film screenings:

Rot in Routine — short film from 7Arte Academy

Pemet flasin — short film from 7Arte Academy

The Sky Above Zenica — a Bosnian film addressing environmental issues in Zenica, a city facing challenges similar to Mitrovica.

Photography exhibition: A documentary-style exhibition highlighting toxic areas of Mitrovica and nearby landfills, including Liqeni i Kelmendit, Zveçan, and the Mitrovica Industrial Park—sites associated with industrial waste and potentially toxic metals.

The music concerts concluded four nights of the festival, featuring well-known artists such as Yll Limani, Armend Rexhepagiqi, Gipsy Groove, DJ Ahmet Kilic, and Orchestra.



# | Recreational Program

To encourage healthier lifestyles and a closer connection with nature, our recreational program offered a variety of activities for participants:

Hiking and cycling tours promoting active mobility and clean environments.

Kayaking and outdoor activities showcasing Mitrovica's natural potential.

Yoga and pilates sessions designed to strengthen the link between personal well-being and environmental well-being.





# Green Talks

# Psychological Wellbeing in Industrial Cities

At Green Fest 15, anthropologist Dr. Rozafa Berisha and psychologist Veronë Perçuku led a discussion on “Psychological Wellbeing in Industrial Cities.” The talk highlighted that toxicity is not only chemical but also social and psychological, shaping relationships, deepening polarization, and affecting mental health.

Berisha emphasized that hope is a social construct built through safe spaces and community, while Perçuku underlined the need for fair transitions that provide both employment and a clean environment. She also noted that outdoor activities like cycling and kayaking help reduce stress but remain insufficient without broader public policies and green alternatives.

The session concluded with reflections on Mitrovica’s future: a city marked by industrial toxicity, yet holding strong potential to become a model for green transition.

# The Truth About Chemical Pollution

At Green Fest 15, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Milihate Aliu presented findings on mercury (Hg) and other heavy metals in the Mitrovica region. She explained that mercury, known locally as “zhiva”, is a highly toxic metal with severe effects on the nervous system, particularly for children and fetuses. The most dangerous form, methyl-mercury, is directly linked to neurotoxicity, with even the smallest doses posing serious health risks.

Research covering Mitrovica, Zvečan, and Vushtrri (301.5 km<sup>2</sup>) analyzed 156 soil samples, showing mercury concentrations up to 11 mg/kg. Results confirm significant pollution from decades of heavy industry, including mercury, cadmium, lead, sulfuric acid, and other toxic substances, which bioaccumulate and spread through the food chain.

Prof. Aliu emphasized that measuring pollution requires scientific indices beyond concentration levels, to determine ecological risk and the human impact. She proposed strategies such as continuous monitoring of air, soil, and water; training local staff; raising awareness among farmers; using hyperaccumulator plants like sunflower and maize for soil remediation; and managing hazardous waste according to international standards.

The presentation closed with a strong call for cooperation between the scientific community, local institutions, and citizens to address this complex challenge that affects the environment, economy, and public health.

# The Effects of Toxic Pollution on the Sitnica River

At Green Fest 15, the discussion “The Effects of Toxic Pollution on the Sitnica River” brought together voices from both activism and science. MSc. Arif Kadriu, a committed environmental activist and fisherman, shared firsthand experiences and a call to action for the protection of rivers, while MSc. Hysni Beqiri, a geologist with over 20 years of experience at Trepça, presented the scientific perspective on the impact of mining industries and heavy metal contamination on aquatic ecosystems.

“As a fisherman and someone who spends every day by our rivers, I have seen with my own eyes that our rivers are dying,” Kadriu emphasized. Fish species are steadily declining, and water quality is deteriorating due to untreated sewage and industrial wastewater. Riverbeds are covered in plastic fragments and waste, creating barriers that suffocate the water and deplete oxygen levels.

From the scientific perspective, Beqiri explained how heavy metals released through mining and industrial processes infiltrate the waterways, damaging biodiversity and threatening public health. These pollutants persist in ecosystems, accumulating through the food chain and leaving long-lasting consequences for both nature and people.

Both speakers agreed that the situation demands urgent intervention. Kadriu concluded with a strong appeal: “The construction of a wastewater treatment plant is essential for Mitrovica – and it must happen as soon as possible, before it is too late and our rivers die completely.”

# Heavy Metals with toxic potential

Flora Zabërgja presented her research on the presence of heavy metals in the environment and their impact on both human health and ecosystems. Her talk highlighted concrete data on the levels of these substances, their main sources, and the long-term consequences they can have on communities living near polluted areas.

Zabërgja emphasized that heavy metals not only accumulate in soil, water, and air but also enter the food chain, creating risks that persist for generations. The findings underscored the urgency of addressing industrial pollution and developing strategies to monitor, prevent, and remediate contamination in order to protect public health and the environment.

# | Impact & Achievements

# Numbers: participants, partners, volunteers

## Community engagement

### Environmental awareness impact

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**50 trees  
planted**



**6000 +  
festival  
attendees**



**5,000,000+  
reach on  
social media**



**50+ staff**



**7000+  
recyclable cans  
around 100kg**



# | Partners & Sponsors



# TOXICITY

13 GUSHT - 17 GUSHT  
Edicioni XV



REPUBLIKA E KOSOVËS  
MINISTRIA E KULTURËS,  
RINISË DHE SPORTIT



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# **GREEN FEST**

PORTFOLIO 2025