



RUR@L

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NEWS

ENRD REPORT

Stakeholder Networks on Leader as a Tool for Local Development

The ENRD participated in a public hearing on 'Leader as a tool for local development', held on 20 June, 2011. The aim of the event, organised by the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) was to foster debate on lessons learnt from the Leader approach, so as to provide recommendations on Leader's role as regards the future CAP beyond 2013. The EESC is currently preparing an opinion on the Leader approach. While participants were vocal in their support for the Leader method, they also acknowledged that it had yet to live up to its full potential. Click [here](#) for further information.

Building Bridges for Transnational Cooperation

An international conference to assist Local Action Groups (LAGs) with setting up Transnational Cooperation (TNC) projects was held in Lithuania on 22-23 June, 2011, in Druskininkai. For further information, click [here](#).

Rural Development Days in Pori, Finland

The Famari agricultural exhibition took place in Pori, Finland on the 3 July, 2011. Some 70,000 visitors attended the exhibition, which featured all the latest agricultural products on the market. The European Commission stand showcased rural development projects on topics such as forestry, climate change, biomass and youth in rural areas. Click [here](#) for further information.

POLICY BRIEF

New Thematic Initiative on Communications Launched at 12th NRN Meeting

A new thematic initiative on communicating Rural Development Programme (RDP) achievements was launched at the 12th National Rural Network meeting, which took place in Brussels on the 28th of June.

The meeting focused on exchanging Member State experiences on RDP/EAFRD communication strategies and tools.

The new communications initiative is aimed at enhancing partnership amongst NRNs with respect to communication and dissemination tools for RDPs, across Europe. As part of this initiative an international conference entitled 'Communicating rural development to citizens' was formally announced, to be held in Milan on 17-18 November, 2011. The conference, which is being organised by the Italian NRN in conjunction with the ENRD, will represent a "showcase" of information and communication campaigns on rural development, carried out within the framework of the RDPs. As a preparatory step for this event, NRNs were invited to submit examples of communication and information products via 'My ENRD', as well as any existing materials on evaluation work carried out on the impact of their communication strategy and tools. All materials received are being reviewed and will feature as part of the 'Communications Gateway' on the ENRD website. An ENRD publication on NRN communication tools - to be published in the autumn - was also announced as an extension of this new thematic initiative.



To complement the topic of the day, three simultaneous workshops were held which focused on the following: measuring the impact of communication campaigns and website tools; using the general and social media; and effective coordination among EAFRD implementing bodies.

DG AGRI stressed the importance of rural development stories for communicating the benefits of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) in relation to the DG's communication strategy on CAP reform and its 50th anniversary. Representatives from various NRNs also presented their experiences as regards innovative online tools, social media, and the use of video, as well as communication campaigns directed towards young people and EU citizens generally.

An overview of communication obligations regarding RDPs was provided, including the importance of mid-term evaluations, as well as an update on recent ENRD activities. Furthermore, a range of NRN communication products were showcased at the event, including publications and audio-visual material. Click [here](#) for further information.

Please note: 'Rur@L News' is an online publication; for further information, please go to <http://enrd.ec.europa.eu>



NEW ONLINE...

- Two new EAFRD brochures on Leader and Green Growth now published. Click [here](#).
- Issue 8 of EU Rural Review magazine on Product Quality now online. Click [here](#).
- The self-assessment toolkit for NRNs is now available on our website. Click [here](#).
- Remember to check out the RDP Project database. Click [here](#).
- Attention LAGs! New Leader Cooperation offers now posted on the website. Click [here](#).

'RomaForest2011' Conference: The Importance of EU Rural Development Policy for Forestry

The importance of rural development policy measures for the continued sustainability of the EU forestry sector was highlighted at a two-day conference, organised by the Italian NRN and INEA (the National Institute of Agricultural Economy) and with the assistance of the ENRD, in Rome on 23-24 June, 2011. Over 200 participants attended the 'RomaForest2011' conference, where the role of forestry resources in the socio-economic development of rural areas was discussed.

In the last few decades, this role has been extending well beyond production objectives, to include new issues and challenges such as climate change mitigation, biodiversity conservation, energy production, water cycle management, soil erosion and desertification containment, natural risks prevention and forest historical-cultural landscape management. However, given the fact that forestry policy falls within the competence of Member States, and in the absence of an EU forestry fund, rural development policy is considered the main support tool for implementing EU forestry strategy. Therefore the conference set about defining and analysing relevant rural development themes, so as to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, as well as to

propose ideas and suggestions for the present and future rural development policy.

As well as highlighting the importance of current rural development measures for forestry, the conference also identified the need for further improvement in policy delivery (several aspects of which were also identified in the work of the TWG4 of the ENRD). The four themes chosen for the parallel sessions represented the main priorities for future action in the forestry sector: provision of environmental services; provision of renewable energy from forest biomass; support to climate change mitigation and adaptation; and the inclusion of the forestry sector in the bottom-up strategies for the development of rural areas.

'RomaForest2011' reminded participants how important it is to communicate the role of forestry in delivering key EU policies, especially in the context of climate change. Indeed many forests will depend on support from RDPs to deliver their contribution to the economic and social future of rural communities right across the EU. In order to ensure continuity between the actions supported by the conference, a forthcoming seminar in Finland was proposed by the Finnish NRN on 'energy production from forest biomass and related impacts on climate change mitigation under the RDPs'. Click [here](#) for further information.

NRN FOCUS

Leader 'Amazes' Young People in Finland

'Amaze Me Leader' is an action-packed event aimed at promoting the work of the Finnish Leader rural support programme for young people, which will take place in Finland from 22-28 August, 2011. Participants (aged from 16-28) will tour the Finnish countryside to find out more about rural life, so as to increase their interest in rural development, build young European networks and of course promote Leader itself. Click [here](#) for further information.

Estonian Rural Parliament discusses Rural Development

Some 400 participants are expected to take part in the Estonian Rural Parliament for 2011, from 3-7 August, which brings together village members, organisations and local and national representatives in Estonia to discuss rural development issues. The 'Rural Parliament', organised by the Estonian NRN plays an important role in setting overall strategic directions for the Estonian Village Movement. For registration and further information, click [here](#).

Greek NRN holds First National Conference

Some 80 rural development stakeholders attended the first Greek national NRN Conference on 7 July in Athens. Key objectives and priorities for the network were discussed. Click [here](#)

COUNTRY FOCUS



SPAIN

Population: 47 million

Area: 504,411 km²

Spain is located in the Iberian Peninsula bordering France in the Northeast and Portugal to the West. Spain's GDP contracted by 3.7% in 2009 (ending a 16-year growth trend), and by another 0.1% in 2010. There are great discrepancies between interior and coastal areas as regards population density, income and employment rates. Rural areas cover 91.3% of Spanish territory and about 31% of the population live in these areas. About 50% of the total surface of Spain is utilised as agricultural land (25.2 million ha) with 10.47 million ha covered by forests. Of the agricultural land, about 79% are deemed Less Favoured Areas (LFAs). The main priorities for rural development in Spain are to maintain the rural population and improve quality of life by increasing the competitiveness of the agri-food and forestry sectors. Important investments are foreseen in the area of water management and in the agro-food industry. Much attention is also being paid to the need to enhance biodiversity (with a large Natura 2000 surface) and the capacity of local communities.

