## Gal Fior d’Olivi recognised at European Commission Awards Ceremony…

*‘The photos offer such a rare glimpse into this hidden world. This exhibition is not just for those interested in rural life - it’s for anyone simply interested in life…’*

*Emilano Larizza, President of Jury.*

**Gal Fior d’Olivi was officially recognised at a European awards ceremony in Brussels on the 1 July, 2012 – which saw people from across the EU come together to celebrate Rural Europe.**

**The ENRD ‘Images of Rural Europe’ awards, which took place at the prestigious Berlaymont Building in Brussels was attended by the EC Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development, Dacian Cioloş, dignitaries from the European Commission, and representatives of Local Action Groups (LAGs) from all across the EU.**

In total, more than 1700 photos were submitted from 25 countries – as part of a pan-European competition, which took place between March and May, 2012.

Organised by the Contact Point of the European Network for Rural Development (ENRD) and promoted by LEADER Local Action Groups (LAGs) the competition sought to promote the beauty and diversity of rural Europe, by giving rural citizens themselves a platform on which to express their feelings on issues relating to them. Photos were collected in six categories: *Rural People, Rural Environment, Rural Employment, Rural Diversity, Rural Youth,* and *Spirit of LEADER*.

Francesco Catalano from Terlizzi won an award for his photo ‘A Treasure in the Hand’ in the **Rural Employment** category. “*This photo represents the economic lifeblood of rural Europe. In our work at the ENRD we are always impressed with not only the skill but the passion that is evident in the work of those who live Europe’s rural areas…as this photo demonstrates,”* said Angelo Strano of the ENRD CP.

**Oronzo Amorosini from the Local Action Group Fior d’Olivi in the regi**o**n said ”This is** **an important award for our work, the photo is a culture, tradition and history of Bitonto, Giovinazzo and Terlizzi”**

According to Commissioner Cioloş, the photos portray modern life in rural areas, including the challenges faced and the unique quality of life experienced by those who live there. *‘This photo exhibition proves we have a lot of diversity in rural areas and this is an important element, as it is this diversity which gives us the capacity to innovate and develop further in the future*

Internationally acclaimed photographer and Jury President, Emiliano Larizza commended all those who entered the competition, praising not only the technical composition and aesthetic value of the photos…but the important messages conveyed. *‘These photos force you to confront your own views about people, about nature…about life generally. It was a great privilege to have been part of this competition,’* he said.

*Adrian Neal from the ENRD Contact Point said: “We are confident that the photographs we have now gathered will provide an invaluable resource - to help build strong links and bonds so as to better enhance the work of the ENRD as it seeks to grow and strengthen connections in rural Europe”.*

A selection of photos will be on display at the Presidents Gallery of the Berlaymont building, until 10 July, 2012. A ‘touring exhibition’ of the exhibition will follow in the autumn.

**For further information:**

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* All of the original entries are available for viewing on the dedicated website [www.ruralimages.eu](http://www.ruralimages.eu).