

## Our Chat Show Guests Today are.....

### **Marina BRAKALOVA**



Marina Brakalova was born in Sofia, Bulgaria. After French Language School, she graduated from the Law School of the University of Sofia in 2001 with a degree in International Relations and during the period 2004-2005 was a chief representative of the programmes of the American Red Cross (ARC) in Bulgaria.

Since 2005 Marina has worked as Director of the FORA Community Development Foundation and has a strong interest in rural development and public private partnerships – with a particular focus upon applying the LEADER approach within the national rural development and fisheries programmes for Bulgaria.

Marina has extensive experience as a consultant and trainer in Bulgaria, the Western Balkans and Eastern Europe. Her day-to-day work is a balance between strategic and analytical work, development of national alliances, advocacy and networking.

She has provided coaching and technical assistance for the establishment of 10 Local Action Groups (LAGs) and one Fishery Local Action Group (FLAG) in Bulgaria.

### **Pedro BROSEI**

Pedro Brosei has been working with LEADER for over 10 years. He started in the German LEADER+ Network Unit in 2002 and then moved to Brussels in 2004 to work for the European LEADER+ Contact Point .

Since mid-2008, Pedro has worked for the European Commission in the Co-ordination Unit for Rural Development at DG AGRI. His main day-to-day responsibility is dealing with horizontal questions regarding LEADER and policy development.

### **Urszula BUDZICH- SZUKALA**



Urszula Budzich-Szukala is an expert on rural and local development, LEADER approach and evaluation. For the last 20 years her responsibilities have involved needs analysis, planning, designing, implementation and evaluation of rural and local development programmes and policies at national and EU level. As one of the founders and member of the board of the Polish Rural Forum, she has initiated or been involved in most activities related to the preparation and implementation of the LEADER approach in Poland.

In the period 1991-2009 she was director of the Rural Development Bureau (later Bureau for Local Development and Civil Initiative) at the Cooperation Fund in Poland. In 2008-2010 she was member of an expert group discussing ways to introduce local development practices in the European Regional Development Fund (at the initiative of DG Regio). Since 2009 she is Thematic and Territorial Coordinator in FARNET - a European network working with DG Mare to promote local development approach in fisheries areas.

**Ryan  
HOWARD**

Ryan Howard has been a LAG Manager in Ireland for over 15 years and he is the leader of a team of 21 people working in South & East Cork Area Development – known as ‘SECAD’ based on the south coast of Ireland. SECAD has evolved over the past 15 years from a position of working with only one co-financed programme (the LEADER II Programme in 1996) to the present day which sees SECAD delivering a global or multi-funded programme of activities in areas such as rural development, social inclusion, social employment and community transport.

Concern about the future viability of the LEADER approach has led Ryan (on behalf of SECAD and other LAGs in Ireland) into supporting positive discussions and reviews at local, national and European levels with the aim of restoring/protecting some of the key values and principles of the LEADER approach. He is an active member of the Irish Network of Local Action Groups (Irish Local Development Network) and is a member of Focus Group 4 on ‘Better Local Development Strategies’.

**Petri RINNE**

Since 2001, Petri Rinne has worked as the Manager of the Joutsenten Reitti LAG in South-West Finland and was the first to introduce the LEADER approach to this area both in terms of programme design and implementation. Creativity and internationalisation are the two focus points of his work.

In addition to his LAG work, Petri has provided consultancy on the LEADER method in most of the New EU Member States, the Western Balkans, Russia, Mozambique and the Republic of South Africa. Together with an OECD colleague, Mr Philip Wade, he has published a LEADER Dissemination Guide Book in 2008. Currently he is President of the European LEADER Association for Rural Development (ELARD) which brings together the interests of more than 700 LAGs from 20 European countries.

Petri is also a co-chair of the ENRD Focus Group 4 on ‘Better Local Development Strategies’.

**Hans-Olof  
STÅLGREN**

Hans-Olof Stålgren currently works as Transnational Co-ordinator at the Swedish Rural Network combined with being Co-ordinator of reports for the Swedish Board of Agriculture regarding the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region and a consultant to the European Network for Rural Development.

Hans-Olof began his career as a farm advisor specialized in crop production, but has been involved with LEADER since 2001. From 2002 – 2007 he was Manager of the National Swedish Network Unit for LEADER + and a Member of the Strategy Advisory Group of the European LEADER+ Contact Point. Until 2010 he was consultant to the National Rural Network Unit at the Swedish Board of Agriculture and contact person for Swedish LAGs regarding trans-national co-operation and general animation of the LEADER approach. Hans-Olof is a well-known champion of the importance and value of trans-national co-operation.