

16th NRN Meeting

Nicosia Cyprus, 18 October 2012

Welcome Speech by the Director of the Department of Agriculture

Dr Androula Georgiou

Dear delegates, dear colleagues, dear friends,

It is with great pleasure that we welcome you all to Cyprus and to the sixteenth (16th) National Rural Network Meeting.

When the European Network was launched in Cyprus in November 2008, Mrs Dormal Marino, Deputy-Director for Rural Development, DG Agri, in her speech she mentioned that it seems that our country is a special place to start off networking. So we are here again for a great event, the 16th National Rural Network meeting.

Since then, our Network developed and has gained invaluable experiences through its close cooperation with all other European Networks. Having in mind the principles of networking, the exchange of experience and know how, we have worked all these years to support the Cyprus Rural Development Programme by providing the necessary technical assistance.

It was not an easy start. But with your help, our colleagues from all the Networks, we feel that we have achieved quite a lot. The Network depends on good novel ideas and knowledge transfer. The thematic initiatives that were created from the European Network, dealing with various issues like rural entrepreneurship, forestry, innovation, social aspects, transnational cooperation between the Local Action Groups, local food and short supply chains, environment and many more, indicate the involvement and the very important role of Networks in Rural Development.

As the end of this programming period and the beginning of the new one is quite close, we are very interested and excited to see how the Networks across Europe will continue to operate. By evaluating the existing Rural Development Programmes and preparing for the Rural Development Plan for 2014-2020, in combination with guidance from the European Commission we believe that issues like climate change, water management, biodiversity and renewable energy sources, could be given special consideration when planning the future of networking. We have faith that the Networks will further develop and expand in the new programming period so that they can contribute even further to our rural communities.

Before I end, I would like to take this opportunity to express our gratitude to DG Agri and the European Network and especially to our colleagues from the Contact Point for giving us the opportunity to host today's event and for helping us in organising this meeting.

Finally, a big thank you to all of you, the delegates, for honoring us with your presence. Once again we welcome you and wish you a fruitful meeting and a nice stay here in Cyprus.

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