



# RUR@L

September **EN** 2011

# NEWS



## ENRD REPORT

### First Meeting of French-Spanish trans-border Region

The first meeting of the French-Spanish trans-border region - "Pyrénées Méditerranée Euroregion", took place on 6-7 October at Ille sur Têt, in France. Over 100 rural development actors attended the event, from areas including Catalonia, Aragon, Balears Islands, Languedoc-Roussillon and Midi Pyrénées. Cooperation under Leader and other EU programmes in the region were discussed, serving as a precedent for future cooperation between rural development stakeholders in this area. For more information, click [here](#).

### AGRO SHOW 2011 in Poland

The 13<sup>th</sup> International Agricultural Exhibition 'AGRO SHOW' 2011 was held in Bednary, Poland, on 25-26 September 2011. The stand of DG Agriculture and Rural Development exhibited six co-financed rural development projects, presented by their beneficiaries who explained their project, how they obtained EU funding and the results achieved. Click [here](#) for more information.

### Rural Energy Day Shapes Debate on Future

On 21 September, 2011, a Rural Energy Day was hosted by FREE (Future of Rural Energy in Europe) in Brussels, with the aim of shaping the debate on the future of rural energy in Europe. It highlighted rural energy patterns and emissions levels in key EU Member States, including the findings of a major report by Ecofys, a leading consultancy company in renewable energy. For more information, click [here](#).



## POLICY BRIEF

### Nordic Baltic Rural Networks Tackle Common Rural Development Objectives

A seminar on 'Common Rural Development Measures for the Baltic Sea Region', was held in Helsinki, on September 28-29. The event was hosted by the Finnish Ministry of Agriculture in cooperation with the Finnish Rural Network.

The objective of the conference was to find synergies and value added on cooperation between the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR) and Member State Rural Development Programmes (RDs), and to look for possibilities to design some common RD measures in the future. For more details, click [here](#). The EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR), adopted by the European Commission, in June 2009 (further information [here](#)) has given the Nordic-Baltic Networks an increasingly important strategic influence.

The EUSBSR aims to address the urgent problems of the Baltic Sea region through an integrated strategy, including environmental issues. Three flagship initiatives of the Action Plan in the EU Strategy for the Baltic region were highlighted:

1) The 'Baltic Compass' is an initiative which promotes sustainable agricultural practices in the region, in such a way that assures the production of high quality food for its 90 million inhabitants, whilst at the same time preserving the vulnerable Baltic Sea ecosystem. Click [here](#) for more information.

2) 'Baltic Manure' is an initiative to enhance the perception of manure as a source of energy and as a fertiliser rather than merely as a waste product. The initiative identifies business opportunities and fosters renewable energy use in the region, as well as reducing environmental load from agriculture to the Baltic Sea. For more information, click [here](#).

3) 'Baltic Deal' brings together farmers and farming advisory services to improve agri-environmental practices and measures. The aim is to reduce nutrient losses from farms, so as to foster sustainable agriculture and maintain production and competitiveness. For more information, click [here](#).

By recognising potential opportunities for cohesion, as well as partnerships between initiatives in the Baltic Sea Member States, the seminar also led to discussions on future Transnational Cooperation (TNC) projects. In fact, the convergence of Member State networks and cooperation may also be an interesting practice for other National Rural Networks across Europe. The possibility of forming network clusters in other regions will be further explored at the next National Rural Network meeting in The Hague, on 10-11 November.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

- » The 13th National Rural Network (NRN) meeting will take place on 10-11 November 2011 in The Hague, Netherlands.
- » Registration is open for the international conference 'Communicating Rural Development to Citizens' in Milan, on 16-18 November, click [here](#) to register.

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



- The new Leader Gateway has been launched, the portal for information on Leader implementation, including the most recent addition to the Gateway, the Leader Toolkit. Click [here](#).
- The new ENRD publication 'Communicating EU Rural Development Policy' is now online. Click [here](#).
- Remember to check out the RDP Project database for all you need to know about rural development projects in your area. Click [here](#).
- Please review updated cooperation offers on the MyENRD section of the ENRD website. 275 new cooperation offers have been recently added to the ENRD website and 30 additional offers are online, as a result of recent cooperation fairs held across Europe. Click [here](#).

## Leader Approach after 2013 discussed in Poland

The international conference 'Leader approach after 2013 and new challenges for the development of rural areas of Europe' was held on 3-5 October, in Koszęcin, Poland. The conference offered an opportunity to discuss the approach and lessons learnt from results achieved to-date, with a view to addressing future challenges for rural areas. It was organised by the Polish Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development and the Silesian Union of Municipalities and Districts, as part of the Polish Presidency of the European Council.

Plenary sessions focused on a local perspective of the Leader Approach in Poland and in a separate session, impetus was given to the role of each of the various stakeholders in contributing to a more effective implementation of Leader, in terms of innovation, specificity and added value. Best practices were showcased with a view to shaping the present and future face of Leader. Working groups were held on two specific topics: 'Better Local Development Strategies after 2013' and 'Future of TNC: What is a good TNC project and its impact on the local area in future'. A further workshop focused on how to effectively manage the transition period

between the current programming period and the period post-2013. Importantly, specific suggestions were made for a model system regarding the implementation of the Leader approach, in the context of the preparation for the legal framework for the future 2014-2020 programming period. This discussion raised possible solutions as to how the Leader approach can contribute to smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, for Europe 2020.

Leader-specific resources, created to promote the Leader approach and assist all those interested in the programme, were showcased at the event. The ENRD website hosts a 'Leader Gateway' section which contains a wealth of information on all aspects of Leader. The latest addition to the tool, the 'Leader Toolkit' explains the seven Leader principles, the main steps in local development strategy design and implementation, and provides guidance on how to form a Local Action Group (LAG).

For further information on the Leader conference in Poland, click [here](#). To access the 'Leader Gateway' on the ENRD website in six languages, click [here](#).



## NRN FOCUS

### Finnish Seminar on RDPs and Bio-energy from Forests

The Finnish National Rural Network (NRN) and local stakeholders are organising a three day event on 25-27 October, 2011 in Punkaharju, Finland, in order to explore support opportunities for the production and use of forest-based biomass offered by Rural Development Programmes. Further information is available on the Finnish Rural Network website. Click [here](#).

### Leader Summer School, Specchia, Italy

The Leader Summer School took place in Specchia, Italy on 21-23 September, 2011. It was organised by the Italian NRN, in collaboration with the LAG Santa Maria di Leuca. The main focus was on transparency, communicating the added value of Leader and providing LAGs with new instruments to be used to improve the implementation and the evaluation of their local development plans. Click [here](#).



## COUNTRY FOCUS

 **Finland** Population: 5.3 million  
Area: 390,920 km<sup>2</sup>

Finland, officially known as the Republic of Finland, is a Nordic country situated in the Fennoscandian region of Northern Europe. It is bordered by Sweden in the west, Norway in the north and Russia in the east, and Estonia lies south of the country, across the Gulf of Finland. In 2009, Finnish GDP was €171 billion, with agriculture representing up to 2.6% of total GDP. Finland is the most forested country in Europe, and agricultural land covers 8.9% of the total surface area. Due to the climate, the isolated geographical location of the country, and the fragmented structure of the farmland, agricultural development is focused on ensuring the supply of certain basic products. However, a strong forestry sector provides a secondary occupation for the rural population and is an important export earner. 4.9% of Finland's labour force is occupied within either the agriculture or forestry sector. The RDPs of both the mainland and the region of Åland focus on furthering entrepreneurship, economic competitiveness and quality of life based on the sustainable use of natural resources. Key rural development challenges for the country are ensuring a viable countryside, management of existing agricultural land, biodiversity preservation and a decrease in the environmental impact of agriculture. Click [here](#) for more information.

