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NEWSLETTER FOR THE ENRD



# Facing the rural development challenges of tomorrow

Welcome to the first newsletter of the European Network for Rural Development (EN RD)! In this issue we focus on the conference in Cyprus *“Europe’s rural areas in action: facing the challenges of tomorrow”* where the EN RD was launched. Held on 16–17 October 2008, the aim of this conference was to take stock of the current policy and try to identify whether it adequately addresses the present and future challenges facing Europe’s rural areas.

In her speech, Mariann Fischer-Boel, European Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development reiterated the three main goals of rural development policy – competitiveness, land management and wider rural development. In addition, she referred to developing challenges identified by the Commission in the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) Health Check, notably climate change, water management, bio energy, and biodiversity.

Tackling some of these issues, the conference workshops found that harnessing the potential of rural areas for economic diversification and development, improving policy delivery, local governance and networking, and finding the right balance between top-down and bottom-up approaches are crucial to successful rural development. The workshop on adapting agriculture and forestry to climate change, for example, concluded that all EU policies need to contribute in a consistent way. This means measures targeted and coordinated on a territorial scale. Rural development already provides a framework for

implementing adaptation measures but is not sufficient as a stand-alone policy. Flexible instruments are needed in order to respond to crises, such as droughts and floods.

The event also gave the opportunity for a number of open questions to be addressed. In particular, it was found that more needs to be known about the typology and specificities of different rural areas; the demographic, socio-economic and environmental changes in rural and peri-urban areas; the relationship of rural areas with smaller and bigger towns and cities; and the factors that shaped the enormous diversity of rural areas, those associated with success and those with failure.

Above all, participants found that a clearer definition of rural areas and a better idea about the territorial aspects of rurality is needed. The fourth workshop, for example, discussed what common elements of rurality can be distinguished which would allow for a clearer territorial focus of EU rural development policy, given the great diversity of rural areas across the EU-27. Taking a more numerical view of what rural development policy could look like after 2013, the Commissioner spoke about the balance within the CAP between income support and market instruments on the one hand, and tasks naturally associated with rural development on the other. It was her view that the latter will likely keep its ‘share of the cake’ and that its popularity among EU citizens may also have an influence on the policy as a whole. In addition, she stressed the importance of highlighting what rural development policy gives citizens for every Euro spent, as future EU budgets will likely be under great pressure, and the CAP may be seen as a prime candidate to be squeezed.



European Commission



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## EN RD: oil for the engine

In her opening address to the Cyprus conference, the Commissioner Mariann Fischer-Boel remarked: "Policy runs on ideas and experience: ideas have the advantage that, if you share them around, their total value increases. They also tend to multiply. Experience helps us to grow ideas into success stories. These facts have been well illustrated in the networking that has been such a large part of the 'Leader approach' to rural development. Now we want to spread the benefits of networking more widely".

The European Network for Rural Development has not been conceived simply for organising meetings between the partners of European Rural Development Policy. It will

have to provide real incentives for achieving the objectives established within the framework of the Community strategic guidelines for rural development, which have been defined by the Council in 2006.

It will also have to highlight the added value of supporting rural development. By drawing on lessons from experience on the ground, this assists decision-makers to make the choices that are still to be made when implementing their strategy and their rural development programme.

The simplicity of the procedures for beneficiaries, and also the development of synergies with other European funds intervening in rural areas will become on-going concerns for the network, in order to guarantee its fundamental objective which will be to optimise the efficiency of our policy. The aim is that the EN RD will set off chain reactions of ideas and will quickly prove its worth in the policy-making process.

If policy is an engine and ideas are the oil, then the EN RD is expected to provide 'oil for the engine' as described by Mrs Loretta Dormal Marino, Deputy Director-General for Agriculture and Rural Development. This newly launched European network is about making easier exchanges and transfers between different rural actors, not only at national level but also using the wider experience of all European rural areas.

Continuing the metaphor of oils and engines, the Contact Point of the European Network for Rural Development is like the mechanic providing the oil. It is a specialist team based in Brussels, working on a variety of tasks, as exemplified below.



## Coordination Committee meets for the first time

The first meeting of the Coordination Committee of the EN RD (Commission Decision of 20 February 2008, 2008/168/EC) was held on 1 October 2008 in Brussels – an important step in the preparation of the activities of the network, and in particular of the work programme for 2008–09.

Meeting twice a year, the Coordination Committee has the specific tasks of:

- assisting the Commission in the preparation and implementation of the EN RD activities;
- ensuring coordination between the EN RD, the national rural networks referred to in Article 68 of Regulation (EC) No 1698/2005, and organisations active in rural development at Community level;
- advising the Commission on the EN RD's annual work programme and contributing to the choice and coordination of thematic work carried out by the EN RD;
- proposing, as appropriate, to the Commission the creation of thematic working groups.

### THE NEED TO KNOW

In this monthly newsletter you can find information on developments in the world of rural development. You will certainly appreciate the need to

be kept informed about policy issues, relevant events and publications, at both local, national and European levels. RUR@L News is designed as one of a range of tools that helps to communicate information and share experience.

The aim of this newsletter is to act as an interactive tool, providing you with information you need. Clicking on the relevant links in the text takes you to the relevant websites. You can also inform us about your experiences in rural development in your region by sending us an e-mail to the following address: [newsletter@enrd.eu](mailto:newsletter@enrd.eu)

## What can the Contact Point offer you?

▷ Ensuring close coordination with national networks	Coordination will be sought through direct contact, common meetings between national units and regular consultation. The goal is to match the activities of the European network with the needs at national level
▷ Support for transnational cooperation between Local Action Groups	The aim is to facilitate the search for partners and offer permanent information on selection procedures
▷ Secretariat for the entities of the network	This will include the Coordination committee and the Leader sub-committee
▷ Pool of experts	Experts can be mobilised in order to participate in various common analyses, e.g. for thematic groups, and also for more specific tasks linked for example to seminars or publications
▷ A set of information and communication tools	This will include publications like the present Newsletter, special issues on best practices, thematic publications and magazines. There will also be a website with purely informative sections in various languages and also more interactive and thematic sections. The site will also offer a FAQ and search engines for finding examples of good practices or Leader projects
▷ Seminars and conferences	They will be organised in order to promote information- and idea-sharing
▷ Promoting and representing the EN RD	Among its responsibilities, the Contact Point will promote and present the network at various meetings, conferences, fairs and other relevant events where information about the activities of the EN RD will be requested
▷ Reception of visitors	The Contact Point has the capacity to receive visitors in order to provide information about rural development and the EN RD's activity

At the 1 October meeting, the legal framework, structures and tasks of the EN RD and Contact Point were introduced to the members of the Coordination Committee. A comparative analysis of the NRNs in the EU Member States was prepared and presented by the EN RD Contact Point, as well as a summary of its first-year draft work programme.

With regard to experiences of national networks, presentations were made by representatives of three NRNs: the first was made by Päivi Kujala, Head of the Rural Network Unit in Finland where there are two rural development programmes: one for the [Finnish main-land](#) and another one for [Åland](#). Alessandro Monteleone from the Italian Ministry of Agricultural Policy, Food and Forestry introduced the [Italian NRN](#), which has been in operation for one year. Finally Henk Kieft of the Network for Rural Development introduced the [Dutch NRN](#) which was set up in October 2007.

Concern was expressed that in order for the NRNs to fulfill their tasks, significant institutional participation is needed: cooperation of stakeholders; involvement of stakeholders on a large scale (farmers, social domains, local actors); links with formal/informal networks; interinstitutional cooperation (especially in Member States where there are regional rural development programmes); and international cooperation.

In addition, the European Commission proposed some specific activities of the EN RD for 2008-09. Regarding the creation of the thematic working groups, three themes were proposed by the Commission and discussed by the Committee:

**Theme 1:** Targeting territorial specificities and needs in rural development programmes

**Theme 2:** Agriculture and the wider rural economy

**Theme 3:** Public goods and public intervention (for later launch)

An expert group on 'Policy delivery & governance' should support the work of the thematic groups.

## First meeting of the Leader sub committee

On 26th of November 2008, the Leader sub-committee of the European Network for Rural Development met for the first time. The structure of this committee is similar to that of the Coordination Committee (as described

## Who's Who: Members of the Coordination Committee

**Chairman:** European Commission, DG Agriculture and Rural Development

- Members:**
- one representative from each Member State for the national competent authorities
  - one representative from each Member State for the national rural networks (NRNs)
  - representatives from 12 organisations active in the field of rural development at Community level
  - one representative from the European organisation representing local action groups;
  - for the next meetings, 2 representatives of the Leader subcommittee

Staff of DG Agriculture and Rural Development, Directorate G. Horizontal aspects of rural development, G.3. European Network and monitoring of rural development policy, and of other relevant Commission services as well as staff of the EN RD Contact Point also participate in the Committee as support team.

above). Two of its members will be nominated as representatives for future Coordination Committee meetings.

Members discussed the first year's work programme and were consulted on how the European Network could best address the needs related to the implementation of Leader in the EU-27. The committee outlined that it was similarly important to ensure the dissemination and capitalisation of the Leader experiences, for the benefit of all RD actors.

Case studies presented from several Member States highlighted how Leader projects had been implemented under Axes 1, 2 and 3, and were followed by a discussion on the difficulties – and interest – of the mainstreaming of Leader. Some national networks were then invited to describe their specific activities to support LAGs. There was also a special focus made on transnational cooperation and the role of the EN RD in this field. The need for coordination between the EU-level and the national/regional levels was also highlighted.

## Meeting of the National Rural Networks

Held in Brussels, this first meeting of the National Rural Networks took place on the 27th of November 2008. It was an occasion for these networks to get to know each other, and to facilitate an exchange of ideas and network amongst themselves. During the course of the day, the networks were asked their views about: some proposed themes for the 'Capacity building for national networks' seminar' planned on 30-31 March 2009 in Brussels; their pressing needs in relation to support that could be provided by the Contact Point for their planned activities; and also their priority needs in respect of Transnational Cooperation. A discussion took place about the possibility of organising such meetings in the Member States

themselves, and representatives were invited to make suggestions for such events.

## The European Evaluation Network

The Evaluation Expert Network has been set up to fulfil the evaluation related functions foreseen by Article 67 (e) of Council Regulation (EC) No. 1698/2005. It is part of the European Network for Rural Development, but works independently in its daily tasks.

The Evaluation Expert Network is tasked to help establish good practice and capacity building in the evaluation of Rural Development Programmes, thereby increasing the utility of monitoring and evaluation as tools for improving the formulation and implementation of Rural Development Policy.

It is open to anyone dealing with the evaluation of Rural Development Programmes and measures in the EU. This includes rural development evaluators, programme managers, policy makers, academics and researchers, and other experts.

An Evaluation Helpdesk assists the European Commission in implementing the multiple tasks of the Evaluation Expert Network. The Helpdesk offers expertise and guidance on evaluation methods and tools, and data collection, as well as facilitates the exchange of good practice concerning programme evaluation and transnational cooperation in this area.

You can find out more about its work programme and structure under the following link: [http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/rurdev/eval/network/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/rurdev/eval/network/index_en.htm).

## "Health Check" of the Common Agricultural Policy

[http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/healthcheck/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/healthcheck/index_en.htm)

On the 20th November 2008, a year to the day since news of plans for a "Health-check" was first announced the EU agriculture ministers reached a political agreement on the Health Check of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). The Health Check will modernise, simplify and streamline the CAP and remove restrictions on farmers, which will help them to respond better to market signals and to face new challenges. The agreement covers a range of measures, including: the abolition of arable set-aside; increases in milk quotas and gradually leading to their abolition in 2015; and converts market intervention into a genuine safety net. Ministers also agreed to increase modulation, whereby direct payments to farmers are reduced and the money transferred to the Rural Development Fund. This will allow a better response to the new challenges and opportunities faced by European agriculture, including climate change, the need for better water management, the protection of biodiversity, and the production of green energy. Innovation linked to these four priorities will be encouraged. Member States will also be able to assist dairy farmers in sensitive regions and in adjusting to the new market situation.

## Green Paper on quality

[http://ec.europa.eu/yourvoice/ipm/forms/dispatch?form=gpagpro\\_dqual2&lang=en](http://ec.europa.eu/yourvoice/ipm/forms/dispatch?form=gpagpro_dqual2&lang=en)

A Green Paper to open the debate on how to help European farmers make the most of the quality of the food and drinks they produce was adopted by the European Commission on the 15 October 2008. This paper asked what could be done better to exploit the strengths of EU farming and better inform consumers about the products on offer. It also asked the stakeholders to present their views on how effective these measures are in delivering guarantees and communicating the qualities of the products, and to suggest improvements. The consultation period ran until the end of 2008. A Communication will be prepared in 2009 based on the results, which could

lead to legislative proposals at a later stage. For more information please also consult the following link: [http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/quality/policy/back\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/quality/policy/back_en.htm)



## A selection by the Contact Point of events until February 2009

When the Website of the EN RD will be available, a larger selection with direct links to the events' page will be offered.

If you want to inform us of your event, please send the link to [newsletter@enrd.eu](mailto:newsletter@enrd.eu)

### Building strong partnerships with the private sector for better jobs and inclusion

EN [http://www.oecd.org/document/54/0,3343,en\\_2649\\_34417\\_41681398\\_1\\_1\\_1\\_1,00.html](http://www.oecd.org/document/54/0,3343,en_2649_34417_41681398_1_1_1_1,00.html)

9 February, 2009

Vienna, Austria

This fifth annual meeting of the [OECD LEED Forum on Partnerships and Local Governance](#) will tackle the important question of how collaboration with the private sector can be strengthened to deliver better and more sustainable outcomes on the labour market. This event will examine some of the most advanced partnership innovations in connecting business with other local stakeholders to generate better jobs and inclusion. It will review a wide array of initiatives from the US, Denmark and the UK, to understand the different approaches.

### New roles and requirements in managing cross border cooperation (CBC) programmes of the European territorial cooperation

EN <http://www.europaeische-akademie.net/en/veranstaltungen/veranstaltungsuebersicht/s-1080001.html>

9-10 February, 2009

Berlin, Germany

This conference of the European Academy for Taxes, Economics and Law aims to become a meeting point for those involved in European territorial cooperation and the cross-border cooperation (CBC) programmes and will help in understanding how to comply with new EU regulations. Participants can: discuss the common challenges regarding the Lead Partner Principle; learn how to avoid irregularities; learn from experts and best practices about the management set-up of CBC programmes; understand how to set-up control systems and how to gain a deeper understanding of payment systems.

### International agricultural show / Salon international de l'agriculture (SIA)

FR <http://www.salon-agriculture.com/accueil/>

The 46th international agricultural show will be held at the Paris Expo (Porte de Versailles). The event is targeted at: professional visitors from agriculture and the agri-food industry and has over one thousand exhibitors, providing an excellent opportunity to meet with a variety of actors from the world of agriculture, including professional agricultural organisations dealing with research, training, and environmental issues.

### European Leader Expo

EN [www.leaderexpo.eu](http://www.leaderexpo.eu)

26 February - 1 March 2009

Budapest, Hungary

This is the first European Leader Expo along with the International Tourism Fair to which national delegations from all EU Member States are invited by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development of Hungary, the Hungarian Leader Alliance and ELARD (the European Leader Association for Rural Development). There is no registration fee for foreign national exhibitors, who can send delegations, including folk groups, rural artists and conference participants of up to 30 persons. Besides national delegations, foreign LAGs can organise joint exhibitions with their Hungarian counterparts, who will invite the delegations from the 26 member States for a free one day excursion of their own territories. For more information contact: [hajas@euragro.hu](mailto:hajas@euragro.hu) tel: +36 30 2104308, or consult the above website.

### Sustainable energy week (EUSEW)

EN <http://www.eusew.eu/>

9-13 February, 2009

Brussels, Belgium

Within the framework of the sustainable energy Europe campaign (SEE), the third EU sustainable energy week (EUSEW) is co-organised by the European Commission's Directorate-General for Energy and Transport, the European Institutions and major stakeholders concerned with sustainable energy. It is a good opportunity for private and public decision-makers, both in Brussels and across Europe, to come together and hear about: the latest policy and market developments; best practice on energy efficiency; renewable energies and clean transport.

## Reisepavillon

EN <http://eng.reisepavillon-online.de/>

FR <http://fra.reisepavillon-online.de/>

Munich, Germany

Reisepavillon is a unique sustainable tourism platform that brings together organisations and holidaymakers with an interest in and commitment to sustainable (environmentally and socially responsible) tourism. The fair will have an extensive supporting programme of trade events, travellers' tales, discussions, workshops and multi-media shows presenting a wide range of travel and tourist experiences. In focus theme for 2009 will be: (Tourism) challenges in countries along and beyond the 'green belt'. For information please contact the [organisers](#).



FIND OUT  
MORE

## WHERE TO FIND OUT MORE

EU Rural Development policy 2007–13 :

[http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/rurdev/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/rurdev/index_en.htm)

Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development :

[http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/index_en.htm)

The European Evaluation Network:

[http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/rurdev/eval/network/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/rurdev/eval/network/index_en.htm)

## RUR@L NEWS Contributions/Events

Don't forget to keep us informed by telling us about what you are doing in rural development in your area. Please send the comments to: [newsletter@enrd.eu](mailto:newsletter@enrd.eu)

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