

ENRD

m a g a z i n e

Connecting Rural Europe...

Winter
2012/2013
.....
English



MAIN STORY:
**ADDED VALUE
OF NETWORKING**

Funded by the



European Network for
Rural Development



Dear Reader,

Welcome to the latest issue of the ENRD Magazine – all you need to be inspired and uplifted by the value of networking this winter!

Fittingly, the theme of this issue is on the subject of networking itself, and our lead article examines its growing importance to EU rural development. Once again the array of innovative and exciting networking activities taking place across Europe is most impressive and, as always, the ENRD magazine aims to share these stories with the network at large.

Our ENRD Report brings you up to date on all the latest policy and ENRD news. We hear from the 16th NRN meeting in Cyprus in our NRN Focus section and we see LEADER in Action supporting sustainable business in Spain, amongst other things. Our Rural Focus, this issue, examines what we can expect from rural development programming, post-2014. The ever-popular EAFRD Projects section profiles initiatives which are currently helping to rejuvenate local communities across the EU, from supporting female entrepreneurs in the UK to protecting craftsmanship in

Denmark. We have three Over to You articles in the current edition – including one from Euromontana on tackling depopulation in Europe's mountainous areas. As always, we turn the microphone over to you for the In Your Own Words section, and we had great fun selecting our Out and About photos for this issue.

But most of all, we enjoyed hearing from you! The ENRD is a 'network of networks' and this magazine is evidence of your networking activities come to life! We would like to thank you all for your valuable contribution to European rural development at every level, and for sharing your stories with us, so that we in turn can share them with all of our stakeholders in all EU Member States. And we are always keen to do more! So please send any stories or suggestions you may have to: info@enrd.eu

And don't forget to save our pull-out 'Images of Rural Europe' at the centre of the magazine, chosen just for you from the amazing photos submitted for our Images of Rural Europe photo competition...

Until next time!



This cover photo 'Water Creatures' (Vodnici) by Martin Trcka was taken in the Horni Lidec village in Wallachia, Czech Republic. The children are dressed up in costume as part of the 'Shrovetide Parade' during the 'Masopust' or 'Fasching' (Fasting) Festival, in February 2012. The tradition is most common in Moravia but also occurs in Bohemia.

The photo won 2nd prize in the Rural Youth category of the ENRD Images of Rural Europe photo competition, in 2012. It was submitted by the LAG Valassko-Horni Vsacko.



Table of Contents

ENRD Report

2

A round-up of all the latest ENRD news, with a special focus on networks and networking.

NRN Focus

9

We zoom-in on a selection of projects from National Rural Networks around Europe, including Cyprus, which recently hosted the 16th NRN Meeting.

Over to you!

Euromontana: We hear about best practices in fighting depopulation in mountain areas.

Flanders, Belgium: A feature on how to make the most of peri-urban areas.

Romania: Read all about an innovative cultural benchmarking project in rural Dobrudja.

14

21

23

Images of Rural Europe

17

A 'pull-out and keep' selection of winning entries from the ENRD 'Images of Rural Europe' photo competition.

LEADER in Action

25

Local Action Groups (LAGs) from all over Europe inspire us with their interesting and innovative projects and events.

Rural Focus

30

Getting ready for a successful next programming period.

EAFRD Projects

32

A diverse selection of innovative rural development projects, including an environmentally-friendly flood resilience effort from Germany.

In Your Own Words

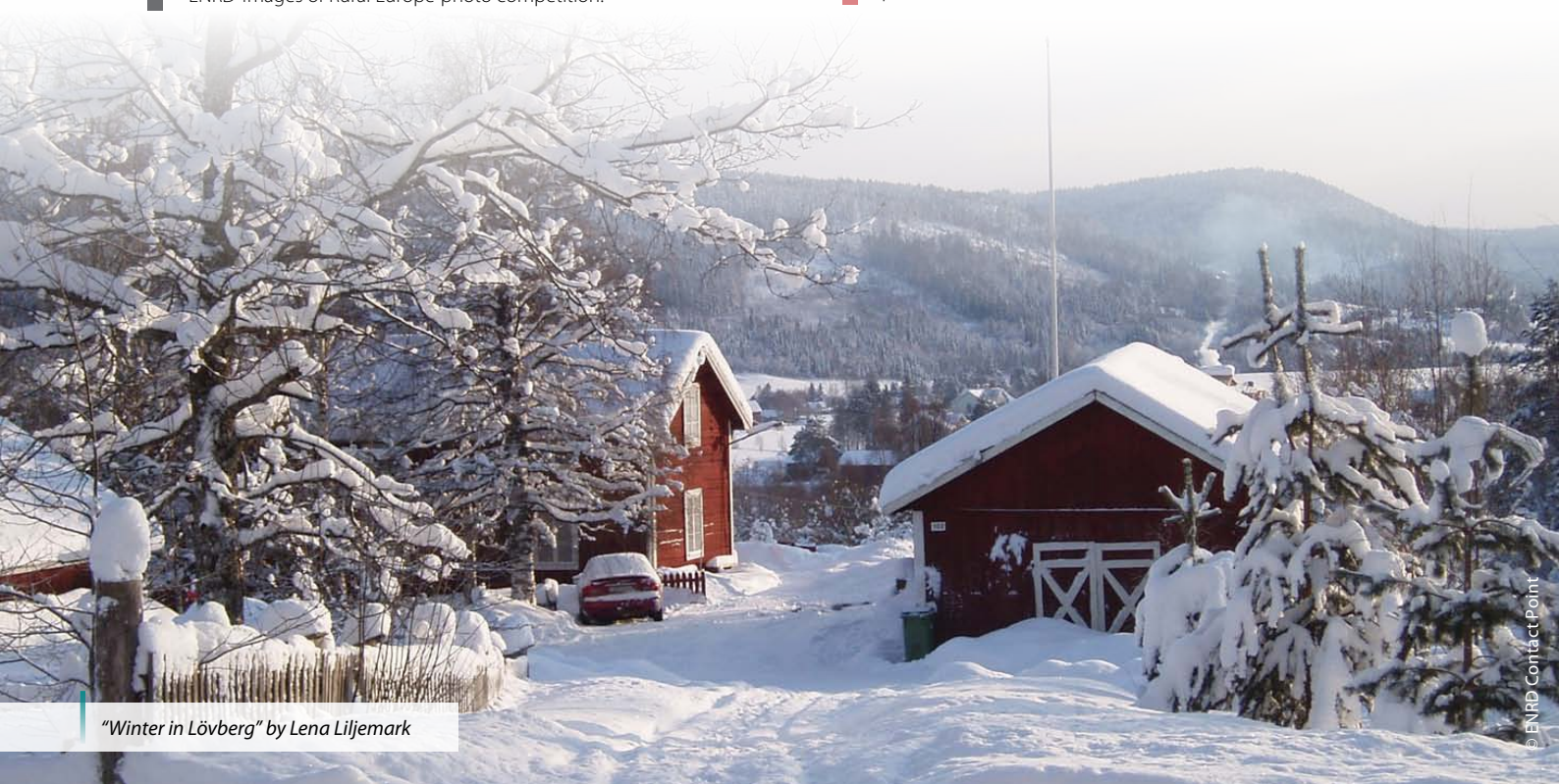
34

We turn the microphone over to you and hear what you have to say...

Out & About

35

Smile! You're on camera! A selection of your networking photos from recent events...



"Winter in Lövberg" by Lena Liljemark



© ENRD Contact Point

ENRD *Report*

The European Network for Rural Development (ENRD) is the hub that connects rural development stakeholders throughout the European Union. Read all about our latest activities.

Networking in action at the 2nd French LEADER 2007-2013 Cooperation Event "Cooperation, onwards and upwards!"

The added value of networking

Networking is recognised as a powerful policy instrument tool. And it is now poised to play an even greater role in delivering EU policy to citizens during the next programming period. The ENRD - as a network of networks - is at the forefront of the current debate about the added value of networking.

Networking is very much at the top of the policy agenda right now. Its value to European, national and local rural development is widely acknowledged and informed opinion increasingly appreciates the ability of networks to engage stakeholders and enhance the implementation of Rural Development Programmes (RDPs). Rural development stakeholders – including the National Rural Networks (NRNs) and the ENRD - are actively working to assess the value of their networking efforts so as to inform the debate.

Supporting EU policy delivery

The current generation of networks has enhanced the policy-making and policy

delivery process. The European Commission has reported that NRNs and the ENRD have significantly contributed to the consistency in programming, notably by ensuring an exchange of information and practices between RDP managers and stakeholders, and by carrying out joint analyses.

Networking is also synonymous with effective local development. It has grown to become a defining characteristic of the LEADER approach which is designed to help rural actors consider the long-term potential of their

local region. Looking ahead, the use of the LEADER approach is expected to expand to play a role for all five funds covered by the Common Strategic Framework.



© ENRD Contact Point

Networking is set to grow in the next programming period.



© ENRD Contact Point

Networking

The role of networking in Europe continues to evolve. Under the Commission's proposal for the next programming period the ENRD will remain the main policy network flanked by two more specialised networks, the European Innovation Partnership network for agriculture (EIP) and the European Evaluation Network for Rural Development (EENRD).

Effective networking is about sharing information and building strong relationships.

Clearly, there is a broad consensus that networks and networking have great potential for EU rural development policy. Their added value lies in an ability to produce solutions and results that would otherwise not occur. A problem shared is a problem halved, as the saying goes.

What is networking?

- Networking refers to the exchange of ideas, knowledge and practice around a shared interest to create value.
- There is no single definition; networking describes a wide range of activities and social connections.
- Different types of networks, driven by diverse goals and objectives, are informing, inspiring and empowering local people in rural communities on a daily basis.
- The power of a network is directly related to its ability to encourage information and relationships to flow through it.

Networking: The next generation

The Coordination Committee Workshop on the Future of Networking, which was held in Brussels on 17 September 2012, generated an exchange of views regarding the future framework for networking at European and national level. The workshop was also a preparatory step for the next generation of Rural Development Programmes (RDPs), with regards to rural networks. Over 80 representatives from Managing Authorities, NRNs, European organisations active in the field of rural development, research organisations and other relevant network stakeholder groups participated.

The workshop discussion on rural development networking highlighted a range of issues including the need for more clarity and guidance regarding the structure and mandate of the future EU networks and 'operational groups' within the context of the proposed EIP, agreement upon a common set of activities for all NRNs and the need to actively safeguard network relationships,

experience and continuity - both at EU and national level - during the transition to the next programming period. The full workshop report is available from: <http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/en-rd-events-and-meetings/seminars-and-conferences/cc-workshop-on-the-future-of-networking/>



© ENRD Contact Point

Discussing the future of networking at the Coordination Committee Workshop in Brussels, 17 September 2012.

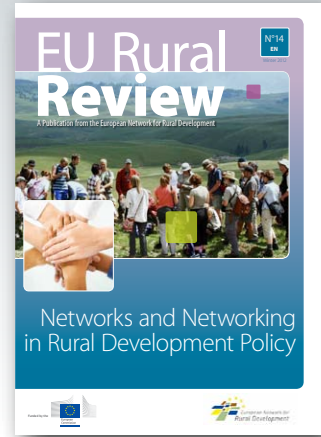
New EU Rural Review on networking

In EU Rural Review - Issue 14, networking is put under the microscope.

The review provides insight into the current understanding of networking in rural development policy at European, national and local level. In-depth articles profile European and rural networks, examine how networks work in practice - including success stories and case studies - and provide some food for thought regarding rural networking in the next programming period.

The aim is to de-mystify some important concepts regarding the role of networks and networking in rural development – with a specific emphasis upon outlining the use and effectiveness of networks as a rural development policy tool.

<http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/publications-and-media/eu-rural-review/>



Assessing networking

Rural development networks exist in order to improve the well-being, capacity and resilience of rural communities. Experts agree that such networks take time to develop and mature. Despite this, there is a real need to identify, demonstrate and communicate the added value of networking for rural development policy. Happily, there are already some practical examples out there...

The European Evaluation Network for Rural Development



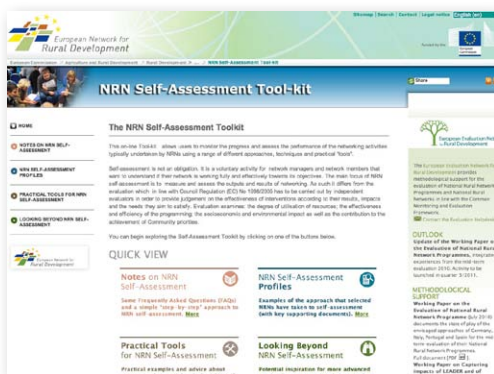
European Evaluation Network
for Rural Development

The European Evaluation Network for Rural Development supports quality and efficiency of evaluation of RDPs. The network targets the evaluation functions established by national authorities, evaluation experts and other stakeholders dealing with evaluation of RDPs. Network support includes development of evaluation methods and tools and guidance on evaluation processes.

<http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/evaluation/en/>

The NRR Self-Assessment Toolkit

This web-based resource of practical NRR assessment examples highlights a range of different approaches, techniques and practical tools.



<http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/networks-and-networking/nrr-self-assessment-tool-kit/>



Attendees at the LEADER Event 2012.



It is important to demonstrate the added value of networking.



Experts at a workshop on youth and agriculture in mountain areas at the European Mountain Convention.

© Alexia Rouby, Euromontana

European Mountain Convention targets young people

How to create a favourable environment for new generations was the theme of the latest European Mountain Convention – a major biennial event organised by Euromontana, the European multi-sectoral association for mountain areas. Delegates gathered in Chambéry in the Rhône-Alpes region of France to discuss what mountain areas can offer to young people and to evaluate how to enhance such locations' attractiveness for upcoming generations.

Held from 2-4 October 2012 the convention combined field trips, workshops and a plenary session. The ENRD CP

participated as a rapporteur at the event. The discussion focused on how young people in mountain areas can be best supported and on identifying recommendations for the future.

The overall conclusion is that support is needed to bridge the gap in relations between generations. This gap is the main obstacle to knowledge transfer and exchange of experience. Steps to promote greater political involvement by young people as well as participation in decision-making processes should be encouraged. Likewise, it was felt that the design and implementation of education

programmes would benefit from greater youth participation.

Issues identified involved lack of access to services, including high level education, and lack of access to credit and land for young people and young farmers looking to set up their businesses in mountain areas. The delegates were called on to make full use of the possibilities under the next rural development policy phase (2014-2020). The official conference declaration on how to improve the attractiveness of mountain areas can be accessed via: <http://www.euromontana.org/agenda/assises-chambery.html>

Transnational Cooperation at LEADER event

The LEADER Gathering 2012, held in Marseille, France, was an opportunity to monitor the LEADER implementation progress in EU Member States. Held on 25-26 September, the joint event was organised by LEADER France, the French LAG association, and ELARD, the European LEADER association for Rural Development. Examples of successful LEADER implementation were coupled with reflections on potential bottlenecks and proposals on how to overcome them in the 2014-2020 programming period.

As part of the event, the ENRD Contact Point ran a 'TNC Corner' at the event which

highlighted the value of transnational cooperation (TNC) projects. The ENRD explained how such initiatives can contribute to the objectives of Local Development Strategies and highlighted current TNC trends and the tools available to facilitate such cooperation.

The ENRD website features a list of fledgling TNC project proposal ideas. The online tool allows interested parties to contact the project promoter directly to find out more about the idea. It is part of the website's LEADER Gateway and can be accessed via: <http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/leader/cooperation-platform/leader-cooperation-offers>



The LEADER Gathering 2012 looked at LEADER implementation progress in the EU.

© ELARD



© ENRD Contact Point

Local development was a main topic of discussion at the OPEN DAYS 2012 event.

Local development at OPEN DAYS 2012

Community-Led Local Development (CLLD) was a hot topic at the 10th edition of OPEN DAYS - a major European networking platform for experts in regional and local development - which ran from 8-11 October 2012. In all, there were 20 workshops about the European Commission proposals for funding CLLD in urban, rural and fisheries areas post-2013. Four of them were organised by Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development (DG AGRI) in collaboration with the ENRD Contact Point.

Delegates concluded that the multi-fund approach is an opportunity to develop better Local Development Strategies (LDS) in the future. A good LDS involves an ongoing dialogue and clear division of tasks between the different key players - Local



OPEN DAYS
10th European Week of
Regions and Cities
Brussels 8 - 11 October 2012

Action Groups (LAGs), Managing Authorities, etc. - in order to avoid potential pitfalls. The preparation, design and implementation of local strategies for CLLD were considered, and the range of delivery models currently being used for LEADER examined for their potential application in a multi-fund environment. The role of networks in mobilising actors to create, share and build ideas were highlighted as part of a sustainable CLLD approach. The merits of transnational cooperation (TNC) between LAGs were also emphasised, despite the challenges of the multi-funding context for TNC. For further information about the sessions: <http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/en-rd-events-and-meetings/seminars-and-conferences/community-led-local-development-open-days-2012/>



© ENRD Contact Point

OPEN DAYS is a key EU regional policy event. Each year, in October, it welcomes some 6 000 participants to Brussels (local, regional, national and European decision-makers and experts) for more than 100 workshops and debates, exhibitions and networking opportunities. In addition to the main event, some 250 local events are run from September to November all over Europe.

Mediterranean Macro-Regional Network Cluster

The 2nd meeting of the Mediterranean Cluster took place on 17 October 2012 in Nicosia, Cyprus. The meeting took place the day before the 16th NRN Meeting, which was also held in Cyprus, and it allowed NRNs from Cyprus, France, Greece, Italy, Portugal and Spain to discuss quality food policies and short food supply chains. The ENRD Contact Point reported on the local agriculture and short food supply chains conference, which was organised by DG AGRI in April 2012.

The involved NRNs will now work on the adoption of a common opinion regarding food quality policy provisions of the European Commission's proposals for rural development policy after 2013.

Regarding short food supply chains, the French National Rural Network will circulate a survey to the NRNs of all Member States of the EU. Some conclusions regarding this topic in the Mediterranean countries will be incorporated.



Discussing short food supply chains at the 2nd Mediterranean Network Cluster meeting.

© NRN, Cyprus (Ministry of Agriculture, Natural Resources and Environment)

Highlighting the key future role of financial instruments

The recently held Coordination Committee Workshop on Financial Instruments raised the awareness of rural development stakeholders about the potential of financial engineering instruments for local development. Financial instruments, which include loans, guarantee funds and venture capital funds, provide an innovative and complementary approach to grant funding. A key advantage of such instruments is that they allow funding to be recycled and used to stimulate further rural development.

The objective of this well-attended event, which was held in Brussels on 26 October 2012, was to help bridge the existing information gap. The workshop presentations and discussions drew on experience from various EU funds and policies to

demonstrate key lessons learned by those who are successfully coordinating financial instruments at local, regional and national level. The workshop also informed participants about the latest news regarding the financial instrument-related provisions in the context of the Common Strategic Framework (CSF).

Use of financial instruments in RDPs has been limited to date, but demand is increasing and is expected to intensify as more flexibility is introduced by new rural development policy measures in the 2014-2020 period. The workshop was timed to coincide with the preparations underway for the next generation of RDP. For more information: <http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/en-rd-events-and-meetings/seminars-and-conferences/cc-workshop-on-financial-instruments/>



© 123rf

Learn more about financial instruments

Check out Issue 13 of the EU Rural Review - which outlines how rural development financial instruments provide new opportunities to tackle the economic crisis.



New ENRD gateway showcases rural communications examples

In October 2012, the ENRD launched the Communicating Rural Development Gateway. This unique online resource aims to strengthen the capacity of communications practitioners by providing access to communication tools that have been effective at local, national or European level. The Gateway is especially relevant to any organisation in search of ideas for its RDP communications plan during the next programming period.

With over 70 communications product examples at the launch, the Gateway is regularly updated with EAFRD-funded communications tools that have been used at national and European level to promote RDPs. If you would like to submit your communications product for inclusion on the Gateway, just contact us at: info@enrd.eu

The Gateway is fully searchable, by country-of-origin, target audience, category, etc. Each product on the database is accompanied by a detailed description that summarises the key objectives, provides

technical information and indicates specific contact details. The Gateway can be accessed from the ENRD website at: <http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/policy-in-action/communicating-rural-development/eafrd/>

The new ENRD online communications gateway.

European Innovation Partnership

The outcomes of a highly participatory event, held in Brussels on 19 November 2012, will enhance the activities of the European Innovation Partnership (EIP) on Agricultural Productivity and Sustainability.

Stakeholders from farmers' organisations, national authorities, research and academia, civil society organisations, advisors and innovation brokers discussed future priorities and how to accelerate innovation by facilitating knowledge exchange, communication, interactive approaches and networking.

A key challenge for European agriculture is not simply to produce more, but to do so in a sustainable manner. The aim of the agricultural EIP is to bring innovative farmers and researchers closer together by creating a working interface between agriculture, bio-economy, science and others at EU, national and regional level. Information about the EIP event is available at: http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/events/conference-eip-2012_en.htm



The agricultural EIP will bring innovative farmers and researchers closer together.

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ENRD Contact Point Visits



Visitors from the Wels-Land region in Austria visiting the ENRD Contact Point in Brussels.

© ENRD Contact Point

Austrian region of Wels-Land

On 18 September 2012, the ENRD Contact Point welcomed a group of Austrian rural community stakeholders from the Wels-Land region, along with MEP Josef Weidenholzer. The visit was organised by the LAG LEWEL as part of a Brussels study trip. A lively discussion was held about the future of LEADER under Community-Led Local Development (CLLD) and the challenge of multi-fund financing. LEWEL Managing Director Wolfgang Pichler felt that the trip helped to bring European policymaking closer to the local level.



The East Sweden EU office visited the ENRD Contact Point in September 2012.

© ENRD Contact Point

East Sweden EU Office

The Brussels-based East Sweden EU Office is part of the East Sweden Regional Development Council, which consists of the region's 13 municipalities and the Östergötland County Council. Four representatives of the East Sweden EU Office took part in the meeting at the Contact Point on 27 September 2012. The discussion focused on ENRD activity, with an emphasis on communications management and practical advice on how to accurately target local stakeholders.

Pays et Quartiers d'Aquitaine, France

A group of 20 people representing LAGs, local authorities, officials and social workers from the Pays et Quartiers d'Aquitaine came to the Contact Point on 25 September 2012. The meeting, which was organised at the request of Bureau Aquitaine Europe, comprised a general presentation on rural development policy and the ENRD role, followed by a fruitful question and answer session.



© ENRD Contact Point

NRN Focus

National Rural Networks (NRNs) are set up by Member States to bring those involved in rural development together to help implement EU rural development policy. This section features all the latest NRN news.

Participants working at the 16th NRN meeting in Cyprus.

Cyprus hosts 16th NRN Meeting

The Cypriot NRN was the host of the 16th NRN Meeting, which was held in Nicosia, Cyprus on 18–19 October 2012. Programming, monitoring and evaluation of future national rural networks was at the top of the agenda, followed by a discussion on the need for more effective communication tools and products to showcase the value of networking in the delivery of rural development policy.

Much energy was focused on how best to ensure that the networking function is embedded in the design of rural development programmes. Getting this right allows Managing Authorities to make best use of NRNs and to more accurately define the resources needed for efficient and effective operations. The meeting's 'Evaluation Helpdesk' reiterated the importance of having a common set of indicators by which the performance of the networks could be measured. Key aspects were considered in more detail, such as the 'intervention logic' and the objectives earmarked for NRNs, monitoring and evaluation of networking and identifying the minimum core functions of an NRN.

The role of communications for NRNs was also highlighted at the meeting. The ENRD's latest online tool, the Communicating Rural Development Gateway received much interest (for more about the Gateway see the article on [page 7](#)). The meeting also identified where capacity building and training may be needed for NRNs. On the second day a field trip giving delegates a chance to visit projects financed by the Cypriot RDP addressed a range of issues such as water management and rural entrepreneurship in remote areas.

More information about the 16th NRN meeting is available from: http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/en-rd-events-and-meetings/meetings/en/16th-nrn-meeting_en.cfm



© ENRD Contact Point

Sharing experience on how networking is embedded in the design of RDPs.



Bodaj by Vas vy mladenci.... Slovak folk song. Winning photo by Adriana Slivoka. (LEADER LAG: OZ Mikroregion RADOŠINKA)



Oberačka – Grape Harvest in Šalov. Winning image in the 'Our Traditions' category, by Aniko Botta. (LEADER LAG: Dolnohronske rozvojove partnerstvo)

Slovakia: LAG photo competition winners announced

The Slovakian NRN announced the winners of its 2nd Annual Photographic Competition at a celebratory 'Rural Evening' in Nitra, Slovakia on 24 August 2012. A publication was also launched at the event showcasing the 91 photographs submitted by 17 of Slovakia's Local Action Groups (LAGs). This is the second year that LAGs have been invited to submit images highlighting the best of their region, under six categories from 'Our Nature' to 'Our Traditions'. However it is the Slovakian general public who decides on the winning photos. In 2012, some 7 644 votes were cast.

"We were delighted with the high standard of the entries submitted for this year's photographic competition," said Anna Molnárová from the Slovakian NRN, "this initiative has caught everyone's imagination and enables us to highlight much of what is special about our rural areas and why we need to work with our communities to provide a sustainable future for these regions." A publication featuring images from the competition can be accessed here: <http://www.nsrv.sk/index.php?pl=12&article=451>

Estonia: Wood for Energy conference

Some 130 participants from six Member States gathered in Jänedä, northern Estonia, at the 'Wood for Energy' conference on 12-14 September 2012. Organised by the Estonian Private Forest Centre and the Estonian NRN, the conference brought together private forest owners, state forestry representatives and municipalities to discuss the cost-effectiveness of using wood for energy production, the benefits of wood-based energy for local communities and opportunities for private forest owners. Speakers from Latvia and the UK helped bring a wider European perspective to the conference and several practical examples of relevant Estonia-based projects were discussed. Delegates also visited a working wood fuel boiler and discussed local supply chains on a field visit. Further information is available from: www.maainfo.ee



Neeme Malva, who runs the biomass boiler at Tamsalu, explains how it works.



A biomass boiler at work.



Small producers' workshop at the conference.

© Sucursala Bucuresti, Monica Obregon

Romania: Rural challenges and opportunities discussed at NRN conference

The Romanian NRN held its first national conference, in Bucharest, on 12-13 September 2012. Some 400 participants attended the 'Rural Community: Challenges and Opportunities for Rural Development in Romania 2014-2020' conference. The European Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development, Dacian Cioloș, told participants how important the NRN and LEADER LAG's work is for the future of rural development. Romania's Minister for Agriculture Daniel Constantin also spoke at the event.

A wide range of presentations were heard on topics ranging from administrative arrangements for the next programming round to key opportunities for rural development in Romania, including those offered by local food and high nature value agriculture. These were complemented by workshop sessions and a series of short videos on a range of innovative rural development projects. Full details of the conference can be found at: <http://rndr.ro/EvenimentDetaliu.aspx?id=1122>

Netherlands: Promoting growth in cooperatives

Regional partners of Netwerk Platteland (the Dutch NRN) hosted three information events about the potential of cooperatives, in October and November 2012. One of these events, held in Groningen, enabled policy professionals in the areas of social care, environment, energy and housing to join LEADER coordinators and project developers to discuss how cooperatives work and the challenges they face. Two other sessions in Friesland and Overijssel sought to inform community members as to whether or not establishing a cooperative could provide a solution to their development issues.

Cooperatives offer many potential solutions ranging from the delivery of broadband to securing village services such as local shops or cafes, as well as enabling the community to become better organised and so more resilient to change. Marieke Koot from the NRN, who organised the study sessions, commented, "in this United Nations' Year of Cooperatives we see, hear and read a lot about new forms of cooperation. We think the cooperative model could help local initiatives to find new ways of financing and cooperating, both at village and regional level. We organised these meetings to encourage people to learn from each other's experiences." Find out more from: www.netwerkplatteland.nl and www.partoer.nl



Participants in a workshop on 1 November 2012 in Nijverdal, Overijssel.

© Marieke Koot



Inita Ate from Liepaja District Partnership provides feedback from one of the workshops.

Latvia: Working with LAGs to plan the future of LEADER

Over 50 participants, representing 31 LAGs, the Latvian NRN and the Latvian Ministry of Agriculture, came together in central Latvia to discuss the implementation of LEADER in the next programming period, on 5 September 2012. "The event was about listening to the views of LAGs. It is important that we and the Ministry are able to take on board lessons and ideas from those charged with delivering LEADER on the ground," outlined Zanda Dimanta from the Latvian NRN.

At the meeting, LAGs were informed about the new RDP and regulations relating to LEADER from both the EU and Latvian perspective. Discussions were also held on how to best implement the LEADER approach in 2014-2020. The

ideas generated were collated by the NRN for further consideration by the Ministry of Agriculture. The NRN is now establishing a committee made up of LAG representatives who will continue to inform on the development of Axis 4 of the new RDP. More information is available from: www.llkc.lv



The Latvian NRN seminar.

Northern Ireland: Rural Futures conference to inspire future RDP

Some 80 representatives of all axes of the Northern Ireland Rural Development Programme (RDP) came together at the Rural Futures conference on 11-12 October 2012, hosted by the Northern Ireland Rural Network. As Aileen Donnelly, Communications Officer from the Rural Network, explained, "we are now four years into the programme, so we felt it was important to create a space for people to be reinvigorated and to start to think in an aspirational way about the future of our rural areas. We only have a small window to plan for the future RDP so it's important we have some innovative input at this stage."

RURAL FUTURES
inspire...innovate...create...



Delegates at the Rural Futures event.

The networking event was divided into three key sessions. The 'Inspire' session featured presentations on the potential and value of the region. The 'Innovate' session involved a panel discussion with representatives from agricultural, food, energy, enterprise and social sectors and centred on thinking about the needs, wants and hopes of future generations. The third session, 'Create' focused on the vision required for progress towards the new RDP. Further details are available from www.ruralnetworkni.org.uk.

Sweden: Rural Parliament brings rural development officers together

Some 900 participants took part in the Swedish Rural Parliament, held in Ronneby on 6-9 September 2012. The occasion gives a voice to rural populations to influence policy and practice. The Swedish NRN took the opportunity to arrange a seminar of municipal rural development officers from across the country.

The Swedish NRN regularly organises virtual working groups on topics ranging from renewable energy and land-use planning to local finance. The seminar at the Rural Parliament was a first however. "Virtual meetings are great but face-to-face meetings are still very important to build good sustainable relations. For this reason, we decided to invite the experts to this network meeting in Ronneby," explained Beata Allen from the Swedish NRN.

Participants shared experiences, identified common issues and sought solutions with the NRN. The initiative will hopefully be the start of a more permanent network. "The next step will be a new virtual think tank, with an agenda based on participant needs, and this will require on-going dialogue with a smaller group of experts," said Beata Allen. Further information is available from: www.landsbygdsnatverket.se



© Lotti Jilsmo

Lotti Jilsmo, rural developer in the municipality of Västervik who participated in the Swedish Rural Parliament.

Denmark: Agri-environment applications reach record levels

The Danish NRN reports that the Danish Ministry for Food, Agriculture and Fisheries received a record number of applications for its Rural Development Programme (RDP) Agri-Environment Measure, in its September 2012 round. A total of 244 grant applications were made – a rise of 38 from 2011. In particular, there has been a significant increase in grazing-related projects, which has been greeted positively, due to the fact that the maintenance and reinstatement of grazing is essential to maintain some natural habitats that have been in decline in recent years.

Lene Sørensen, Unit Chief of the Centre for Project Grants at NaturErhvervstyrelsen, the Danish AgriFish Agency, said, "we are pleased to see that there is great interest in nature and environment related projects among farmers, as these projects contribute greatly towards the green transformation of agriculture."



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A record number of applications were received for the Danish Agri-Environment measure.



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Over to You!

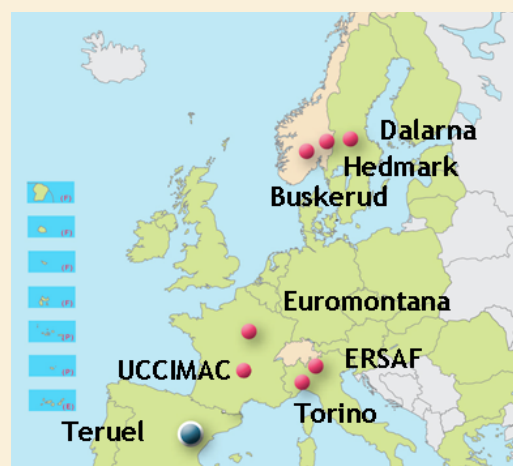
In this section, we ask ENRD stakeholders to share stories that matter to them and which have relevance for everyone in the rural development community.



Increasing the attractiveness of mountain areas

PADIMA - Policies Against Depopulation In Mountain Areas - is a project to exchange best practice on the fight against depopulation in mountain areas. Eight partners from five European countries are collaborating to produce policy guidelines on successful methods to attract new inhabitants to mountain areas.

Euromontana, the European Association of Mountain Areas together with the Provincial Department of Teruel, Spain, has developed a three-year INTERREG IVC project to reflect on mountain attractiveness for permanent inhabitants, on services needed to support it and on elements of a dynamic local economy. Six other partners have joined the PADIMA project: Torino Province and ERSAF in Italy, the counties of Buskerud and Hedmark in Norway, the Union of Chambers of Commerce and Industry from Massif Central (UCCIMAC), France, and the region of Dalarna in Sweden.

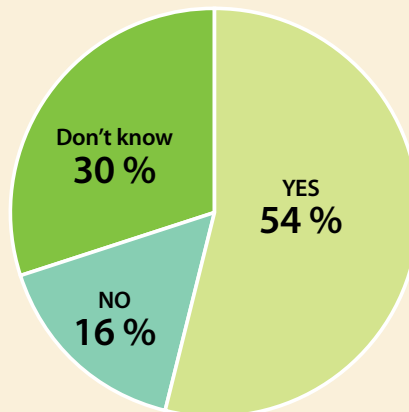


PADIMA project partners

The PADIMA project is first and foremost about understanding mountain people. According to a 2010 study by the European Environment Agency, mountain people represent 13% of the EU population and 17% of the wider European population. The mountain population is far from being static: some people leave - especially young people,

women and businessmen, looking to find places which offer more job opportunities or better access to a certain type of life. Others are moving in from the cities or from other countries, in search of different opportunities and a special quality of life.

Would you consider living in your region when you have finished education ?



Source: PADIMA project

The age structure of mountain society is characterised by an elderly population which outweighs the young. The result is a negative birth balance, i.e. fewer children are born to replace those who die. However, many municipalities in the project have a stable or slightly increasing population, as a result of positive migration, such as the rural areas of Teruel, Spain.

Good practices for mountain areas

Project partners reflected on how to improve the attractiveness of mountain regions. Based on their own experience they also considered the potential components of a policy to combat depopulation. The work has highlighted three key areas:

Education and training: if people are to remain in or to move to mountain areas, they must be given an opportunity to access

high-quality and diversified education, not only as children but also as teenagers, young adults and throughout their adult lives.

A dynamic and diversified economy is needed to provide the types of jobs that people want in the 21st Century; i.e. interesting jobs to retain young people or to encourage them to return to where they were born to live and work, or to encourage others in search of a different type of life.

A positive and strong image and identity is very important for a region. This means being able to demonstrate the attractiveness of living and working in a mountain area.

The work of the PADIMA project has been intense, comprising surveys with residents, business and public sector representatives; SWOT analyses; interviews with local stakeholders on innovative practices; and analysis and formulation of policy recommendations. By way of example of the level of cooperation the project generated, PADIMA partners identified 99 good practices that have had a positive effect on retaining people in mountain territories and improving daily lives.

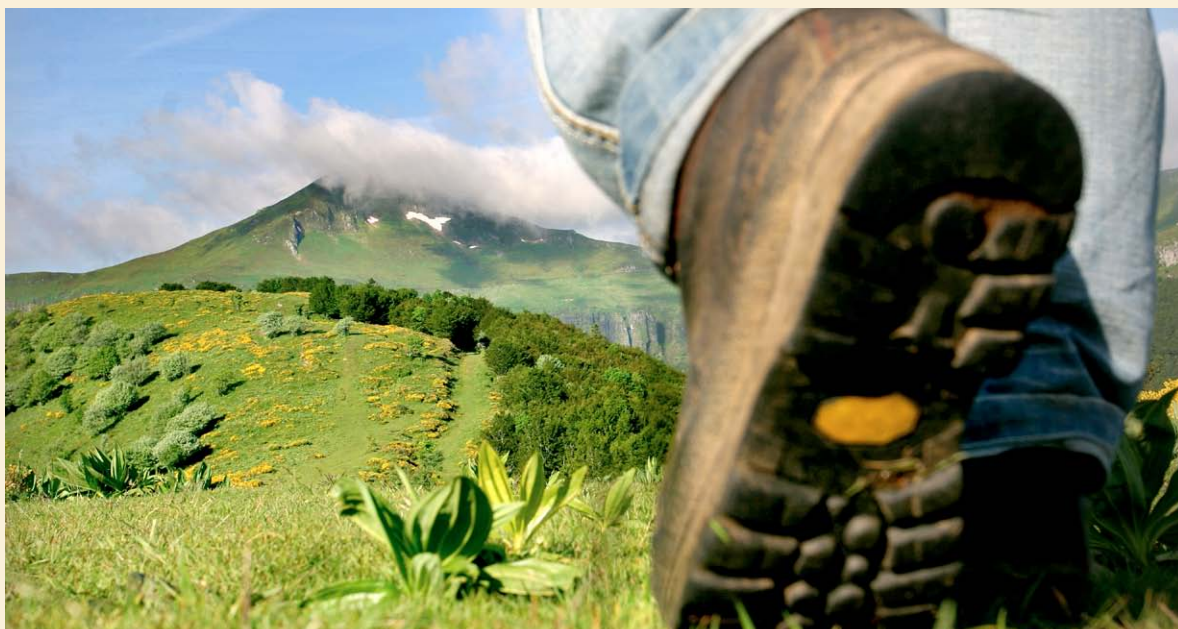
PADIMA has reported on the overall population trends, and in partner regions has developed three strategies to increase the attractiveness of mountain areas for different target groups, and prepared final recommendations on how the project results can contribute to the better formulation of policies for 2014-2020.

Key findings:

Young people are very positive about life in mountain areas and are interested in remaining there or in returning once they have finished their studies. The main qualities PADIMA respondents value in their local society are that people know and care about each other, that there are diverse and easily accessible outdoor activities, and that they consider that there is less criminality than in big cities.



© Euromontana



© Euromontana

Three strategies; three target groups

To improve attractiveness to **young people**¹, the project partners identified the need to improve the supply of diversified education and training opportunities, including the rethinking of the education system to embrace the new possibilities of ICT. Recruitment of young people into the local economy must be enhanced, with links between schools and businesses strengthened and jobs better advertised. Finally, it is essential to promote a positive image of the mountain area and to clearly communicate local opportunities. Improving the cultural vibrancy is also crucial.

For the **working age population**², economic aspects are of primary importance. Job opportunities need to be communicated well, job seekers should be well supported and training opportunities may need to be adapted. A strong territorial image - and many good practices related to territorial branding, local ambassadors and marketing campaigns were noted - supported by a well-organised welcoming policy will help those who are settling into mountain areas. Finally, services in the field of education, especially schools and child-care, are crucial for young couples. Training opportunities must also be diversified and migrants should be helped to integrate via specific courses.

Mountain territories are ageing. PADIMA recommends improving the situation for **elderly or retired people**³, whilst also seeing economic opportunities. A key strategic objective must be to develop an innovative care sector, training people to operate in that sector and to ensure a dynamic provision of services. In addition, using the knowledge of retired people benefits everyone: encouraging the older generation to volunteer to mentor young people could be a brilliant idea!

More information about the PADIMA project is available from: www.padima.org

1. A brighter future for young people in mountain areas!

http://www.euromontana.org/images/stories/projets/PADIMA/CP2/brochures/young_light.pdf

2. Attracting more working people in mountain areas

http://www.euromontana.org/images/stories/projets/PADIMA/CP2/brochures/working_light.pdf

3. Increasing the attractiveness of mountain areas for retired people

http://www.euromontana.org/images/stories/projets/PADIMA/CP2/brochures/retired_light.pdf

Good practice

Two PADIMA examples of good practice that are now being replicated in other mountain regions to help combat depopulation.

Recruiting for the wood industry

In the context of an ageing labour force, the wood industry in Norway was concerned about the recruitment of skilled workers. Thus, some 43 manufacturers of furniture, interiors and wood products took the initiative to meet students from secondary schools and to present their profession to them. Young people often prefer jobs promoted by the media, involving communication, new technology or music; and other opportunities risk being categorised as uninteresting or old fashioned. The wood industry representatives encouraged the pupils to design their own furniture. Since the meetings, 30 students have applied to work in participating wood industry companies. The companies selected the best students and they have continued to meet new students every year.

Wool industry decline? Not in Ardèche!

In the declining, traditional sector of wool processing in Ardèche, France, a group of workers formed a cooperative in order to reorganise a failing enterprise. They combined the heritage value of the buildings and traditional aspects of wool production with new methods of product creation and marketing. Thus production and marketing activities have been integrated with the cultural - through the creation and management of two local museums - and tourism sectors, e.g. through the opening of a bookstore, cafe and restaurant for visitors.

This article was contributed by Euromontana, the European multisectoral association for co-operation and development of mountain territories (www.euromontana.org).



Gathering Wood to Bake Bread by John Rousopoulos

This engaging photo shows an elderly woman carrying wood to use for baking traditional bread in the mountainous Nafpaktia region in rural Greece. It is not uncommon in rural areas for locals to collect wood for home-made stone ovens – used for baking traditional bread. The photo was submitted by the LAG Aitoliki Development Agency S.A. in Greece, in the Rural People category of the ENRD Images of Rural Europe photo competition.





The Fishing Pond by Marie Holm

This stunning image shows an area previously used as a fishing pond but now used to grow crops, in the Ávike Bruk in the Timråbygd area in Sweden. The area possesses fantastic natural resources, including six nature reserves. The entire coastline from Ångermanland around Áviken and inland towards Söråker offers a wealth of gems for lovers of nature and beautiful scenery. The photo was submitted by the LAG Timråbygd in the Rural Environment category of the ENRD Images of Rural Europe photo competition.



'Draci' or evil spirit costume, from Vișeu de Sus, Maramures, by Gabriel Saplontai and Lucian Hotoiu

A villager from Vișeu de Sus, in the Maramureș region of Romania, dressed as a draci or evil spirit as part his performance at the Vișlain festival, at Christmas. The festival, linked to local traditions with Germanic roots illustrates the story of King Herod and the baby Jesus. The draci wear whips, bells and horns to represent the evil spirits. The villager's coat is a reversed traditional fleece. This photo was submitted by the LAG Codrii Hertei, Romania in the Rural People category of the ENRD Images of Rural Europe photo competition.



© Jacek Cislo

Winner of the first prize in the PURPLE (Peri-urban regions platform Europe) photo competition, taken in the Silesian region of Poland.

Contributing to rural-urban bonds in peri-urban regions

Organised to coincide with OPEN DAYS 2012 in Brussels (see page 6 for more information) Vleeva, the Flanders-Europe liaison agency, held an event on 10 October 2012 about rural-urban linkages in peri-urban regions.

Urbanisation is putting increased pressure on open spaces and on the environment. In Flanders, there is persistent suburbanisation pressure and rural areas are becoming more and more urbanised. This subject is of much importance to many regions and the full-day conference and workshop attracted participants from around Europe.

Flanders led the consortium of 10 peri-urban regions and cooperated with PURPLE (www.purple-eu.org) the peri-urban regions platform, to set up the OPEN DAYS conference on 'Contributing to rural-urban bonds in peri-urban regions' (<http://en.vleeva.eu>)

RuralUrbanBonds2012). The aim of the morning session was to contribute to the debate on the development, challenges and opportunities for rural-urban partnerships within these regions.

As defensive walls are no longer built around our cities, the boundary between the edge of the city and the countryside, or where the urban ends and the rural begins, has become less obvious. The picture is even more complex in highly-developed metropolitan regions. Clusters of towns and cities with strong economic and social ties are surrounded by smaller settlements with countryside and open space in between. This peri-urban reality is growing across Europe. In such zones, we have to manage this merging of urban and rural by mitigating the disadvantages and exploiting the (many) opportunities.

These challenges and opportunities were addressed by three regional representatives and by the European Commission (EC). Wladyslaw Piskorz, from the EC's Directorate-General



© Alexander Louvet

Participants at the morning session of the OPEN DAYS conference on peri-urban regions.

for Regional and Urban Policy, focused on the role of cohesion policy for rural-urban partnerships. He emphasised the RURBAN study (http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/what/cohesion/urban_rural/index_en.cfm) as a basis for further EU policy development.

G rard Blanc from the Nord-Pas de Calais region in France confirmed that there is a need for an integrated approach to optimise rural-urban synergies. The region developed a directive on peri-urbanisation to integrate territorial development policy. The aim is to achieve a new balance through efficient land management and a more coordinated action plan for issues such as mobility.

Thomas Kiwitt from Stuttgart argued that functional areas can be a more relevant and appropriate model for territorial development of regions. He noted the example of accessibility and transport in Stuttgart. Hans Leinfelder from Flanders sees peri-urban regions as a laboratory for creative research on future urbanisation. They need a much clearer definition and recognition at EU level as specific spaces with particular management needs. He argued for an alternative planning discourse. Open space is new public space in a peri-urban context and there is an evolution towards the concept of 'the city in the countryside'. He acknowledged that while the idea of a peri-urban directive is premature, the concept should be given more consideration.

The afternoon session (http://en.vlewa.eu/locaevent_RuralUrbanBonds2012) was dedicated to bottom-up initiatives in Flanders addressing specific problems and opportunities. PURE HUBS (www.pure-hubs.eu), a new INTERREG IVB project lead by the farmers' association Boerenbond, aims to reconnect the relationship between rural practice and the needs for urban well-being. The project is to contribute to quality of life in both cities and their rural hinterlands. Hubs provide economic and social added value by empowering urban and rural stakeholders through involvement within networks facilitating interaction and knowledge transfer. The Sustainable Urban Fringes (SURF) project - www.sustainablefringes.eu - involving the provinces of Antwerp, East Flanders and West Flanders, has been recently finalised by different types of partners and experts from across the North Sea Region. They exchanged information and developed a common approach towards the sustainability of urban fringe areas in order to formulate policy recommendations and to develop a toolkit of techniques and successes for local projects.

A lack of communication and cooperation between neighbouring local authorities has been criticised by some. A new more collaborative approach has recently been successfully trialled by 18 municipalities in the Westhoek area of West Flanders, where a multi-agency forum has been created in which development issues can be debated and development strategies formulated.

Another series of projects was highlighted in the attempt - by the Flemish land agency (VLM) - to connect a number of green spaces in the Vlaamse Rand, the Flemish municipalities around Brussels.

The challenges raised by these projects were addressed in the panel debate with Alessandro Proia of the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (www.ccre.org), Jonas Scholze of the German Association for Housing, Urban and Spatial Development, Paul Van der Sluys of the Flemish land agency and MEP Elisabeth Schroedter, who was the rapporteur of a European Parliament Opinion, published in October 2012, which called for the integration of rural-urban linkages. The panel agreed on the importance of such linkages for European practice and policy, the need for support for Community-Led Local Development initiatives and on the need for synergies between relevant policy and governance levels.

The day concluded with the announcement of the winners of a European peri-urban photography competition organised by PURPLE (www.purple-eu.org/news/116/15/Peri-urban-photography-competition). Over 200 photos were submitted and the best 30 were displayed at the Vlewa office.

This article was contributed by Vlewa, the liaison agency for Flanders-Europe (www.vlewa.eu).



© Tim Hudson



Members of the Turkish Community in Tulcea and Constanța counties at the 'Inter-ethnic cohabitation in Dobrudja area' organised by the Cumpăna village Myority on 26 May 2012.

Projects, identities, and ethnic milestones in rural Dobrudja

The ethnic mosaic in Dobrudja has helped to build the rich social, cultural and economic identity of the villages in this area. Ethnic minorities contribute to local development in this multicultural area by running activities and projects that add value to the local rural environment. In order to promote this ethnic diversity, festivals are held every year in Dobrudja showcasing the traditions of the more than 15 ethnic groups which, over time, have settled in this area.

It is in this context that the local council in Cumpăna, in Constanța County, organised the fifth 'Interethnic Conviviality in Dobrudja' festival on 26-27 May 2012. The event promoted and showcased the customs, costumes, dances and traditional cuisine of the local ethnic Turks, Tatars, Lipovan Russians, Armenians and Greeks living in the counties of Constanța and Tulcea.

The Aromanian community in Mihail Kogălniceanu commune, Constanța County

The women of this ethnic group, who have associated under the umbrella of the *Mușata Armână* Foundation based in the commune of Mihail Kogălniceanu, have preserved the occupational traditions of the Aromanian minority and now manufacture artefacts made of cotton and wool by looming or crochet needling.

Woven items - such as rugs, tablecloths, and napkins - are inspired by the highly valuable heritage of the Aromanians. They are used as adornments to hang on the walls of traditional houses. Another product category covers woollen socks and stockings made from a secondary product (wool), which is produced by another craft specific to this population: weaving.

In order to preserve these traditions for the future, the *Mușata Armână* Foundation

together with the *Gheorghe Celea* Museum in the commune of Mihail Kogălniceanu, now hosts practical demonstrations of the craft of loom-working and special workshops about cooking.

The workshops are among 50 targets highlighted in five tourist itineraries across Dobrudja (the cultural-historic itinerary, the crafts' itinerary, the wildlife itinerary, the cuisine itinerary and the itinerary of festivals and events) that are promoted under the project entitled *TRANS-TOUR-NET: Production and marketing of pilot cross-border tourist products in Dobrudja*, funded under the 2007-2013 Romanian-Bulgarian Cross-border Cooperation Programme. The general target of the project is to integrate Dobrudja's natural, ethnic, historic and cultural resources into tourist products, and it is aligned with both the general target of Measure 313, which supports tourist development in rural areas, as well as with the specific objective of Measure 312, which encourages the conservation of cultural heritage.

The Turkish community in the village of Fântâna Mare, Independența commune, Constanța County

The village of Fântâna Mare (or *Başpunar*, as the Turks call it) is fully inhabited by Turks. Total population: 430. The main activities of the locals are agriculture, sheep breeding, cow breeding and beekeeping. Most of the young people have left the village to work in urban areas or abroad. Men do not wear shalwars anymore and women no longer wear veils, but life is not so different from decades ago, and the minaret is still the only building that overlooks this community.

Of the total four private investments in agriculture made in the commune of Independența under Measure 121 of the national Rural Development Programme (RDP), one has been made by a farmer from Fântâna Mare and involved buying farming machines.

The only EU-funded project in this commune was implemented in 2003, when the mayor's office in Independența obtained €965 412 of Sapard funding under Measure 2.1 to stone-pave the roads inside the village limits and to build a water drainage canal.

The community of Lipovan Russians in Carcaliu

The commune of Carcaliu (2 800 inhabitants) is located in North-Western Dobruja on the right-hand bank of the Danube. 95% of the locals are of Lipovan extraction.

They mainly work in agriculture and fishing. The national RDP is hardly used by the locals, two people have accessed semi-subsistence measure (141) and one the micro-enterprises measure (312), primarily because most youngsters have left the village to find a job abroad. They have worked in Italy, Spain and Greece and have now returned and re-settled in this area, living in the beautiful houses they have built for themselves.

The local council of Carcaliu has accessed a number of government programmes in order to develop the local infrastructure. The targets of these programmes converge with



Arman women from Mihail Kogalniceanu village, Constanța county – processing wool in a traditional way.

© 'Museata Armena' Foundation

the targets of the national RDP: a project devoted to water supplies, worth around 3.5m Lei, under Government Ordinance No. 7/2006 that created the rural infrastructure development programme. Secondly, the local authorities also implemented a sewer building project, worth about 10.6m Lei, under a programme devoted to protecting water resources that involves the building of integrated water supply systems, water treatment facilities, sewerage and cleansing stations.

The Greek community in the commune of Izvoarele, Tulcea County

The only Greek community in Romania has settled along the road from Tulcea to Măcin, in the highlands of Niculițel. Ninety percent of the 1 400 inhabitants of the commune of Izvoarele are Greek.

The office of the Greek community in Izvoarele is the place where Greeks of all ages meet at the end of the week or after religious services that are conducted during holidays, and where Greek children learn the Greek language.

This community has seen an obvious revival once the local youngsters - who had formerly worked in Greece - started to return home and to invest in agriculture or animal breeding farms. Apart from the field

cropping farms, other new cultures involve roses, watermelon and vegetal greenhouses. Eleven people have accessed the young farmers measure (112) in order to build plant farms and beehives and another 23 subsistence farms have received support based on Measure 141. Under the farm modernisation measure (121), four farmers who hold surface areas of over 500 ha have purchased modern machines to help them deliver high-performance agricultural output.

This brief description of some of the ethnic communities that live in Dobruja reveals that people's occupations and their economic lives are not that different from one ethnic group to another, or from the activities of the majority of the population. The occupations and economic activity reflect people's adaptation to local conditions.

The identity of each ethnic group stems from its respective traditions and has been transposed into a cultural, linguistic and religious mosaic; the peaceful and harmonious conviviality of these ethnic groups is an expression of the EU motto: unity in diversity.

*This article was contributed by the Romanian National Rural Network (www.rndr.ro). It was originally published in Romanian in the June/July 2012 edition of *România Rurală*, the network's magazine.*



© Dumfries and Galloway Leader Programme

Launch of new community BBQ in Kirkconnel, in the region of Dumfries and Galloway.

LEADER *in Action*

Local Action Groups (LAGs) are local public private partnerships who work to promote LEADER's 'bottom-up' approach to rural development in the EU. Here we feature some recent and notable LAG-related activities.

Day of the Regions celebrated around Europe

The 13th Day of the Regions was celebrated in communities across the EU during October 2012. In Germany, Ireland, the Netherlands and Scotland individual communities hosted events and activities, aimed at capturing the essence of life in their region and encouraging more participation at local level. The movement started in the regions of Bavaria and North-Rhine Westphalia in 1999 and is now a nationwide movement in Germany, with over 1 200 events taking place this year. The baton was then taken up by Groningen region in the Netherlands, in 2004, with the neighbouring Drenthe region participating in 2011, thanks to LEADER support. The Scottish region of Dumfries and Galloway supported by its LEADER LAG joined the movement in 2011 and this year hosted over 150 events across six communities. This year was the first that communities in Ireland took part in the Day of the Regions festivities and plans are underway for Finland, Poland and Austria to develop activities for 2013. For more, check out: www.tag-der-regionen.de, www.dagvanderegio.nl and www.dayoftheregion.co.uk



© Dumfries and Galloway Leader Programme

Face painting fun in Kirkconnel.

Bulgaria: Cooperation amongst LAGs

The LEADER LAG in Troyan and Apriltsi, in Bulgaria, hosted a three-day conference about encouraging transnational cooperation (TNC), from 25-27 October 2012. Participants heard about experiences of collaborative work from long-established LAGs including the Anglona Romagna and Logudoro Goceano LAGs from Italy, the NGO North-Harju Partnership from Estonia and LAGs Vizovicko and Slušovicko from the Czech Republic. Participants were also given the opportunity to present their ideas for cooperation

projects and a round table networking session fostered the setting up of new partnerships. Two new projects were developed. The first is an agro-food and tourism project linking LAGs in Sardinia and Bulgaria. The second project will bring Bulgarian LAGs together to revive and preserve traditional local crafts. Further details are available from: www.migta.org



Finnish and UK delegates begin their study tour of Bempton cliffs and headland, East Riding of Yorkshire.

England: International conference on nature tourism

An English LAG hosted a conference on nature tourism in Bridlington, North East England, on 3-4 October 2012. The meeting, which was held as part of an ambitious transnational cooperation (TNC) project celebrated the rich natural heritage of the region, as well as the potential for using diverse landscapes and wildlife for tourism growth throughout the EU. Those in attendance also took part in field trips to coastal and wetland nature reserves in the area, renowned for their diverse bird life. The TNC project involves partners from Hungary, France, Finland and the UK (Scotland and England) - with six LAGs from along the east coast of England alone, all collaborating to strengthen nature tourism in the region.

Dee Mitchell, LAG Coordinator of the LEADER Coast, Wolds, Wetlands & Waterways LAG, who hosted the conference said, "our aims were to share knowledge and experience with our transnational partners, as well as to inform and encourage local business activity. We are delighted with the outcomes." Further information about English regional cooperation and the conference is available from: www.yorkshirenaturetriangle.com. Information about the Coast, Wolds, Wetlands & Waterways LEADER programme can be found at: www.ruralprogrammeseast-yorkshire.co.uk/rdpe



The Sculpture Trail at South Landing – inspired by the Flamborough Long Sword Dancers; the swords are interwoven to form a 'lock' which is held in the air. In the past it is said the lock was put over the head of a spectator until a ransom was paid.

Denmark: National Open Day LAG/FLAG

National Open Day for Local Action Groups and Fisheries Local Action Groups (FLAGs) was held at some 50 locations across Denmark on 30 September 2012. The overall aim of the event was to communicate best practice project examples and disseminate information about the work of LAGs and FLAGs. To this end, the event saw members of the general public invited to Denmark to see the results of supported projects. Some LAGs/FLAGs gathered several projects in one location, with LAG-Svendborg choosing the location of the local adventure park to promote its projects. A short video of the event showcasing the projects supported by LAG-Svendborg is available to view here: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=707Kro6q0-o&feature=youtu>



© Kirsty Mann, Forestry Commission Scotland

Scotland: Supporting growth through community allotments

A LEADER-supported community allotment initiative in Fort William, Scotland, held an open day to encourage participation in local fruit and vegetable growing on 5 August 2012. The SLUG group was formed in 2010 and leases 17 allotments to a diverse range of individuals - both young and old, as well as families and even a local youth group. SLUG member Kirsty Mann said that, "while communities managing allotment schemes are relatively new in Scotland, we have found it a very worthwhile experience and it gives a real sense of community... especially on a fine day when everyone is out working on their plots."

The SLUG group is one of several community-based allotment schemes to have been supported by the Highland LEADER Programme. "We have been fortunate to see a real upsurge in interest in these local growing projects, which have provided a range of additional benefits, including the provision of opportunities for people with learning or physical disabilities," said Nicole Wallace, Manager of the Highland LEADER Local Action Group (LAG). Further information is available from: www.highlandleader.com

The Netherlands: Stimulating collaboration in the north of the country

A Dutch LAG ran a series of networking evenings for LEADER project developers in village halls across the Hoogeland region of the Netherlands from May to October 2012. The meetings saw an increasing number of participants discuss factors that helped make their projects successful. The initiative was the brainchild of Het Hoogeland LEADER Manager Jan Beekman, who realised that, "while the LAG had supported over 250 successful projects, including everything from village playgrounds and tourism initiatives to small enterprises, there was little in the way of exchange and learning between the project developers themselves." The networking evenings have enabled the LAG to develop improved collaboration and mutual learning, which it is hoped will help sustain future development capacity, a process described by Jan Beekman as being similar to, "loose beads turning into a string of pearls." Find out more from: www.leaderhoogeland.nl

Opening Day of the SLUG Allotments in 2009. Martyn Calam chairman of SLUG Allotments with Roseanna Cunningham, Scottish Government Environment Minister at that time.



© Kirsty Mann, Forestry Commission Scotland

A scarecrow protecting the SLUG allotments.



Some of the many visitors to the ENRD Images of Rural Europe photo exhibition in Italy.

© Andre Smal

Italy: Images of Rural Europe exhibition attracts huge interest

Some 2 500 people visited the ENRD's Images of Rural Europe exhibition, during its first two days, in the Apulia region of south-east Italy, in October 2012. The magnificent Castel Del Monte in Andria was chosen by the LAG Le Città di Castel del Monte as the perfect setting for the Italian leg of the exhibition's European tour. The collection of images features 30 winning entries to a photo competition showcasing the beauty and diversity of rural Europe, which was organised by the ENRD in spring 2012. The successful competition involved collaboration with LAGs from all Member States. In total some 1 700 images were submitted and the winners were announced by the Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development, Dacian Cioloş at a prestigious awards ceremony in Brussels in July 2012. The photo exhibition is currently touring across the EU. If you are interested in hosting the exhibition, please contact your National Rural Network. And don't forget that all competition entries are available to view online: www.ruralimages.eu

Austria: European Village Renewal Awards & LEADER event

Some 30 LEADER initiatives from across the EU were showcased on the occasion of the European Village Renewal Awards, which took place on 20-22 September 2012 in Vorarlberg, Austria. As well as the LEADER Transnational Forum, workshops and study trips were also held at the awards ceremony, which saw over 1 000 participants attend.

The village of Vals, in the German speaking part of Switzerland, was the winner of the 2012 Village Renewal Award. Making the announcement, Charles Konnen, Head of the Jury, said, "the holistic series of measures taken in Vals demonstrating creative, open, and concrete action are impressive and exemplary. Future generations will find a firm foundation and Vals is a shining example of a village that does justice to the theme of this year's awards."

The awards were organised by the European Association for Rural Development and Village Renewal. A range of criteria are set for judges including: village strategy and vision, the implementation of local supply chains and the strength of local cultural identity, as well as ecological, social and architectural criteria. More details can be obtained at: www.landentwicklung.org and <http://zukunft.regio-v.at/>



Representatives from the Winning Village of Vals, Switzerland.

© European ARGE for Rural Development and village renewal

Spain: Sustainable business awards

A LEADER LAG in the Aragon region of Spain - the Association of Development of Gúdar-Javalambre - celebrated leaders in sustainable business development on 12 September 2012. A total of seven businesses were awarded prizes at the ceremony, which was held in the town hall of Mora de Rubielos. The overall winner was the Farmhouse Toranes, in the Biodiversity and Natural Environment category, for its work promoting natural and cultural heritage. It was also praised for its adherence to strict ecological criteria when restoring the Masada, which is a traditional isolated farmhouse with crops and livestock typical of the rural territory of the old Kingdom of Aragon. The awards ceremony was part of a rural development evening that also saw the screening of a documentary called 'Masadas: A shared reality', a film that depicts a range of different lifestyles in the remote Spanish countryside. More details can be found at: www.agujama.org



The Farmhouse Toranes, an award winning sustainable agri-tourism business.

© AGUJJA (Asociación de desarrollo de Gúdar-Javalambre)

Romania and Hungary: Cross-border cooperation plans agreed

A transnational cooperation (TNC) conference, involving NRNs and LAGs from both Hungary and Romania was held in Timișoara, Romania, on 27-28 September 2012. The conference facilitated potential cooperation projects on tourism and local products, as well as on the environment and cultural heritage. Presentations and workshops on the first day were followed by an intensive matchmaking session, where potential partners could take part in project planning discussions, supported by NRN staff. One of the most important outcomes of the meeting was the signing of a cooperation agreement between the Hungarian and Romanian NRNs, which establishes a framework for how both networks will work together in supporting cooperation between LAGs in the two countries. The agreement also sets out a roadmap for collaboration between the NRNs on information exchange and dissemination activities. Further information is available at: <http://rndr.ro/EvenimentDetaliu.aspx?id=1442>



Representatives of Hungarian and Romanian LAGs discuss transnational cooperation.

© Sucursala Bucuresti, Monica Obregon

Poland: Mountain walking festival

The Duchą Gór LAG in Poland organised a 'Spirit of Mountain Walking' festival over three weekends, in September and October 2012. Families and individuals of all ages were encouraged to take part in walks of varying lengths, difficulties and duration, in order to get to know the region better. Those who successfully completed their walk were presented with an educational game called the Secret of the Spirit of the Mountains! Each route was designed to take in a range of cultural and natural heritage features – from those of historic importance, like old copper mines and buildings of particular interest, to more modern additions to the local area, such as traditional local craft makers and a local bakery, which has revived the traditional craft of Polish gingerbread baking. The Festival is just one activity in the LAG's programme to foster optimal use of natural resources and the development of cultural tourism. The LAG's website has more details: www.duchgor.org.



The Festival of Flavours workshop, which was part of the Mountain Spirit Walking Festival.

© Grzegorz Rutkowski

Rural Focus

EU rural development incorporates a diverse range of issues from forestry to rural finance to emerging challenges such as climate change. In this edition, we focus our attention on successful rural development programming.

Successful rural development programming for 2014-2020

The European Commission's proposals for the 2014-2020 programming period are a real step forward for rural areas. However, careful planning is required to implement this new rural development framework successfully.

That is why Member States across Europe are already busy preparing their future Rural Development Programmes (RDPs) with some of the rural networks involved in stakeholder consultations.

The next programming period will be characterised by greater integration between EU policies for rural areas. As

Agriculture and Rural Development Commissioner Dacian Cioloş emphasised at the 'Successful Programming' seminar organised by the ENRD on 6 and 7 December 2012, the new rural development framework requires a strong coordination process. Greater

communication between Managing Authorities (MAs) in charge of different EU funds will create synergies and ensure that programmes are best tailored to national and regional needs.

The Commissioner also highlighted the need to prepare all aspects of rural development policy - from the definition of the strategic objectives to the definition of programmes and implementation procedures - in advance. Such an approach results in better tailored programmes.

When identifying priorities, national authorities should focus on real needs at national and regional level and create programmes with very clear, simple and specific measures. This not only makes projects easier to implement for beneficiaries; it also enhances the clarity and measurability of results and reduces the administrative burden and error rate associated with the previous programming period.

The Successful Programming event in December was a springboard for the European rural development community as RDP preparations begin in earnest. The event brought together a number of different streams the ENRD has been working on. Issues covered ranged from effective shared management of RDPs (e.g. financial management and e-governance) through to monitoring and evaluation under the new regime.



Agriculture and Rural Development Commissioner Dacian Cioloş.

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Member States will be able to present their Partnership Contracts (PCs) and programmes to the EC once the new legal framework will be in place in the course of 2013. Prior to submitting them managing authorities have been urged to involve rural stakeholders in early consultation. Rural development networks can play a crucial role in preparation by ensuring that all relevant stakeholders are included in consultations for the definition of the programmes.

The PCs indicate the priorities to be addressed by Member States' RDPs as well as other non-EAFRD funds under the Common Strategic Framework. The PCs will demonstrate how all the funding and policy instruments work together and will be the umbrella under which strategic programming will be undertaken.

The ENRD will continue to communicate the outcomes of the Successful Programming event broadly during what will be a formative year for the future of rural development in Europe.

More information about the event and the related outcomes can be found on the ENRD website: http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/en-rd-events-and-meetings/seminars-and-conferences/successful-programming_en/



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RDP Success Factors

The ENRD shares insight from the rural development community into elements that are key to the success of future RDPs. Such as...

Environmental Services

The European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) promotes sustainable approaches to the use of natural resources. Many different environmental services can benefit from the financial support made available to Member States' RDPs.

Key ENRD insight:

Focus Group on Delivery of Environmental Services

<http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/themes/environment/environmental-services/>

EAFRD brochure on environmental services

<http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/publications-and-media/eafrd-project-brochures/>

Networking

Networking is as a powerful policy tool: it drives the sharing of ideas, information and knowledge and it supports cooperation throughout Europe. Rural development networking is to be reinforced in the next programming period.

Key ENRD insight:

EU Rural Review on networking

<http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/publications-and-media/eu-rural-review/>

ENRD and the National Rural Networks

<http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/networks-and-networking>

Workshop on the Future of Networking

<http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/en-rd-events-and-meetings/seminars-and-conferences/cc-workshop-on-the-future-of-networking>

Knowledge Transfer and Innovation

Knowledge, skills and innovation are essential to sustainable development. EAFRD measures supporting rural development innovation are helping to close the gap between researchers and farmers.

Key ENRD insight:

The Research and Innovation Gateway

<http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/themes/research-and-innovation-gateway-development>

Focus Group Knowledge Transfer & Innovation

<http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/themes/research-and-innovation-gateway-development/kt-innovation/kt-focus-group/>

LEADER to CLLD

LEADER is evolving. In future it will allow the implementation of multi-fund strategies supported by other EU funds. In this new multi-fund context, the LEADER approach will be referred to as Community-Led Local Development (CLLD).

Key ENRD insight:

LEADER Gateway

<http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/leader>

Community Led-Local Development

<http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/themes/clld>

CLLD Workshops at OPEN DAYS 2012

<http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/en-rd-events-and-meetings/seminars-and-conferences/community-led-local-development-open-days-2012>

EAFRD Projects

The European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) co-finances many successful rural development projects all around Europe. We profile some inspiring examples...



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Supporting female entrepreneurs in the UK

Women are an engine for business creation in rural areas but they often lack the required business support and networks. An innovative LEADER project sought to change all that.

The 'Women Do Business' project in South West England, provided bespoke business support for women who did not think standard business advice services catered for them. Managed by the Community Council of

Devon, the project was funded by the EAFRD and the Greater Dartmoor and South Devon Coastal LAGs.

The objective was to unlock entrepreneurial potential and promote local development opportunities. The project, which benefited from €62 000 of EAFRD funding, provided both new and existing women-owned businesses with a package of locally-delivered, female-friendly training and support, with an

emphasis on key skills and techniques to survive and grow in a difficult economic climate.

In all, 79 micro enterprises were supported; 441 days of training were provided; and 148 women received business support. The project supported five women's business networks, which continue even now that the project has concluded.

Environmentally-friendly flood resilience in Germany

Floods pose major threats to both rural and urban areas; nowhere more so than in Germany's Rhine river basin. A project, partly funded by the EAFRD, has helped reduce flood-related risk whilst protecting local biodiversity.

A major renovation project in the Rhineland-Palatinate region shows how EU rural development funds can support eco-sensitive approaches to flood prevention. The project to upgrade the dyke running between Otterstadt and Waldsee, in the upper Rhine valley, involved almost four kilometres of the dyke's landside and two kilometres of its waterside.

"We included specific assistance for flood works in our Rural Development Programme (RDP). EAFRD support has facilitated a more rapid implementation of the flood protection construction programme," explains

Klaus Weichart from the Ministry for Environment, Food, Agriculture, Viticulture and Forestry in Mainz.

In order to protect a nature conservation area, high-tech construction techniques were used to prevent water seepage and to create a slimmer dyke that had a reduced environmental impact and required less deforestation. To protect local vegetation, seeds of high nature value were extracted from the existing dyke and planted once the upgrading work had been completed. In addition, the project also helped to stabilise local bat populations around the



© Tim Hudson

Floods pose major threats to both rural and urban areas.

construction area and wetland areas neighbouring the dyke were carefully secured against damage.

Check out the latest EAFRD Project Brochure on Environmental Services

<http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/publications-and-media/eafrd-project-brochures/>

Danish project promotes traditional island craftsmanship

The 'Fyrbøder' project took place on the island of Bornholm. It used the LEADER approach to help strengthen local craft businesses.



Pernille Stougaard ceramic bowl, 2012.
© Arts and Crafts Association Bornholm

The island of Bornholm is renowned for its craftsmanship. The Fyrbøder project mobilised an association of local craftsmen, called the ACAB, which brings together artisans working with pottery, glass, textile, metal and wood. The main objective was to develop local skill-sets with training focused on topics such as product development, outsourcing and exportation.

The Fyrbøder funding came from a range of public and private sources, with the EAFRD contributing €57 964, or about 25%.

The network of handicraft businesses was strengthened and the island's products were promoted locally, nationally and internationally. The project delivered a new website and 10 exhibitions were held in Denmark and beyond. The 14 training courses and seminars also had a positive effect: the average income of ACAB members increased by almost 15% between 2008 and 2010!

For more about ACAB visit: <http://www.bornholm.info/en/article/acab-arts-crafts-association-bornholm>

Polish and Swedish LAGs develop local product trails

A transnational cooperation (TNC) project aiming to promote local products through active tourism.

Local produce is very important for both the Polish LAG Podbabiogórze and the Swedish LAG Gränslandet. It helps to define their local cultural identities and it also serves as a source of income for their respective rural communities. Recognising this, both LAGs decided to join forces in a TNC project that aims to develop new ways of promoting local products depicting the communities' cultural, historic and natural heritage.

The team has developed Polish and Swedish 'Local Product Trails' that identify key points of interest. The trails are now being actively promoted to tourists (in Polish, Swedish and English). The EAFRD provides the majority of the funding for this TNC project (€50 000 of the total €62 500) which is seeking to maximise the tourism potential of the two regions.



The project team has developed local product trails.

© Renata Burdyl

A short supply-chain revitalises the Cosenza fig!

The competitiveness of the fig production sector in Calabria, Southern Italy is being increased through supply-chain innovation, new production methods and strengthened cooperation.



The project is halting the decline in fig cultivation.

A coalition of public and private sector actors, from individual farmers to food processors to the local LAG, have joined forces in a large-scale project to combat the decline in fig cultivation, the traditional produce of the Cosenza province.

The EAFRD is contributing €8.9m - or a little over 50% - to this ambitious effort whose aim is to promote production diversification and quality and to strengthen local entrepreneurship. The creation of a Protected Denomination of Origin label ('Fichi di Cosenza') has been a real driver of change.

New production systems, sterilisation techniques and innovative packaging are being introduced.

The creation of advisory services for the sector is helping to modernise cultivation methods. Fig production profitability is increasing as is the viability of many farms. The creation of a short supply chain has also increased market opportunities and encourages a more balanced redistribution of financial margins across the supply chain.

More information about these projects and hundreds more is available from the RDP Projects Database on the ENRD website:

http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/policy-in-action/rdp_view/en/view_projects_en.cfm

And check out the related project videos in the ENRD media gallery:

http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/publications-and-media/media-gallery/en/media-gallery_en.cfm

In Your Own Words

In this section we pass the microphone to you and hear what you have to say! For this issue we hear your views on networking and cooperation...

“Cooperation is about being open-minded! It is very important to see what the others do. We have to cooperate, we need to remain open towards the others, that is Europe!”

*Hélène Cabanes, LAG
Confluences autour du Verdon*



“Emails are fantastic, web-based communication is wonderful but there’s nothing that makes up for the opportunity to sit down and just take 10 minutes to communicate face to face.”

Ros Halley, Dumfries and Galloway LEADER rural development projects to local communities



“The main thing with cooperation is that there is a really good energy between the actors working together. If this is not the case then you can forget the project.”

Anke Wehmeyer, German National Rural Network



“I think that’s the really good thing about cooperation projects, you can get an idea and it changes organically and we can learn an awful lot.”

Andrew McCalister, North East Region LAG, UK



“To have personal and informal contact is important to solve problems and get common ideas.”

*Morten Priesholm, LAG Manager,
Smaernes Aktionsgruppe, (LAG
Danish Small Islands)*



To see related videos for the above quotes visit the media gallery on the ENRD website or click here: http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/publications-and-media/en/publications-and-media_en.cfm.

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“Coordinating” colleagues...

Fabio Cossu (ENRD CP) and Karina Afremonica at the Coordination Committee Workshop on the Future of Networking on 17 September 2012.

Out & About

Smile, you're on camera!
We select some of our favourite photos from the recent networking activities of the European rural development community.

© ENRD Contact Point



Snap!

Phivos Papachristofourou and Makis Papamichael at the 16th NRN meeting in Cyprus, October 2012.

© Dumfries and Galloway LEADER Programme



A great day out...

Derek Hextall (far left, Project Officer for Day of the Regions in Dumfries and Galloway, Scotland) with representatives from IRD Duhallow, County Cork, Ireland who were visiting after delivering their first Day of the Regions in July 2012.

Cooperation? Bien sûr!

The French NRN 'dream team' at the 2nd French LEADER 2007-2013 Cooperation Event –“Cooperation onwards and upwards,” in Montrbrison, France in November 2012.



© ENRD Contact Point



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Caught by surprise!

Crescenzo dell'Aquila and Simona Cristiano, both from the National Institute of Agricultural Economics in Italy (INEA) at the Coordination Committee Workshop on the Future of Networking on 17 September 2012.



© National Rural Development Network Slovakia

Good old-fashioned fun!

Participants at a fashion show of 'folk costumes' as part of the NRDN SR exposition on international Agricultural and Food Exhibition at Agrokomplex, Nitra, Slovakia on 25 August 2012.



If you have a rural development question, contact our ENRD experts at info@enrd.eu!

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Q: *What is transnational cooperation (TNC)?*

A: Transnational cooperation (TNC) means undertaking a joint rural development project with at least one other area in another country. TNC can be, among other things, a way of getting enough people involved in an activity to make it viable, or a means of encouraging complementary actions, e.g. joint marketing by rural business organisations from different regions of local products or services, like food or tourism initiatives. Mutual learning is a useful result from TNC projects.

Special funding is available from the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) for TNC project work. One of the main conditions of TNC funded by the EAFRD is that at least one of the partners in a TNC project is a LEADER Local Action Group (LAG).

Check out our website for more FAQs:

<http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/general-info/faq/rd-regulation>

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Forum > opENRD > LEADER event 2013 - your input is needed!!!

Topic by Marina Brakalova, on 26/10/2012

LEADER event 2013 - your input is needed!!!

Hello all LEADER active actors! We want to hear from you what should be the focus, the activities, the topics, the approach for the next LEADER event in April, 2013 in Brussels so that it meets most of your needs and expectations:

- What topics would you like to discuss?
- What kind of knowledge, expertise, contact would you like to be able to bring back with you and share with your local stakeholders?

You can recollect what the last 2012 event was like at http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/app_templates/filedownload.cfm?id=BD2BB121-EBCF-1155-C9B9-13A559C8C16D

BACK TO TOPICS POST REPLY

1 2 3 4 5 NEXT

#1 Answer by Sarah Watson, on 04/12/2012

re: LEADER event 2013 - your input is needed!!!

Hi all! It would be great to get a little more input in to our new spin off forum thread on the specific issue of simplification of bureaucracy and who should be discussing this at the next Leader event. As always we need your input to get it right! I noticed that Hans-Olaf mentioned it as an issue in his post from Sweden and so had Ryan in the Irish context – it would be great if you both felt you could contribute further in the new thread. Stefanos had also mentioned it as an issue brought forward by the Scottish FIARD members. If

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Connecting Rural Europe...

The European Network for Rural Development (ENRD) is the hub that connects rural development stakeholders throughout the European Union (EU). The ENRD contributes to the effective implementation of Member States' Rural Development Programmes by generating and sharing knowledge, as well as through facilitating information exchange and cooperation across rural Europe.

