

PREPARE NETWORK CELEBRATES ITS 20TH ANNIVERSARY

In year 2019 we will mark the 20th anniversary for PREPARE Network. The origin of PREPARE was the traveling workshop in Estonia and Sweden of 1999, aimed at civil society and government people from rural areas of the then accession countries of central Europe. The success of honourable age of PREPARE hides in the spirit of its founding organisations and of those who joined later and helped build the network. In 2019 we will publish short stories about organisations that make up PREPARE and small history chapters of PREPARE's development through the last two decades. For the first Newsletter of 2019, we present the story about the first event of PREPARE (Travelling Workshop in Estonia and Sweden) and profile information about Forum Synergies.



Travelling workshop in Estonia and Sweden was initiated by Hannes Lorenzen, in his capacity with both European Parliament (which partly funded the Workshop) and Forum Synergies (then called the European Network of Experiences in Sustainable Development). To organise the event, he enlisted the help of the Swedish Branch of ECOVAST (Kjell Roger Karlsson), Hela Sverige ska Leva (Staffan Bond), and Kodukant (Mikk Saav). ECOVAST at European level (Michael Dower, then Secretary General) provided many of the contacts with people in the target countries who were participants in the Workshop.

The traveling workshop was just magic. Despite the many concerns and warnings that "traveling workshops" were never carried out by the European institutions, that insurance would not cover the risks, that public money may not be used for such a 'school excursion' format, this "crazy" idea of leaving everyday routines and travelling to experience rural reality, to meet, eat, talk and work with rural people was a great success. It went right into the hearts of people who might never otherwise have met - high level officials of the European Commission and the Parliament, civil servants from national ministries of agriculture, regional administration officers, local mayors, people from newly emerging civil society in the accession countries and individual rural people, including farmers, teachers, countrywomen and entrepreneurs.

During this traveling week in Estonia and Sweden, the idea grew that this group of people should continue working together through the time of transition and accession to help the new neighbours into a new common Europe; to spread the good news that rural Europe could become more democratic, more innovative and more sustainable in the best sense of the word. The European Parliament published a report about it: the European Commission suggested to broaden and apply this method; and PREPARE was born, the Pre-Accession Partnership for Europe.

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PREPARE PRESIDENT AND VICE PRESIDENT SUPPORTED GEORGIAN LEADER INITIATIVES

PREPARE, since its strategic decision to work in the Black Sea region, is closely involved in LEADER implementation in Georgia.



The LEADER approach is quite new approach for rural development in Georgia, mainly supported by ENPARD. During the piloting, 8 local action groups were established (<http://enpard.ge/en/local-action-groups/>)

With the support of Ministry of foreign affairs of Latvia, PREPARE president Āris Ādlers visited Georgia and met with the main stakeholders of LEADER implementation process of the country: governmental bodies, agencies and NGOs. All representatives were introduced with PREPARE's work in the Black Sea basin countries, as well as efforts to promote direct cooperation between organizations and support cooperation within Georgia.



Recent activities in Georgia are related to establishment of Georgian Association of Local Action Groups (GALAG). During the meeting with PREPARE president, the coordinator of GALAG Ms. Tiko Chulukhadze expressed their interest of cooperation with PREPARE Network.



Under the delegation of European LEADER association, PREPARE Vice-president Goran Šoster participated in the seminar for GALAG. The aim of the seminar was to share the European experience and knowledge in rural development with Georgian LAGs, assist in the elaboration of internal and external communication plans, help in mapping main partners to build stronger platforms for advocacy and fundraising, advise on the formation of thematic working groups and on distribution of responsibilities among GALAG members. (<http://www.ge.undp.org/content/georgia/en/home/presscenter/pressreleases/2018/eu--in-partnership-with-undp--promotes-cooperation-between-local.html>)

PREPARE IS PREPARING NEW PROJECT PROPOSALS

PREPARE AISBL is preparing new project proposal together with our partners.



Holiday season is the best time to start new initiatives and get involved in ones. PREPARE board and officials are using this time to develop new partnerships and project proposals in several international project initiatives. We are proud of the project proposal that is now in the final stage: Project for Black sea counties - BLAST. The main goal of the project is to be able to organise Rural Parliament type events all around the Black sea, to ensure adequate Black Sea content representation in the European Rural Parliament. We are also happy that the lead partner of the project is Ukrainian Rural Development Network.



Details of the project (that we are still working on) is available on special requests from our member organisations. You can always contact Secretary General or President of PREPARE to know more.

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WE CARE WHAT OUR MEMBERS CARE

PREPARE AISBL has prepared Survey on PREPARE's vision, objectives and partnership for our members.



The aim of the survey is to have a clearer view on the expectations of PREPARE member organisations concerning the focus of PREPARE activities in the upcoming years and the future development of the network. Information collected will only be used internally and individual responses will not be disseminated quality of life of the rural community.

The link to the survey will be distributed to all our members separately.

UPCOMING EVENTS WITH PREPARE REPRESENTATION

January 31, 2019

Brussels, Belgium

“Permanent Subgroup on LEADER and Community- Led Local Development”

PREPARE will be represented by Goran Šoster (PREPARE Vice- President)



February 1, 2019

Brussels, Belgium

“Civil Dialogue Group member organisations exchange of view event”

PREPARE will be represented by Āris Ādleris (PREPARE President)



SMART VILLAGE NETWORK MEETING IN FINLAND

The first meeting of the Smart Village Network is organised in Finland (Ellivuori Resort), with support from the Finnish Village Movement and the Finnish National Rural Network



PREPARE promotes smart solutions for rural development. We encourage you to participate in the First Smart Village Network Meeting in Finland this February. More information on the web page:

<https://www.smart-village-network.eu/svn-events>

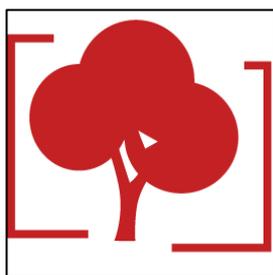
One of co-organisers of the event is Finnish Village movement (Suomen Kylät ry), member of our network.

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INTRODUCING OUR MEMBERS

Forum Synergies (Belgium)

	www.forum-synergies.eu		@ForumSynergies
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Forum Synergies is a non-profit association of engaged citizens, organisations and active practitioners engaged in sustainable rural development. Network supports people and organisations who are engaging for a more sustainable, more democratic and creative rural life.

The Forum Synergies network was founded 1995 as "European network of experiences in sustainable development" by 35 organisations from 16 European countries.

The mission of the organisation is to enable the exchange of experiences, to promote synergies and to support a constructive dialogue between stakeholders.

INTRODUCING OUR FRIENDS

Development principles (Armenia)



Development principles is a non-governmental organisation that invests in people and empowers them to create positive change in their own lives. The organization is a trusted partner and a legacy successor of Heifer International since 2015, and has been recognized for its success in assisting rural people in building viable businesses, promoting effective youth interventions in rural areas, and developing functioning agricultural value chains. (DP) implements projects in the following areas: a) Rural Economic and Social Development (with focus on adoption of innovative and environmentally friendly agricultural practices); b) Youth Leadership Development and Women's Empowerment; c) Sustainable Tourism Development; d) Advisory Support for Rural Businesses and Entrepreneurship.

Development principles was one of the organizers for PREPARE Travelling Workshop in Georgia and Armenia in October 2016.

More information:

www.developmentprinciples.org

Contact person: Anahit Ghatanchuan, President
developmentprinciples@yahoo.com

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The newsletter was prepared by the board of PREPARE AISBL

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