

PREPARE AISBL PRESIDENT ARIS ADLERS PARTICIPATES IN CIVIL DIALOGUE GROUP FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT

“Civil Dialogue Group for Rural Development” was organised by the European Commission on the 27st of February 2019.



The following topics were presented by the European Commission:

- The future Cohesion policy and its contribution to rural development – how can the European Funds work together?
- Supporting the Bioeconomy in future CAP Strategic Plans
- Risk management in the post-2020 rural development policy
- Outcomes of the Stakeholder Round Tables on the Green Architecture of the CAP
- Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation Systems (AKIS), Farm advice and Innovation Networking and others

All information, including presentations can be found in the link:

https://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/civil-dialogue-groups/rural-development_en

Pay special attention to the presentation about Cohesion policy, where five policy objectives were announced: (1) A smarter Europe (innovative & smart economic transformation) (2) A greener, low-carbon Europe (including energy transition, the circular economy, climate adaptation and risk management) (3) A more connected Europe (mobility and ICT connectivity) (4) A more social Europe (the European Pillar of Social Rights) (5) **A Europe closer to citizens (sustainable development of urban, rural and coastal areas and local initiatives)**

YOUNG PEOPLE FOR THE FUTURE OF SUSTAINABLE RURAL DEVELOPMENT - SCHOLARSHIP ANNOUNCED

Forum Synergies in cooperation with the Latvian Rural Forum announce a Scholarship programme. It is an international exchange program with the aim to promote sustainable rural development by sharing knowledge and a particular know-how about sustainability.



Organisers are looking for:

- young people involved in rural development activities, who want to discover or improve their knowledge and their know-how in a particular field of sustainable rural development, AND
- organizations or entrepreneurs from rural areas, who would like to host young people to transmit them a particular knowledge and to share their experience.

Both the host and the trainee are invited to apply online (Forum Synergies' website) using the online application form:

For host: <https://goo.gl/forms/yE2TIII6oxefYDhi1>

For trainee: <https://goo.gl/forms/iYIJ9VZ5DWY7JI762>

newsletter #WeArePrepare

MAKING RURAL AREAS THE ENGINES OF A SUSTAINABLE EUROPE

A joint event of the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) and European Rural Parliament (ERP) “Making rural areas the engines of a sustainable Europe” was organised in Bussels, on the 14th of March 2019



PREPARE was present at EESC-ERP event: “Making rural areas the engines of a sustainable Europe”. Goran Soster presented PREPARE and supported our partnership and advocacy work with the European and national rural parliaments as well as the work with non-EU and candidate countries. PREPARE insisted on giving more possibilities and power to local communities.

You will find the presentations at <https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/agenda/our-events/events>

This was an ERP event organised together with EESC. ERP representatives all agreed that the EU should better listen better and connect to rural citizens and give them possibilities to participate in the policy debate and policy making. Climate, populism, lack of democracy and cuts (35%) to the integrated rural development funding were the key discussion points.

The momentum of connecting to rural citizens may be lost once again if members states and EU do not work in a more inclusive and just way on the preparation, content and implementation of rural development. This came out from many of the presentations:

Eamon O’Hara, ECOLISE “We lack both at EU-level and national level real local development policies” “Community energy projects have eight times the benefit to the local economy compared to projects owned by power companies”

Peter Welch, Court of Auditors: “Agriculture had 1,5% share of GDP and 4% of the gross value added in the last 5 years.

Lambert Van Nisterooij, MEP: “We should not be shy in criticising the 35-40% cut in the second pillar”.

Paul Soto, ENRD: “Policies do not just trickle down to rural areas”. Mr Soto asked to overcome the divide between sectorial (farming) and territorial development.

Guillaume Cros, CoR raised the challenge of rural exodus, especially of youth, towards cities. There is a feeling of abandon leading potentially to euroscepticism. Also available budget to rural development in general has already decreased from 32,6% (2007) to 21,3% (2014 programming). Only 7% of the ESF funding for professional education were directed to rural areas. This is not what the Cork Declaration meant in saying to have a just balance.

Petri Rinne from SYTY closed the meeting. The messages can be found at the ERP-website <https://www.europeanruralparliament.com/index.php/archive/european-rural-parliament-2018-19/road-documents>

newsletter #WeArePrepare

PREPARE AISBL BOARD MEMBER NIKŠA BOŽIČ REPRESENTS PREPARE IN EU STRUCTURAL AND INVESTMENT FUND PARTNERS GROUP OF EXPERTS

EU Structural and investment fund partners group of experts was organised by European Commission on the 28th of February 2019.



The mission of the Structured Dialogue group of experts, set up by the European Commission, is to establish an open, frank and informal dialogue with partners working in the field of the ESI Funds. The members of the Structured Dialogue are umbrella organisations at EU level. Tenth meeting of the Structured Dialogue with European Structural and Investment Funds' partners group of experts was held in Brussels on February 28, 2019. On the agenda was the update on the negotiations of the post-2020 legislative package, alignment with the European Semester (programming/negotiations), 2018 Summary Report of the Annual Implementation Reports and information about the new policy objective 5 (Europe closer to citizens).

Detailed reports on the state of programming negotiations for the 2021-2027 period were presented. The Commission is ready to start informal dialogue, it is important to make as much progress as possible in 2019 and 2020 before the adoption of the 2021-2027 legislation. The Commission will ask Member States to prepare their programming plans ("roadmaps") by end of June 2019, first drafts of the programming documents are expected by the end of 2019 and the objective is to adopt all Partnership Agreements and programmes by end of 2020.

Legal framework for 2021-2027 period will be based on Common Provisions Regulation (CPR) with its simplified policy objectives (11 objectives simplified to 5) and tools and requirements for integrated territorial development (including CLLD); Fund-specific Regulations (ERDF/CF, ETC, ESF+, EMFF) and CAP Second Pillar (EAFRD) that includes common set of rules for CLLD (LEADER). Although the legal framework for LEADER/CLLD will be changed, we were informed that overall similar rules will be retained. Territorial provisions of the CPR will also apply to EAFRD, CLLD can be supported under CAP Strategic Plans and multi-funded CLLD local development strategies will be possible with EAFRD. There is a shared objective to support Smart Village initiatives. LEADER will remain compulsory part of the CAP Strategic Plan with the common CPR provisions on the method and coordination of CLLD for the 4 funds and min. 5% EAFRD allocation.

All presentations from the meeting are available here:

https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/policy/communication/structured-dialogue-with-partners/

ESI FUNDS OPEN DATA PLATFORM

A remarkable presentation by DG REGIO Evaluation and European Semester Unit on ESIF Open Data Platform, an online platform that gives access to open data on financing and achievements under the ESI Funds 2014-2020. The platform visualises data in an interactive way for over 530 programmes, available in various level details (EU level, by theme, by country and by fund). The platform is available here: <https://cohesiondata.ec.europa.eu/>, a short introduction video is available here: <https://youtu.be/Q6ohALHldtg>

newsletter #WeArePrepare

PREPARE NETWORK IN 2019 CELEBRATES ITS 20TH ANNIVERSARY

In connection with the 20th anniversary of our network, we publish here short articles about the history of PREPARE. Here is our story no. 3. (you can read the previous stories in newsletters from January and February 2019)



Story by **Marta Marczis** from the Hungarian Rural Parliament:

Following the aim and spirit of the first travelling workshop in Estonia and Sweden, the name of the network, PREPARE, has been given by participants at the second event, held in Hungary in 2000. During these two events the freshly established network has organised travelling workshops; visited rural development projects, met with key activists and project participants, analysed lessons learned in working groups, produced reports and policy conclusions. As a bottom up initiative, the Romanian network of the 'County Agencies for Agricultural Advisory' organised the third event in 2001. It was funded by the Open Society Institute, as the event in Hungary one year earlier.

PREPARE was invited to visit Bacau County, located in the eastern part of Romania. The western part of the county includes mountains, part of the Eastern Carpathian ridge. Along the valleys of the Oituz River and Trotuş River there are two important links between Moldavia and Transylvania. This county was one of the most industrialized Romanian regions in the communist period, and still Bacau is the region's most important GDP supplier, but the county has become more famous because of the increasing gap between local (rural) economies and the good GDP data on the county level. Romanian majority, Roma and Hungarians (Csango) live together in the multicultural community of the county.

Plenary events were held in Bacau, the county capital that gave the county's name. On one of the evenings, participants enjoyed a great dinner concert, thanks to a local Roma music group, which played the typical "Balkan gypsy music" .

During travelling workshop days, local organizers introduced important long-term projects to the visitor group. We met with representatives of a social cooperative initiative for inclusion of disadvantaged youth. We visited two neighbouring villages: in the first village SME-s have changed the local economic situation. As young local entrepreneurs said they had worked in Italy as migrant workers for years, but came back to Bacau, bringing innovation with them. They created jobs and models to others in their village. In the second village the local community has not been interested in self-initiative. Nobody started local business after collapse of the communism; nobody left the village for job... and the village has remained poor and depressed. The clear lessons learned was that the better "community spirit" makes the necessary transition more efficient at the local level - as it has been similarly experienced in many post-communist communities in that time.

Another typical and very sad example: we visited a destroyed part of the Carpathian Mountain area. It was near a village where the local municipality gave licence for clear-cutting the forest to foreign (Scandinavian and Hungarian) companies, thus breaking the national law.

newsletter #WeArePrepare

OVER 80 PARTICIPANTS FROM ALL OVER ALBANIA WERE PRESENTED IN NATIONAL ROUNDTABLE



The national Albanian roundtable on Governance of Agriculture and Rural Development (held on February 12th, 2019) brought national policies on agriculture and rural development to the core of public discourse. In particular, it aimed to raise stakeholders' awareness of the challenges and critical issues of the agricultural and rural development policies and to influence their improvement. Over 80 participants from all over the country, representatives of central government institutions and local authorities, civil society, farmers' associations and rural entrepreneurs, academics, experts, donor representatives, etc. were present and contributed to discussions.

Appeal of the Albanian Network for Rural development: "National dialogue on governance of agriculture and rural development - a vital necessity" was delivered to relevant institutions and stakeholder as follow-up of the national round table. It expressed ANRD member organizations' full readiness to cooperate with institutions to advance Albanian rural agenda.

<https://www.facebook.com/anrd.al/posts/2275787152701697?sfnsw=cl>

NETWORKING AND ADVOCACY FOR GREEN ECONOMY PROJECT HAS STARTED

Networking and Advocacy for Green Economy - NAGE project started with implementation of the program-specific capacity development training in order to enhance the capacities of the grassroots CSOs in advocacy, lobbying and networking, and in green entrepreneurship.



To bring closer the concept of green entrepreneurship to the target beneficiaries (grassroots CSOs), and to mobilize the community in an advocacy campaign that will facilitate the EU approximation process of the national agricultural and rural development programmes and policies towards the EU CAP reform, the project organizes two-module training in:

- i) Advocacy, lobbying, networking and constituents empowerment, and
- ii) Green economy and entrepreneurship.

On February 13 and 14 the first training of trainers was organised in Skopje. It focused on advocacy, lobbying and networking, and was attended by a total of 14 representatives of the 7 project implementing partners. Their further task will be to transfer the gained knowledge to the grass-root organizations.

This three-year regional project, launched in April 2018, is financed by EU and implemented by the members of the Balkan Rural Development Network – BRDN: Rural Development Network of the Republic of Macedonia, Croatian Rural Development Network, Albanian Network for Rural Development, Network for Rural Development of Montenegro, Network for Rural Development of Serbia, Network of organizations for rural development of Kosovo and Rural Development Network in

newsletter #WeArePrepare

UPCOMING EVENTS WITH PREPARE REPRESENTATION

April 2-5, 2019

Chisinau, Moldova

**EU Moldova LEADER
Conference” Building rural
prosperity for people”**

PREPARE will be represented
by Āris Ādleris (PREPARE
president)



SAVE THE DATES FOR THE THIRD CROATIAN RURAL PARLIAMENT, 20-23 MAY



The Third Croatian Parliament will be held in May 20-23, 2019, in Vodice and Tisno in the Šibenik-Knin county.

The main theme of the Croatian rural parliament is Smart Villages

SAVE THE DATES 12-14 JUNE, 2019, FOR THE 1ST NATIONAL RURAL PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF NORTH MACEDONIA

The Rural Development Network of the Republic of Macedonia, CNVP – Connecting Natural Values and People and ARD – Action for Rural Development are organizing the first National Rural Parliament in the Republic of North Macedonia



This event will be an opportunity for around 60 rural stakeholders to meet with a spirit of cooperation and action for sustainability and welfare in rural areas in the country.

Please save these dates to participate in the 1st Macedonian Rural Parliament! More information and instructions for registration are coming soon.

WE CARE WHAT OUR MEMBERS CARE ABOUT

PREPARE AISBL has Survey results on PREPARE’s vision, objectives and partnership from our members.



The majority of our members see PREPARE network as strong members organisation with a wide range of necessary resources to help national networks to develop rural areas in their countries, feeling a sense of pride from being part of network. Members see the network as an advocacy and awareness raising organisation. Based on the survey: possible mission statement, analyses of strengths and weaknesses and willingness to contribute, PREPARE board have started to develop the organisation’s strategy till 2020-2025, to be approved in GA this year. The framework is now under development, but we already see that it should most probably include the following directions: (1) Strong members (2) Making vibrant space (3) Well functioning organisation (4) Significant impact (5) Pride in the organisation

Thanks to everyone who contributed!

newsletter #WeArePrepare

PREPARE NETWORK IS PROMOTING NEW ACTIVISTS FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT

We are continue a new PREPARE Aisbl initiative - Presentations of young rural development enthusiasts. In this edition, meet Leotrim Germizaj from Kosovo



“Being acitivist of civil society and rural development sector is a great opportunity to contribute for the inclusion of the rural communities in all aspects that affect the improvement of their lives.” This is a part of the story brought to us by Leotrim Gërmizaj.

Leotrim is national coordinator of Network of Organizations for Rural Development of Kosovo and currently he is project representative for Kosovo of the regional project “Networking and Advocacy for Green Economy”.

He had the opportunity to lead youth networks at national and regional level, being part of relevant programs and projects aiming at advancing youth in all sectors including recent campaigns for active youth in rural areas and young farmers clubs.

Leotrim Gërmizaj is board member of PREPARE AISBL since last General Assembly in November 2018 and appointed as a European Rural Parliament Steering Group member since 12th December 2018.

Beside his engagement in civil society, previously, he had opportunity to work for the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Development of Kosovo, showing specific interest on the national policies and strategies for agriculture and rural development.

According to him, being activist of civil society and rural development sector is a great opportunity to contribute for the inclusion of the rural communities in all aspects that affect the improvement of their lives.

Recently he has been included on the organisational aspect of PREPARE Gathering in Kosovo, second-multi thematic meeting of the ALTER Project (Active Local Territories for Economic Development of Rural Areas), and on the preparatory campaign of 1st Kosovar Rural Parliament.

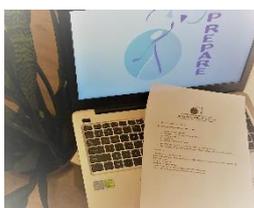
The 4th European Rural Parliament gathering is a very important activity for all rural development activists, including Leotrim who is very interested for the overall process together with other colleagues from Steering Group.

“Rural development is a very attractive sector that gives the opportunity to contribute, by creating links and collaborations that reflect the diversity and development of the rural community” - concludes Mr. Gërmizaj.

newsletter #WeArePrepare

PREPARE BOARD DECISIONS

PREPARE board is organising its board meetings every month and since February are distributing minutes of board meetings to the members. Here are the main decisions.



- PREPARE decided to participate at the Networkx event with an own stand and will present there the travelling workshops method, the support for creation and development of national rural citizens networks and parliaments, its advocacy for local development in non-EU countries and the European Rural Parliament as an advocacy channel;
- Action plan preparations will continue on the basis of the survey answers and task/theme responsibilities were shared between board members;
- PREPARE does not participate in the Welcoming Spaces Horizon 2020 project (for immigrants inclusion and benchmarking on experiences), as the request came very late and PREPARE participation would have been very limited. A cooperation-project between LEADER groups will be initiated by Kim Smedslund and supported by Urszula Budzich-Tabor;
- The board discussed and decided to work for the development of PREPARE as an organisation and a working place, clarifying issues on representation and work done in PREPARE's name;

INTRODUCING OUR FRIENDS

Civil Development Agency (CiDA)



Civil Development Agency (CiDA) is a civil society organization established in 2002 in Rustavi, Georgia, that promotes and strengthens the social and economic rights of Georgian citizens by providing direct services, as well as by addressing the problems of interested groups through developing their networking capabilities and opportunities.

For the years 2017 – 2020 the organisation focuses on strengthening and developing the following strategic directions:

- Development of civil society organizations
- Promotion of responsible business
- Cross-border cooperation, regional and local development
- Gender equality and Empowerment of women

In 2016 in partnership with PREPARE Partnership for Rural Europe and the Armenian NGO Development Principles CiDA organized Travelling Workshop in Georgia and Armenia for promoting rural development and to study key challenges in Eastern Partnership Countries.

More information about the organization is available on official web page: www.cida.ge

newsletter #WeArePrepare

INTRODUCING OUR MEMBERS

Hella Sverige ska Leva

	https://helasverige.se/		https://www.facebook.com/HelaSverige/
---	---	---	---



All Sweden Shall Live (Hela Sverige ska leva) is a national civil society organization for rural development consisting of 5000 local community groups and 40 member organizations - many of these are large national NGOs.

There are 24 county networks, working with information and advisory services on the county level. These county councils are formed by the local community groups of the county.

A board consisting of representatives from the local groups and member organizations is responsible for current activities. A secretariat in Stockholm handles contacts, administration and information.

The vision is to have vibrant local communities all over Sweden. The organisation works towards balance between rural and urban areas, good rural development and fair conditions and terms for the whole country.

Became a PREPARE AISBL Facebook follower too: @PrepareAISBL and use #WeArePrepare
The newsletter was prepared by the board and members of PREPARE AISBL