

EUROPEAN RURAL PARLIAMENT DEMANDS A REAL RURAL AGENDA FOR EUROPE



The 4th European Rural Parliament was held in Candás, Asturias, Spain from November 6-9, 2019.

The 335 participants representing 38 European countries included rural inhabitants, representatives of civil society organisations, researchers, national governments and European Union institutions. This was preceded on November 4-6 by the 2nd European Rural Youth Parliament ERYP, in which 70 young delegates from 14 countries gathered to share their perspective on rural life. The 2nd European Rural Youth Parliament issued a Declaration with 10 calls for action regarding the most urgent challenges faced by young Europeans.

Before agreeing on the Rural People's Declaration of Candás Asturias on 9th November, the participants discussed the current situation. What is the political and economic price to pay for exits, exodus and rising populism? Are national governments and EU too attached to growth thinking combined with a dominating urban agenda? Is sectoral thinking, programming, management and financing the best solution for rural communities and economy?

The Declaration suggests working together in partnership for a "real" Rural Agenda for 2021-2027, recognising the critical importance of rural areas whilst opening the path for flexible, decentralised, territorial and place-based solutions where all stakeholders cooperate for the common good. Strategic, economic, environmental and social plans would take into account the variety of rural realities, even declining ones. We must be ready to better meet existing and upcoming challenges such as ageing, social exclusion, immigration, exodus, food security, environment and climate change. New technologies and faster connections bring opportunities, but these are and will probably be unequal in Europe.

Speaking to the 4th ERP, Mihail Dumitru, Deputy Director General of DG Agriculture and Rural Development of the European Commission, supported the value of the ERP in bringing together so many countries and people across Europe with a common passion for the maintenance of our rural territories. The new Commission for 2019-2024 is tasked with "developing a new long-term vision for rural areas and ensuring that the needs of rural areas are specifically catered for in national Strategic Plans under the new CAP".

The ERP partners will now work to ensure that the voices and messages of the 4th ERP Gathering will be heard in the corridors of power in Brussels and also in the national governments across Europe.

The host for the 4th European Rural Parliament was Red Asturiana de Desarrollo Rural (READER)

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STRUCTURED DIALOGUE WITH EUROPEAN STRUCTURAL AND INVESTMENT FUNDS' PARTNERS GROUP OF EXPERTS TOOK PLACE IN BRUSSELS, 19TH NOVEMBER

PREPARE AISBL (through its board member Nikša Božic) was present at the meeting of the Structured Dialogue group of experts for ESI Funds.



The agenda covered topics of preparations for the post-2021 period (update on co-legislative negotiations on the post-2021 package, update on programming of the funds, implementation of the partnership principle, measures proposed for simplification in the post-2021 legislative package and complementarity between Funds. Most presentations are already available at <https://ec.europa.eu/.../c.../structured-dialogue-with-partners/>

PUBLIC FORUM “TOWARDS PEASANTS RIGHTS TO LAND IN UKRAINE” TOOK PLACE IN KIEV IN 26TH OF NOVEMBER



Ukrainian Rural Development Network, European Coordination La Via CAMPESINA, and Institute for Economics and Forecasting, NAS Ukraine, initiated the Public Forum “Towards Peasant’s Rights to Land in Ukraine”, which took place on 26 November 2019, Ukraine, Kyiv

The lifting of the moratorium on agricultural land sales is one of the top urgent priorities for Ukrainian government. The proposed models for land market and land sales are designed to provide an easy access to agricultural land for big investors and legal persons. At the same time, there are considerable risks that about 4 million of Ukrainian farming households, which are not legal persons, will not have priority and real possibilities to acquire land. Implementing the governmental approach to agricultural land market will lead to losing jobs, marginalization of rural population and exclusion of smallholders in agricultural sectors. It is a cause of concern that there are no real regulations to prevent land concentration. According to the draft of new land law, a single natural or legal person will be allowed to own 15 percent of all agricultural land in a region or 0.5 percent of all agricultural land in Ukraine (more than 200 thousand hectares). Another point is that peasants do not have priority to buy agricultural land. City residents and other physical persons without education or experience in agriculture have the same rights. The governmental approach to land market does not also resolve the issue of deeper involvement of local rural communities in land governance. Participants of the Public Forum developed a resolution with regard to the agricultural land market in Ukraine, to be presented at the Parliamentary hearing on 4 December 2019.

Read more: <http://urdn.org/activity/public-forum-towards-peasant-s-rights-to-land-in-ukraine/>

The FB page of Ukrainian Rural Development Network: <https://www.facebook.com/urdn.org/>

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FORUM SYNERGIES AND LATVIAN RURAL FORUM SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAMME BRINGS PEOPLE TOGETHER

In October under the Scholarship programme, the Latvian Local Action Group “Jūras Zeme” was hosting a young man from Croatia Franjo Toic. To encourage other young people to participate in the programme, here is a story from Franjo <http://www.forum-synergies.eu/article154.html>

Early this year, I noticed the information that there was an open call for scholarship provided by Forum Synergies. I never had the opportunity to be on an exchange program, so I decided to apply and after some time of thinking I've decided to go for Latvia and the host from LAG Juras Zeme (formerly PPP Sernikon). Since I'm in Croatia on an island, I wanted something a bit different and I thought that Latvia could provide me with a lot of experience, knowledge and new ideas from the people and organizations I will meet. And that was correct at the end!

In June I got my application approved and I was very happy and excited. I started my planning and at the end of September I flew from Croatia to Poland and then finally in Latvia. There I met with my host Aris Adlers from LAG Juras Zeme who was my “right hand” to organize everything during that period. He had a great plan which gave me opportunity not only to see the landscape of Latvia in the rural areas but also to meet great positive people that are doing great things to help the local initiatives. I was able to travel a lot through Latvia and to see the differences between the coastal and rural part. I can mention places like Nīca, Liepāja, Saulkrasti, Jūrmala and others that are beautiful coastal cities, each one a bit different but still very attractive from a touristic point of view. Liepāja gave me a beautiful view how a city after a huge devastation (WW2) can achieve great success. On the other hand, in villages like Bebrene, Tukums, Gulbene and other in the inner part of Latvia, I had a chance to see positive examples of people that had a vision and successfully implemented it.

I noticed that Latvians have a great respect for nature and the ecological footprint they leave on the nature. Littering is very rare, and they keep their fields clean from invasive vegetation. The Latvian culture is quite different from Croatian, and even though people say Latvians are introverts, I can't agree. On every family farm or agriculture business I went, everyone was really happy to meet me and explained all about their activities. I've noticed that there is quite a big difference between infrastructure in rural and coastal areas. In the rural ones, LAGs are trying to provide the local community with sufficient help to activate inhabitants and afterward lead to bigger projects that could make a positive influence. At the end of the exchange program, I was immensely thankful to both Forum Synergies, Latvian Lauku forum and LAG “Juras Zeme” to provide me such a beautiful experience. I really hope to visit Latvia more often in the future to meet my new friends.



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LEADER/CLLD CONFERENCE IN PORTUGAL

From 25th to 26th of November in Amarante (Portugal), ELARD Aisbl was organising its LEADER/CLLD 2019 CONFERENCE



The keynote presentation “Implementing CLLD in EU: Experiences so far – stocktaking, analysis and recommendations”, elaborated by Loris Servillo, Researcher and Associate Professor at Politecnico di Torino, and Stefan Kah, Researcher at University of Strathclyde/European Policies Research Centre, launched the event, which was joined by more than 120 participants from 17 countries. The panel entitled “Looking forward with the feet on the ground – proposals and expectations from local level” introduced good examples of the use of ERDF and ESF, advantages of the development of the use of simplified cost options, and insights from the ELARD Members workshop introduced by Marion Eckardt, Kristiina Tammets and Robert Lukesch, respectively.

More information in <http://www.elard.eu/what-s-going-on/news?id=2206896>

CLLD CONFERENCE IN BRUSSELS, 3-4 December

500 stakeholders of CLLD from rural, urban and fisheries areas met in Brussels to discuss achievements and future of this approach in the conference “Post 2020 – Local Action in a changing world”.



Since the start of the 2014-2020 programme period, the European Commission and its services organise annually a big transnational event for actors involved in CLLD financed from the four EU Funds (EAFRD, EMFF, ESF and ERDF). In 2019 it was again the turn of DG MARE and FARNET to organise such an event. One of the highlights was an exhibition of 40 CLLD projects funded from the different Funds, focusing on such themes as “Eating local”, “Local jobs and services”, “Going circular”, “Going green”, “Mobilising knowledge”, “Keeping tourism sustainable”, “Smart communities”, “Inclusive communities”. The best projects received their awards from the new European Commissioner for the Environment, Oceans and Fisheries Virginijus Sinkevičius.

More information to be found here:

https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/cms/farnet2/news-events/events/conferences/post-2020-local-action-changing-world-3-4-december-brussels_en

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PREPARE NETWORK IS PROMOTING NEW ACTIVISTS FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT

We continue the PREPARE Aisbl initiative - Presenting young rural development enthusiasts. In this edition, meet Rinor Ahmeti from Kosovo



Rinor Ahmeti is 22 years old and he comes from Kosovo, but is currently studying and staying in Hungary. He is highly passionate about developing his career in the field of Rural Development. According to him local organisations are very important in providing services for their communities. Considering that he is a volunteer in another organisation, being a new rural development activist would assist him to grow both professionally and personally. His main purpose is to be engaged and contribute to the development of his village, and at the same time to contribute in all Kosovos' rural areas. Hewants to learn new things and get to work with new people, get inspired by others and give his own contribution as well. He is very eager to put my ideas to life and fells a force that always pushes him forward.

He is graduate of Bachelor's Program in Agriculture Economics, at the University of Prishtina. Now he is doing master studies for Rural Development and Agribusiness, at Szent Istvan Univeristy, in Hungary.

During the past few years Rinor has been volunteering for Rotaract Club Illyrian, where the members suggest and the club reviews the service projects for community, ensuring that real needs are addressed. Then they develop annual plans for the community service projects, and lead, organize and implement the community service project.

He also volunteered for PEN (Peer Education Network), as a part of Making Sense project which was for empowering citizens through personal digital manufacturing applied to the design of environmental sensors.

Diakonie Youth Center in Mitrovica for a short time was another voluntary engagement for Rinor. The main purpose of this organisation was to improve communication and cohabitation of different ethnicities and starting to accept each other. As well as enabling different leisure youth activities and games, this initiative enables intercultural learning.

Studying rural development has given him a sense of its importance, while being a member of Network of Organizations for Rural Development of Kosovo has given him opportunities for taking part of workshops and meeting other rural civil society organizations, sharing experiences and gaining knowledge.

Family has very important impact on Rinor's development, growth and healthy upbringing. They provide him with security and support, not only financial but also emotional. "They love me, understand my ideas and support my actions. Being on Kosovo society they know its challenges and barriers, so my family supports my dedication to NORDK. My family also gives me the feeling that I belong somewhere. Knowing where I belong gives me the anchor I need to deal with everything the world throws at me" concludes Rinor.

Being around with people, communicating with them, looking at their needs and opportunities that rural areas offers, has influenced his dedication to be the advocate for rural communities. His dedication to rural development includes action to influence the process of social change. It is a dynamic concept which suggests a movement away from a previous situation. All societies are changing, and rural extension attempts to develop certain aspects of society in order to influence the nature and speed of the change.

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INTRODUCING OUR MEMBERS

Polish Rural forum

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Polish Rural Forum (Forum for the Animation of Rural Areas – FAOW) is the first national platform of cooperation of rural organizations in Poland. The organizations cooperating within the Forum work together towards a more effective functioning of Polish rural communities within the European Union, through animation and increased participation in decision making.

The aims of the Polish Rural Forum are as follows:

- to work for the development of rural areas and their inhabitants;
- to support and promote sustainable rural development;
- to support civic society development and knowledge-based economy,
- to build partnership and dialogue for sustainable rural development, and
- to animate local communities in rural areas.

More information in <http://faow.org.pl/en/about-polish-rural-forum/>

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The newsletter was prepared by the board and members of PREPARE AISBL