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European Network for Rural Development

RURAL CONNECTIONS

THE EUROPEAN RURAL DEVELOPMENT MAGAZINE

EN

AUTUMN 2016

NEWS AND UPDATES

- AMSTERDAM RURAL FORUM
- ONLINE TOOLS AND OUTPUTS
- TRANSNATIONAL COOPERATION

RURAL ISSUES, RURAL PERSPECTIVES

- IRELAND'S FIRST RURAL HUB
- SWEDISH RURAL PARLIAMENT
- APPLYING 'THEORY U' TO LEADER

FOCUS ON...

CORK 2.0

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European Network for
Rural Development

European Network for Rural Development

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 (RDPs) by generating and sharing knowledge, as well as through facilitating information exchange and co-operation across rural Europe.

Each Member State has established a National Rural Network (NRN) that brings together the organisations and administrations involved in rural development. At EU level, the ENRD supports the networking of these NRNs, national administrations and European organisations.

Find out more on the *ENRD website* (https://enrd.ec.europa.eu)

Europe Direct is a service to help you find answers to your questions about the European Union.

Freephone number (*):
00 800 6 7 8 9 10 11

(*) The information given is free, as are most calls
(though some operators, phone boxes or hotels may charge you).

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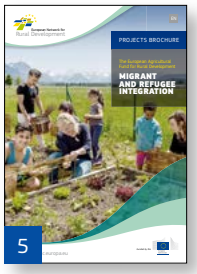

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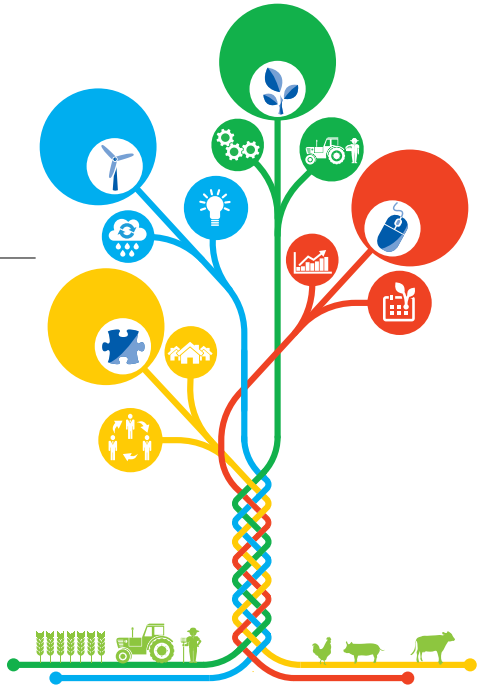

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EDITORIAL

As a British national working on European rural development, I suspect that 2016 will live long in my memory! The UK's referendum decision on 'Brexit' is never far from my thoughts. At the same time, a major European Conference on Rural Development delivered the new **'Cork 2.0 Declaration: A Better Life for Rural Areas'** exactly twenty years after the original Cork Declaration that first created the Rural Development Pillar of the Common Agricultural Policy.

In this edition of Rural Connections, we give a lot of attention to what happened at the Cork 2.0 Conference, 5-6 September 2016. Through **'A focus on... Cork 2.0'** (pp. 13-30) we provide an **overview** of the event, highlight the **main messages** coming out of the **four workshops** (on growth, environment, innovation and vitality) and present the resulting Cork 2.0 **Declaration in full**.

As a networking magazine, we were also very keen to capture the **reactions of Cork participants**. Over eight pages, we hear from 20 different participants, from the European Commissioner to National Rural Networks (NRNs) and from farmers' organisations to environmental and territorial organisations. These give an excellent feel not only for the content of Cork 2.0, but also what people's different opinions, hopes and expectations are for how the Declaration can inform the future of Rural Development policy in Europe.

Our regular **'Rural Issues, Rural Perspectives'** section (pp. 31-38) presents another range of rural development voices. In this edition, you can read about an Estonian event on **Transnational Cooperation**, a growing European network of **rural artists**, the Swedish **Rural Parliament**, the potential of participatory support applying **'Theory U'** in the Netherlands and the first ever **rural hub** in Ireland.

Finally, a reminder that the magazine starts with a section of **'News and updates'** (pp. 4-12). You can read about the recent European meetings of the NRNs, the latest news, thematic outputs and online tools from the ENRD Contact Point, news and outputs from European projects and institutions, and updates from the Evaluation Helpdesk and EIP-AGRI Service Point.

As always, there are opportunities and challenges on the horizon for all of us. Now more than ever it seems to me to be crucial to talk through our differences, increase our mutual understanding and see what we can achieve by working together. To quote one of the participants in Cork "if we don't work together for Europe's rural areas, we're doomed; no one will listen to us!"

Ed Thorpe
Communications Manager, ENRD-CP
editor@enrd.eu

NEWS & UPDATES

ENRD NEWS

5th NRNs' Meeting and the Amsterdam Rural Forum

The 5th meeting of the National Rural Networks (NRNs) in the 2014-2020 period took place at the Amsterdam Rural Forum, 11-12 May 2016. The overarching theme was the potential role that arts and culture can play in stimulating rural development in Europe.

About 150 participants – including rural networkers, entrepreneurs, policy-makers, scientists and artists – took part in more than 20 workshops to share knowledge and ideas. Activities also included cycle visits of local projects and milk tastings.

Artists and other creators had the opportunity to present their work in rural areas, from light shows to community building and from art installations to recording local histories. A one-man performance by the theatre-maker Lucas de Man showcased the reality of life as a pig farmer based on his interviews with farmers, producers of animal food and bankers (see photo).

© Stichting Nieuwe Helden

Participants stressed that arts and culture have a particular power to overcome divides between agriculture and nature, the urban and the rural, producers and consumers. They can bring new ways of thinking and seeing rural areas.

The event, which was organised by the Dutch National Rural Network with support from the ENRD Contact Point included an NRNs' meeting which reflected on how networks can help promote such activities. Ideas included sharing more inspiring examples, reaching out to policy-makers in both culture and rural development, and developing the strong potential for LEADER Local Action Groups (LAGs) to be active in this field.

NRN tools online

The ENRD Contact Point has made available an **NRN toolkit** providing a range of materials to assist Network Support Units (NSUs) in achieving the key objectives and tasks of rural networks across Europe.

The materials largely build on existing NRN experience and are searchable by topics categorised under 'running the NRNs', 'NRN objectives' and 'NRN tasks'. The too materials Is include methodological good practices, relevant outputs from events, and articles in ENRD publications.

You can also find online **NRN profiles** presenting key information on the structure and functioning of the NRNs. The profiles include sections on the main NRN objectives, membership, governance, budget, and communication and self-assessment activities.

6th NRNs' Meeting: From needs to action

The 6th NRNs' meeting in the 2014-2020 period took place 8-9 November 2016 in Senec, Slovakia. Representatives from 19 NRNs came together to discuss ways to improve the two-way exchange of knowledge and information between the national and European levels, and how national and regional networks can best link with stakeholders on the ground.

Participants shared the latest thinking around the structure and role of the NRNs, how innovation is fostered within and between EU Member States and ways to actively follow up to the Cork 2.0 Declaration.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

Visit the 'Networking' section of the ENRD website.

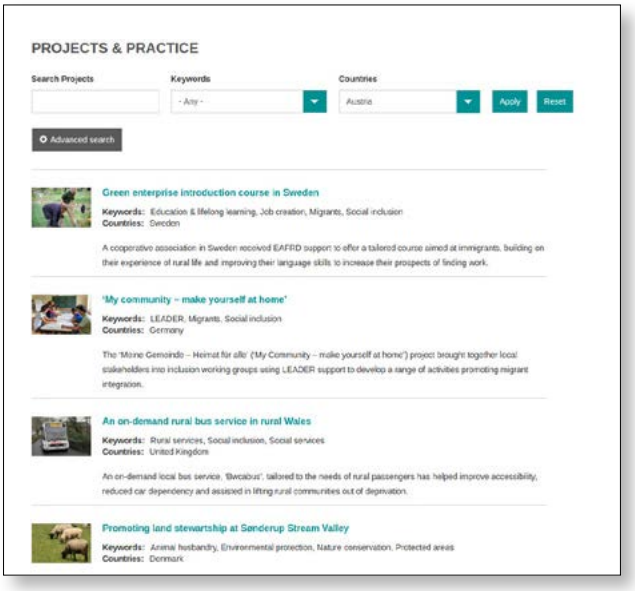
NEWS & UPDATES

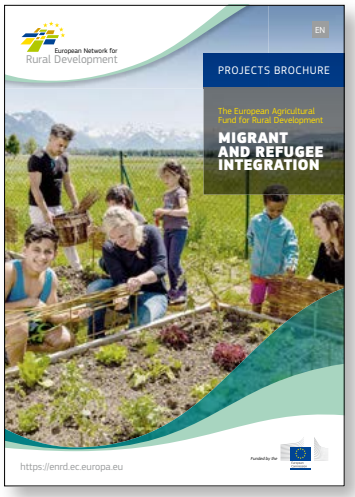
EAFRD Projects & Practice

Browse the projects database now available under the 'Projects & Practice' section of the ENRD website to discover inspirational rural development practice from across Europe!

The new database contains projects searchable by EU Member State, thematic keywords and free text. All of the projects have been funded by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD).

The database aims both to encourage the transfer of approaches that have been shown to work and to inspire even better ideas. Do you have an example of a good EAFRD project that you would like to share with the rest of Europe? Contact us at info@enrd.eu.





Integrating migrants and refugees in Europe's rural areas

Read and help disseminate the latest EAFRD Projects Brochure on 'Migrant and Refugee Integration' in rural Europe.

This edition explores how individuals and communities in rural areas have used EAFRD support to respond in positive ways to the challenges and opportunities presented by the recent influx of migrants and refugees into the European Union.

The Brochure is linked to broader thematic work of the ENRD Contact Point on social inclusion and can be downloaded from the 'Publications' section of the ENRD website.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

Visit also the 'ENRD thematic work' section of the ENRD website.

ENRD presentation booklet in 23 languages!

Read the ENRD presentation booklet in your language and share it with rural development stakeholders in your country.

The 16-page booklet briefly presents the context of the EU's Rural Development policy and objectives, before explaining how networking activities through the ENRD can support the best possible outcomes on the ground.

The booklet is now available for online download in 23 European languages from the 'In Brief' page of the ENRD website. You can also order multiple printed copies to distribute to your contacts and stakeholders. Write to: publication@enrd.eu.

News and events from rural Europe

Keep up to date with the latest agriculture and rural development news and events from across Europe via the improved tools available on the ENRD website.

You can now search for upcoming national, European and international events and browse through the latest news from the rural networks, EU institutions and stakeholder organisations.

Share your news and events with the rest of Europe, write to us at editor@enrd.eu.

NEWS & UPDATES

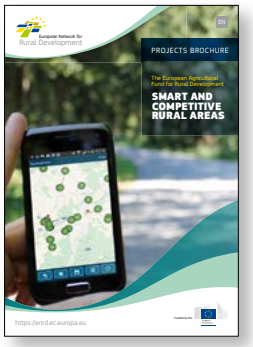
Thematic work on 'Smart & Competitive Rural Areas'

The ENRD Thematic Group (TG) on 'Smart and Competitive Rural Areas' has delivered a set of useful outputs focused mainly on the priority sub-theme of food and drink supply chains.

The TG – including representatives of various stakeholder groups – met three times, kicking off in November 2015 and agreeing to focus on the chosen sub-theme. The following are the main publications and other outputs from this work.

EAFRD PROJECTS BROCHURE

An EAFRD Projects Brochure on 'Smart and Competitive Rural Areas' presents examples of methods and approaches that have been used across Europe to deliver results on:



- Rural broadband;
- Digital access to market;
- Farm modernisation;
- Market development;
- Rural diversification;
- Sustainable communities.

The Brochure provides an indication of the range of possibilities for using Rural Development Programme (RDP) funding to support rural areas in being smart and competitive places to live and work.

EU RURAL REVIEW 22 'SMART AND COMPETITIVE FOOD AND DRINK SUPPLY CHAINS'

EU Rural Review 22 focuses on opportunities to improve the competitiveness of primary producers by better integrating them into the agri-food supply chain.

It provides an overview of the opportunities for adding value in the supply chains and explores current market opportunities in terms of expanding rural markets, accessing urban markets and the market for public food.

The publication stresses the importance of strategies for supporting smarter supply chains using effective links with research and the RDPs.

OTHER THEMATIC OUTPUTS

Additional thematic outputs produced by or for the work of the group include: a background paper, a factsheet on 'smart agri-food supply chains' and four rural development programming case studies from Estonia, Ireland, Scotland (UK) and Basque Country (Spain).

ENRD SEMINAR

The ENRD Seminar on 'Smart and Competitive Rural Areas' brought together around 70 rural development stakeholders in Brussels on 26 May 2016.

The event aimed at identifying and prioritising specific RDP actions to support farms and rural businesses in accessing emerging markets. The main focus of the discussion was on cooperation and investments which increase the competitiveness of sustainable rural products and services.

A NEW FOCUS ON RURAL BUSINESSES

For 2016-2017, the ENRD thematic work is focusing on 'Smart and Competitive Rural Businesses'. The first Thematic Group meeting on this topic was held in October 2016. The group has already decided to focus on: 'Wild ideas and new trends for rural businesses'; 'Smart business support'; and 'Digitisation & ICT'.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

Visit the 'ENRD Thematic Work' pages on the ENRD website or contact us at: smart-competitive@enrd.eu

NEWS & UPDATES

Thematic work on 'Greening the Rural Economy'

The ENRD Thematic Group (TG) on 'Greening the Rural Economy' focused 2015-2016 on 'Transition to the Green Economy' – the related outputs are currently being finalised. For the 2016-2017 work, the TG is focusing on the issue of 'Resource Efficiency'.

Keep up to date by visiting the 'ENRD Thematic Work' pages on the ENRD website or contact us at green-economy@enrd.eu. We will update you on all this work in the next edition of Rural Connections!

LEADER/CLLD

TOOLS & GUIDANCE

The ENRD Contact Point is continuously working to develop useful material and tools to assist both Managing Authorities (MAs) and Local Action Groups (LAGs) in implementing LEADER/CLLD more efficiently. Recent products include:

- A guide for new LAGs on designing and implementing an effective **Local Development Strategy** (LDS);
- Practical guidance on the use of **Simplified Cost Options** (SCOs) in LEADER/CLLD;
- A collection of factsheets overviewing national and regional rules and procedures on **LEADER/CLLD Cooperation**;
- A set of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) on **LEACER/CLLD implementation and cooperation**.

Additionally, new and upcoming online tools will facilitate communication and cooperation between LAGs and other LEADER groups:

- A **LAGs database** contains contacts details of newly approved LAGs across Europe;
- A **partner search** webpage includes LEADER cooperation project initiatives and will soon be developed into a searchable, interactive tool.

COOPERATION EVENTS

Various events throughout 2016 have focused on LEADER Transnational Cooperation (TNC) and discussed its planning and implementation in the 2014-2020 period:

- ENRD workshop on LEADER Cooperation (June 2016);
- LEADER TNC Fair in Estonia (August 2016);
- LINC 2016 event in Hungary (September 2016).

Key messages from the events include a need for more harmonised rules and simplified procedures, as well as better communication around guidelines and potential project partners.

PRACTITIONER-LED SOLUTIONS

Responding to popular demand, the ENRD Contact Point is supporting a dedicated Practitioner-led Working Group on LEADER TNC.

The group will work to identify practical possibilities for harmonisation of TNC rules and procedures, as well as to build the capacities of relevant actors. For more information, contact leader-clld@enrd.eu.

© LINC 2016

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

All tools can be found under the LEADER/CLLD section of the ENRD website: http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/leader-clld_en

See also the dedicated LEADER Cooperation page http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/leader-clld/cooperation_en for EC 'Guidance for implementation of LEADER Cooperation activities in Rural Development Programmes 2014-2020', available in all official EU languages.

NEWS & UPDATES

European Rural Networks' Steering Group

The Steering Group of the ENRD and the EIP-AGRI networks met once in June 2016 and again in October 2016.

The June meeting put forward suggestions and priorities for the existing ENRD Thematic Working Groups and stressed the relevance of additional activities on the theme of social inclusion in rural areas. It also provided proposals for strengthening the European Rural Networks' capacity-building activities and self-assessment framework.

The October meeting focused on how European networking activities can best follow up and build on the outcomes of the Cork 2.0 Conference and Declaration (see pp. 13-30). Participants discussed the content of the Declaration and how to implement it through their own activities and those of the European Rural Networks.

© ENRD CP, 2016

ENRD workshop on Areas of Natural Constraint

An ENRD workshop gathered around 80 national and regional Managing Authorities and Paying Agencies, as well as DG AGRI Desk Officers to discuss the designation of 'Areas Facing Natural or Other Specific Constraints' (ANCs) by rural development programme authorities.

The event explored different approaches to the elaboration, approval and implementation of the new ANC system, specifically focusing on techniques for applying biophysical criteria and fine-tuning, as well as on payment schemes.

The workshop, which was held in Brussels on 18 October 2016, was jointly organised by DG AGRI and the ENRD Contact Point in collaboration with the EU Commission's Joint Research Centre.

ENRD workshop on Measure 16 Cooperation

An ENRD workshop in June 2016 explored the range of opportunities offered to rural development stakeholders via the 'Cooperation Measure' (M16) of the Rural Development Programmes, notably in fields such as: sustainability and climate change; competitiveness; food supply chains; and social inclusion.

The event – which brought together national and regional Managing Authorities, Paying Agencies and DG AGRI Desk Officers – specifically looked at the legal conditions for cooperation projects, state aid issues and some of the challenges currently facing programming authorities in the implementation of M16.

The workshop saw presentations from some of the first experiences in the 2014-2020 implementation and used these to inform a consideration of the emerging issues.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

Outputs and presentations related to all events can be found in the 'Past Events' section of the ENRD website.

For further details on past and future ENRD workshops you can also write to rdp@enrd.eu

NEWS & UPDATES

UPDATE FROM THE EVALUATION HELPDESK

EUROPEAN EVALUATION HELPDESK FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT

EvaluationWorks! Outcomes of 2015 and outlook for 2016

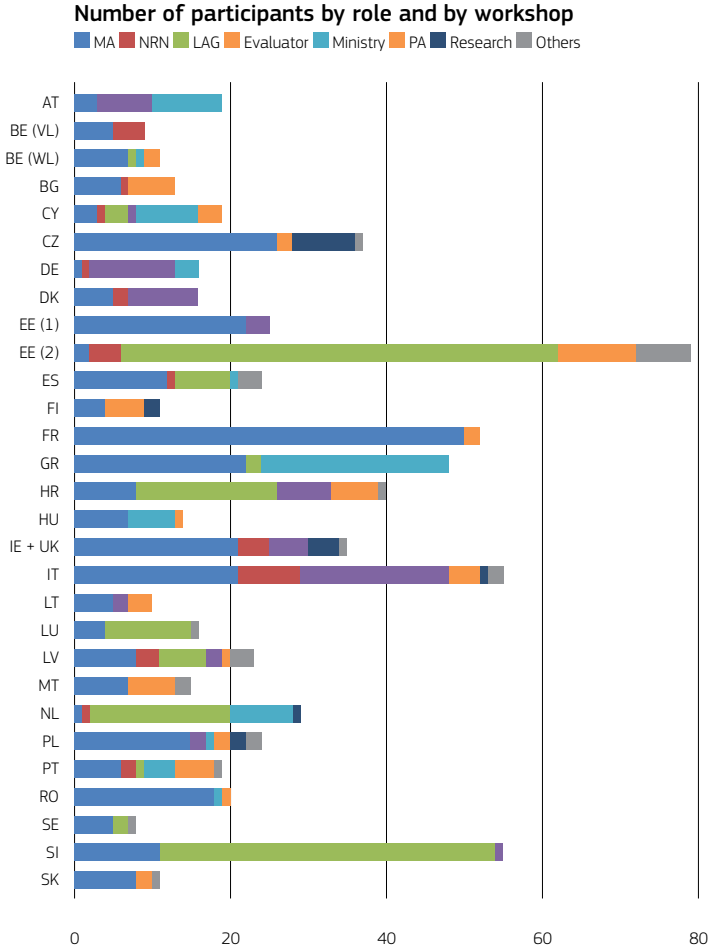
EvaluationWORKS! is the yearly capacity-building event of the European Evaluation Helpdesk for Rural Development, which is organised **in each Member State** of the EU in order to provide a platform for strengthening the evaluation capacity among rural development evaluation stakeholders.

EvaluationWORKS! provides the opportunity for Member States and stakeholders to be actively involved in the entire process, giving them **full ownership of the outcomes**. In this respect, events are organised in **easily accessible locations and run in the local language**.

Between October 2015 and June 2016, 29 trainings in 28 Member States were concluded.

- The trainings were **attended by a total of 750 participants**.
- The two largest groups of participants were from Managing Authorities and Local Action Groups (LAGs).

Number of participants by role and by workshop



Participants from the capacity-building events highlighted:

- An increase in the know-how on evaluation methods and practices;
- The wide variety of evaluation stakeholders in attendance;
- The exchange and transfer of experiences between stakeholders.

EvaluationWORKS! 2016

The 2016 trainings will be offered in a multi-module format to be tailored to each Member State's needs.

The **current modules** are:

Module 1 – Getting prepared for reporting on evaluation in the Annual Implementation Reports (AIRs) submitted in 2017

- Sub-module 1.1 – Evaluation and reporting in the AIR submitted in 2017 – how to understand and conduct the task?
- Sub-module 1.2 – Specific challenges of evaluation and reporting in the AIR submitted in 2017

Module 2 – Evaluation of LEADER/CLLD

- Sub-module 2.1 – LEADER/CLLD evaluation at the RDP level.
- Sub-module 2.2 – LEADER/CLLD evaluation at the local level.

The Evaluation Helpdesk's capacity-building events will continue to establish **direct links with rural development evaluation stakeholders**. Continued support will be provided to **address the knowledge gaps** of evaluation stakeholders in areas such as the AIRs, the evaluation of LEADER/CLLD, the operations database, coordination of stakeholders, and the exchange of good practices among Member States.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

Visit the 'Evaluation' section of the ENRD website: http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/evaluation to find:

- Capacity-building activities of the European Evaluation Helpdesk;
- Rural Evaluation NEWS number 2 (December 2015, p. 12) and Rural Evaluation NEWS number 4 (August 2016, pp. 6-7).

NEWS & UPDATES

EU NEWS

Financial Instruments for Rural Development

A wide range of useful materials to facilitate the implementation of Financial Instruments (FIs) in agriculture and rural development has been made available by the advisory platform fi-compass.

- A new manual provides methodological advice on and step-by-step examples of how to implement the ***ex-ante* assessment of FIs in agriculture**;
- A guidance document from the European Commission overviews and gives advice on the **selection of bodies to implement FIs** using the European Structural & Investment Funds (ESI Funds);
- A set of audio-visual resources and presentations featuring practical experiences with **designing and implementing FIs** came out of dedicated seminars and conferences in Madrid (31 May), Rome (13 June), Warsaw (24 October) and Brussels (25 November).

© fi-compass

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

Visit www.fi-compass.eu for:

- 'Methodological handbook for implementing an *ex-ante* assessment of agriculture Financial Instruments under the EAFRD';
- EC Regulatory Guidance: 'Guidance for Member States on the selection of bodies implementing Financial Instruments';
- Fi-compass events resources.

See also a European Court of Auditors report on lessons to be learned from FIs implementation in the 2007-2013 period: http://eca-publications.eu/special-reports/financial-instruments-19-2016/

Land management case studies

The European project 'Pegasus' has published 34 case studies from across ten EU Member States examining the provision of public goods and ecosystem services from farming and forest activities.

'Pegasus' is exploring innovative land management approaches, including policy and practical challenges in different contexts. Ultimately, the project will use the case studies to identify the characteristics of successful territorial and supply-chain approaches.

The project is funded by the European Commission's Horizon2020 research programme and involves a wide range of stakeholders, from practitioners to academics.

TRANSFORMING APPROACHES TO RURAL LAND MANAGEMENT

© Pegasus

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

http://pegasus.ieep.eu

NEWS & UPDATES

European Rural Parliament 2017 secures funding

The European Rural Parliament (ERP) has been awarded a €150 000 grant from the Europe for Citizens programme to support its efforts to 'Strengthen Participation Among Rural People in Europe' (SPARCE).

The ERP's Action Programme will be structured around six key themes from the European Rural Manifesto:

- Communal action to sustain rural services
- Enabling young people to find a good life in the countryside
- Welcoming immigrants and refugees into rural areas
- Enlisting the participation, and meeting the needs, of socially excluded citizens
- Strengthening rural economies
- Integrated rural development.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

http://europeanruralparliament.com

Smart Specialisation Platform on Agri-Food

A new platform launched by the European Commission aims to accelerate the development of joint investment projects related to agri-food. The Smart specialisation Platform is intended to help generate investment opportunities on agri-food priorities defined by regional and national governments and contributing to a more competitive and sustainable EU food supply chain, more resilient food systems, and a more effective targeting of EU Funds.

To achieve its key objectives, the Platform will encourage and support interregional cooperation in areas such as: agriculture and ICT; water; low-impact farming; food and health; as well as on topics proposed by EU Member States and regions themselves.

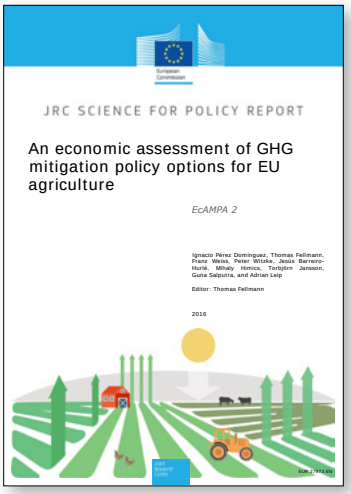
FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

http://s3platform.jrc.ec.europa.eu/agri-food

EU guides and publications

This study examines the choices made by Member States and regions in designing their 2014-2020 Rural Development Programmes (RDPs) in terms of planned expenditure, national or regional co-financing, and top-ups.

ISBN 978-92-823-9302-4



This publication overviews agricultural Greenhous Gas (GHG) emissions in the EU and examines to what extent technological mitigation options could be applied by European farmers and at what costs.

ISBN 978-92-79-59362-8

The study analyses the role of the EU's CAP in creating rural jobs, highlighting the positive effect of Rural Development policy and concluding that the CAP as a whole contributes to sustain and develop rural economies.

ISBN 978-92-823-9063-4

NEWS & UPDATES

UPDATE FROM EIP-AGRI

EIP-AGRI Operational Groups are up and running!

Over 100 Operational Groups (OGs) were already launched across Europe in April 2016 and the number is still going up. **OGs are designed to catalyse innovation in agriculture and forestry**, funded through the EU national and regional Rural Development Programmes.

Operational Groups bring together farmers, advisers, scientists and others to find innovative solutions for problems faced by farmers and foresters. Each OG makes the most of knowledge from their project partners, which have different backgrounds and expertise, to tackle the real needs of farmers and foresters.

© Ludger Linnemann

The Operational Group 'ENU-Wheat' aims to develop a sustainable and environmentally friendly wheat value chain in Hessen, Germany.

DID YOU KNOW?

Over 3200 OGs are expected to be set up under the EU Rural Development Programmes (2014-2020) in 94 EU countries and regions.

OPERATIONAL GROUPS TOOLKIT

To help you navigate your way through setting up an Operational Group, EIP-AGRI has created a specific section on its website. It contains **information on the many important steps of an OG project's life**. As information about current OG projects starts to become available, you will be able to read about the projects and find links to all their supporting material.

To set up a successful Operational Group, it takes a good innovative idea, the right partners, a solid plan and effective ways of spreading results. The **new EIP-AGRI brochure on Operational Groups** gives an update on the information and support that is available and examples from OG projects that have already started.

FIRST EXPERIENCES

The EIP-AGRI Service Point organised an **EIP-AGRI Workshop 'Operational Groups: first experiences'** in April 2016. This took place in Legnaro, Italy and involved representatives of 11 OGs from across Europe. They included OGs on: 'New approaches to pest control' from Austria; 'Sweet potatoes as an alternative crop' from France; and 'Preservation of old breeds of domestic animals' from Germany.

The Service Point has produced a leaflet offering short descriptions of each of the participating OGs. It has also produced a **video of OGs' first experiences**. All of this material can be downloaded from the Operational Groups toolkit on the EIP-AGRI website.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

EIP-AGRI Operational Groups toolkit

Visit the EIP-AGRI website for an online resource providing all the information and guidance you need about promoting, setting up, running and disseminating the outcomes of the Operational Groups:
http://ec.europa.eu/eip/agriculture/en/my-eip-agri/operational-groups

Materials available include:

- Facts, figures and interesting graphs;
- Information on the basic principles of Operational Groups;
- A Brochure on 'Operational Groups – 2016 update';
- A list of existing Operational Groups;
- A video on 'Operational Groups – First Experiences'.

A FOCUS ON... CORK 2.0

Over 300 rural development stakeholders gathered in Cork, Ireland at the start of September for a major European Conference on Rural Development.

Participants included farmers and foresters, environmentalists, researchers, RDP Managing Authorities, NGOs, business operators, Local Action Groups, advisors, National Rural Networks, members of the European Parliament, auditors and European Commission officials.

Coming exactly 20 years after the ground-breaking European Conference which concluded with the signing of the 'Cork Declaration on Rural Development' in 1996, this event was quickly baptised 'Cork 2.0'.

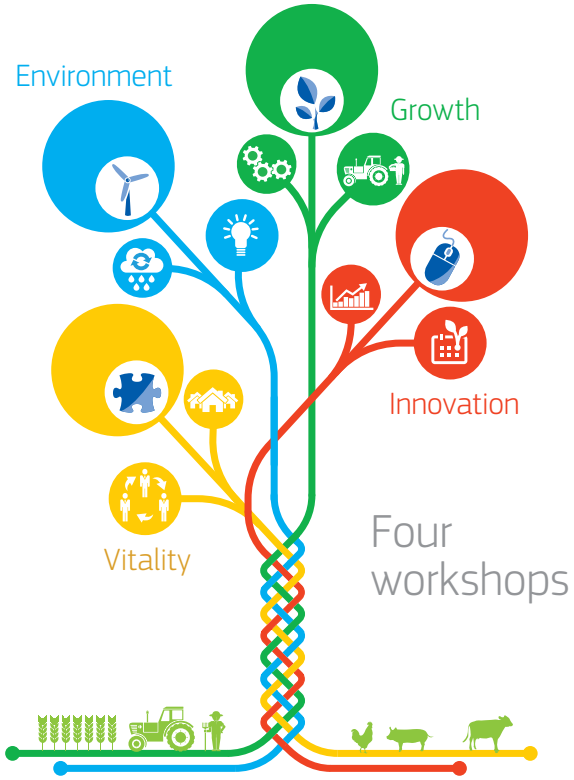
1996 → 2016

Clearly the world has changed significantly since 1996. Not only in terms of the transformational effects of the internet, new technologies and globalisation, but also socio-economic changes linked to an ever-evolving employment market, demographic change and the financial and refugee crises.

Lest we forget, we have also gone from an EU of 15 to 28 Member States through the EU's Enlargement policy, which saw many Central and Eastern European Countries join the Union.

Cork 2.0 aimed to reflect this much-changed world and engage rural development stakeholders in discussion on the specific challenges and opportunities facing Europe's rural areas and, most importantly of all, how best to respond to these.

The event achieved its main objective: **a new Cork Declaration 'A Better Life in Rural Areas' for a new era**.



EVENT INFORMATION

Title
Cork 2.0: European Conference on Rural Development

Date
5-6 September 2016

Location
Cork, Ireland

Organisers
European Commission, Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development under Commissioner Phil Hogan

Participants
340 rural development stakeholders

Primary objectives
To jointly define a new Cork Declaration reflecting the changing challenges and opportunities for Rural Development policy in Europe since the original 1996 Cork Declaration.

"We went to Cork with the objective of in-depth discussions leading to a new Cork Declaration worthy of its predecessor. The conference was also considered an opportunity for the rural stakeholder community to find common ground and develop a common voice that can be heard, when political decisions are made that impact on the lives of the hundreds of millions of EU citizens in rural areas."

Phil Hogan,
European Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development

A FOCUS ON... CORK 2.0

Workshop 1
Jobs, Growth & Investment

KEY MESSAGES

Increase trust and communication between rural stakeholders. 'Break down the silos' between farmers, foresters, environmentalists and consumers who all need to be involved in defining what is wanted, what is achievable and how.

Encourage **local productive networks and strengthen rural value chains** driven by consumer preferences (e.g. healthy food) and giving a fairer share to primary producers.

Foster digitalisation, access to technology and especially broadband to help farms, farm businesses and SMEs to create and maintain jobs in rural areas.

Better integrate Rural Development policy with other policies that have an impact on rural prosperity and jobs.

'Prepare the ground' for generational renewal using technology, enhancing advisor support and knowledge transfer, and making land available to young people.

DISCUSSION TOPICS CHOSEN

Integrated value chains
A new approach to quality
Redefining agriculture and rural
Digitalising agriculture
Local networks and rural-urban links
Bio-economy, by-products & waste

WORKSHOP REFLECTIONS

Producers need to provide safe, **quality**, traceable products that are ultimately demanded by society, but it is also essential to **shorten the information chain** so that consumers know what they are buying.

There are significant **opportunities for extracting value** from the bio-economy, by-products, waste, unused land and agritourism in rural areas.

We need new thinking to combine economic growth with the **provision of public goods and addressing societal challenges**.

Show there is life, opportunities and **a future for all in rural areas**.

Move from thinking mainly about costs to the **value of investment in rural areas**.

Better integrate rural and agricultural policies into the strategic framework.

FACILITATORS:
David Lamb, ENRD Contact Point
Dirk Stockmans, European Commission

RAPPORTEUR:
Alan Jagoe, CEJA

Workshop 2
Rural Environment, Climate & Water

KEY MESSAGES

Ensure consistency between policies affecting the environment in rural areas that are **longer term, simpler and proportional** in terms of controls and sanctions.

Encourage more territorial, people-centred, locally led approaches based on evidence and sound analysis of local circumstances – always with the end user in mind.

Recognise the multiple functions of land in the delivery of environmental public goods and engage stakeholders in innovative ways to **incentivise environmental land management**.

Take **greater advantage of the economic dimension of environment in agriculture and rural areas**, e.g. efficiency gains and capturing environmental value through markets.

Enhance consumers' awareness of environmental value and increase their willingness to pay producers for this value.

CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES IDENTIFIED

Climate mitigation Climate adaptation Air quality **Carbon sequestration + soil management** Biodiversity Water quantity and quality **Resource efficiency** Landscape & cultural heritage Protective functions **Healthy food** Renewable energy Cascading/circular economy **Capturing environmental value through markets** Employment generation Knowledge, education, communication

WORKSHOP REFLECTIONS

Recognise and **enhance the environmental contribution of rural areas** – e.g. sustainable management of natural resources, emissions reduction and carbon sequestration.

Increase knowledge exchange and cooperation for more ambitious approaches, including peer-to-peer advice, combining economic and environmental advice and information to consumers.

Many environment issues present both barriers and drivers for rural development – such as the connection between the environment and the economy and the impact of climate change.

Overcome mistrust: between stakeholders to close the climate-farming gap; and between institutions and beneficiaries which can cause risk-averse decision-making.

FACILITATORS:
Zelie Peppiette, European Commission
Maciej Krzysztofowicz, European Commission

RAPPORTEUR:
Kaley Hart, IEEP

Workshop 3
Innovation

KEY MESSAGES

Put **innovation at the heart of CAP reform** and the bigger system – for example by ensuring that other policies and production support encourage rather than prevent innovation.

Provide an infrastructure that encourages **a more strategic approach** to research and innovation from EU level down to regional level – rather than restricting innovation to the project level.

More effectively balance the long-term need for **creativity, flexibility and risk-taking** with the short-term need for accountability in use of public funds.

Encourage more consistency, coherence and quality in European **Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation Systems (AKIS)** which are key for knowledge transfer.

Encourage and strengthen **peer-to-peer exchange, networking and cooperation** between the range of innovation stakeholders.

KEY BARRIERS IDENTIFIED

Aversity to risk Short-termism **Rural isolation**
Lack of funding
Pillar 1 'fossilisation'
Administrative procedures

WORKSHOP REFLECTIONS

New technologies, digitalisation and robotisation etc. offer major opportunities for productivity, but also some risks around e.g. data ownership.

Food is back on the political agenda and there are important drivers around the desire for e.g. healthy food and local self-sufficiency.

Stakeholders in **isolated rural areas need to be included** within approaches for developing and sharing research and innovation.

There is a big role for research institutes in innovating in agriculture, but it is important to **overcome the gap between farming practice and academic research**.

We need **administrative flexibility based on trust and participation**. If all stakeholders are involved, it can be easier for auditors to formulate public accountability even if a project fails.

FACILITATORS:
Mark Redman, Independent Rural Development Expert
Margarida Ambar, EIP-AGRI Service Point

RAPPORTEUR:
Jan-Willem van der Schans, Wageningen University (NL)

Workshop 4
Rural Viability & Vitality

KEY MESSAGES

Build and promote a new rural identity around dynamism, quality, trust, contributions to wider society, rural opportunities, health, well-being and innovation.

We need a broader, **integrated approach to Rural Development policy and funding**, including 'rural proofing' of other policies. Rural development is not just about the CAP.

Invest in rural **broadband, infrastructure and services** to create the required environment for **entrepreneurship and new opportunities**.

Strengthen local democracy and partnership putting local people first. Bottom-up approaches such as LEADER/CLLD can deliver integrated and targeted local responses.

Use innovation in delivery to encourage new opportunities in rural areas e.g. simplification, Financial Instruments & social economy.

DISCUSSION TOPICS CHOSEN

Using LEADER/CLLD Promotion of rural identity **Local democracy** **Job creation** Access to services, infrastructure and broadband **Opportunities for young people**

WORKSHOP REFLECTIONS

Coordinated local action is needed to **attract and keep young people** in rural areas, as well as to ensure services and opportunities for older generations.

Strengthen links between **local value chains, emerging consumer needs** and the market.

Take into account the needs of the many small and **subsistence farmers** and the most **marginalised and vulnerable members** of rural communities.

Strengthen **local-regional-national-EU partnerships and networks** based on trust and cooperation in order to improve delivery of more strategic approaches and demonstrate effectiveness.

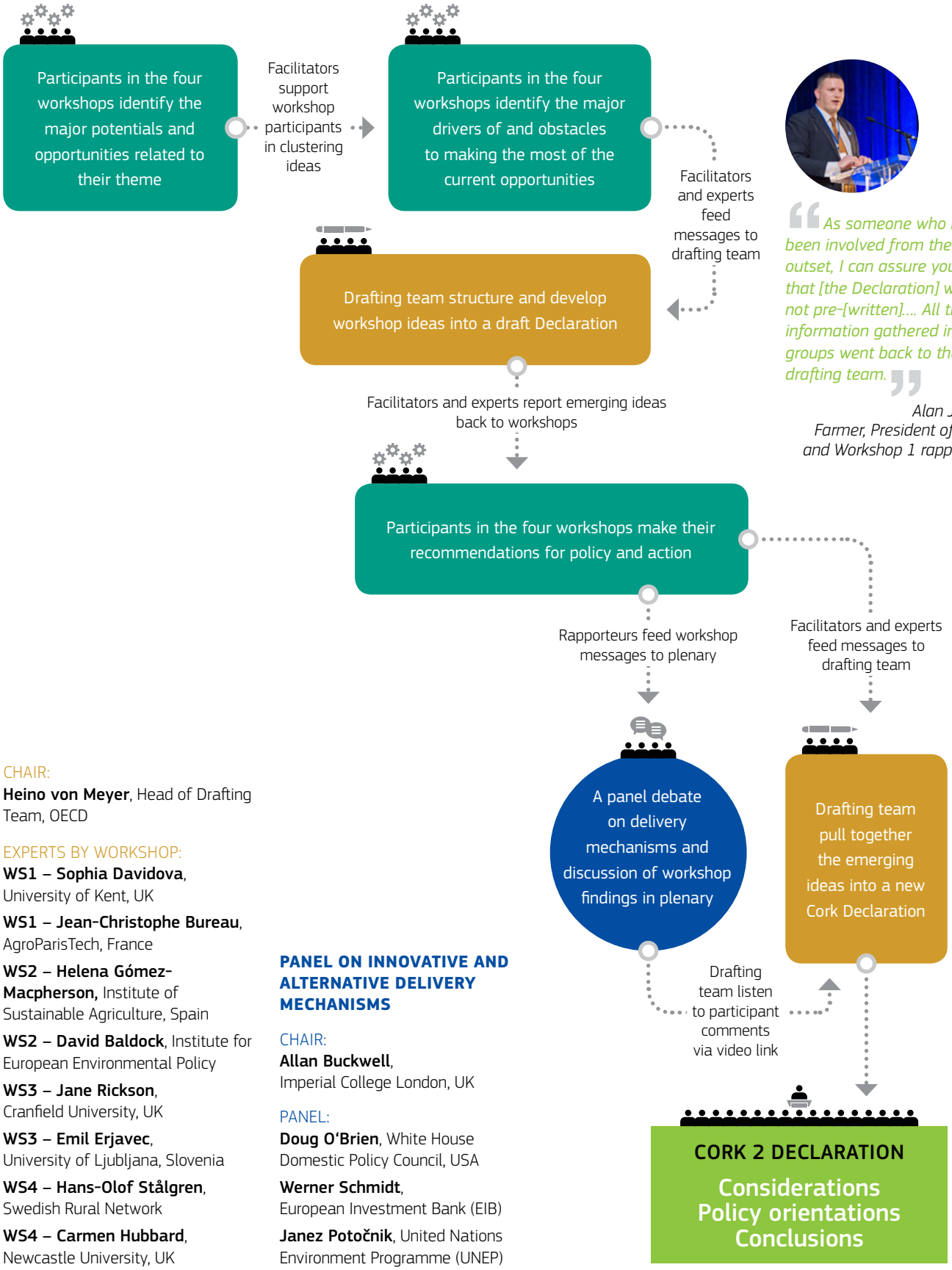
Many **barriers can be turned into opportunities** with more investment and support e.g. lack of infrastructure, opportunities etc.

FACILITATORS:
Paul Soto, ENRD Contact Point
Sari Rannanpnaa, Freelance consultant

RAPPORTEUR:
Randel Länts, Committee of the Regions

A Participatory Process

The findings of the **four parallel workshops** – and discussions and feedback in **plenary sessions** – fed into the work of a **drafting team** of experts whose task it was to turn the input of the 300+ participants into a new Cork Declaration.



"As someone who has been involved from the very outset, I can assure you that [the Declaration] was not pre-[written].... All the information gathered in the groups went back to the drafting team."

Alan Jagoe, Farmer, President of CEJA and Workshop 1 rapporteur

CHAIR:
Heino von Meyer, Head of Drafting Team, OECD

EXPERTS BY WORKSHOP:
WS1 – Sophia Davidova, University of Kent, UK

WS1 – Jean-Christophe Bureau, AgroParisTech, France

WS2 – Helena Gómez-Macpherson, Institute of Sustainable Agriculture, Spain

WS2 – David Baldock, Institute for European Environmental Policy

WS3 – Jane Rickson, Cranfield University, UK

WS3 – Emil Erjavec, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia

WS4 – Hans-Olof Stålgren, Swedish Rural Network

WS4 – Carmen Hubbard, Newcastle University, UK

PANEL ON INNOVATIVE AND ALTERNATIVE DELIVERY MECHANISMS

CHAIR:
Allan Buckwell, Imperial College London, UK

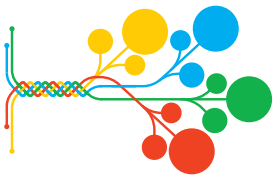
PANEL:
Doug O'Brien, White House Domestic Policy Council, USA

Werner Schmidt, European Investment Bank (EIB)

Janez Potočnik, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)

THE CORK 2.0 DECLARATION 2016 – IN FULL

A Better Life in Rural Areas



Considerations

Having met at Cork, Ireland from 5th to 6th September 2016

Building on the 1996 Cork Declaration – "A living countryside" – developed by the participants of the European Conference on Rural Development in Cork, Ireland;

Considering the key role of rural areas and communities in implementing the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) as well as the conclusions of the 21st annual Conference of the Parties (COP21) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC);

Aware of the economic, environmental and social diversity that characterises Rural Europe – which is home to more than half of the EU population and covers more than three quarters of the territory – and the importance of rural areas in the preservation of Europe's manifold natural and cultural landscapes and heritage;

Persuaded that urban centres and rural areas and their populations enjoy different but complementary assets, and that improved interrelations and partnerships among them are important preconditions for economic viability, environmental performance and social cohesion of the Union as a whole;

Convinced of the value of rural resources capable of delivering sustainable solutions to current and future societal challenges that concern all citizens of the Union such as assuring a safe and sustainable provision of quality food, developing the circular economy, broadening the bio-economy, fostering resource efficiency, combating climate change and reducing the reliance on fossil fuels;

Expecting that the rural economy and rural businesses will depend increasingly on digitisation as well as knowledge workers who make the most of the digital transformation and enhance rural production in a sustainable manner;

Persuaded that economic growth and sustainability are not mutually exclusive and can be fostered by innovation to which rural entrepreneurs, farmers, and foresters must have access and which may concern technologies, practices, processes, social and organisational matters, and be research driven or based on interactive bottom-up approaches;

Concerned about rural exodus and youth drain and the need to ensure that rural areas and communities (countryside, farms, villages, and small towns) remain attractive places to live and work by improving access to services and opportunities for rural citizens and fostering entrepreneurship in traditional rural domains as well as new sectors of the economy;

Convinced that the agricultural and forestry sectors are still of great importance for the Union's economy, and that their associated value chains are engines of rural growth providing jobs and livelihoods to tens of millions of Europeans, in particular in rural areas and often with jobs that cannot be relocated;

Aware of the role of agriculture and forestry in shaping the landscapes and the importance of farmers and foresters as stewards of the countryside and principal providers of environmental public goods and services related to biodiversity, soil, water and climate action;

Mindful of the need for a strong territorial emphasis within the Common Agricultural Policy, operating in complementarity with other EU policies and focusing on delivering relevant results for rural citizens and society as a whole;

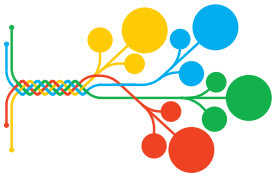
Determined to strengthen the integration of local initiatives and rural capacity building in mainstream EU policy making, in particular through bottom-up approaches to local development such as LEADER and Community Led Local Development;

Committed to ensure participation of rural development actors and stakeholders in line with the European Code of Conduct on Partnership;

Considering the opinion of the Committee of the Regions concerning innovation and modernisation of the rural economy, the opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee on Rural Development Programmes as well as the valuable reflections by other rural stakeholder groups on the prospect for rural and agricultural development;

Confident that a result-oriented Common Agricultural and Rural Development Policy with a strengthened strategic approach is a key instrument to deliver on EU priorities;

Dedicated to ensure the principle of subsidiarity as well as simplification and transparency of the policy design.



Policy Orientations

We, the participants at the Cork 2.0 European Conference on Rural Development, declare that an innovative, integrated and inclusive rural and agricultural policy in the European Union should be guided by the following ten policy orientations:

POINT 1: PROMOTING RURAL PROSPERITY

The rural potential to deliver innovative, inclusive and sustainable solutions for current and future societal challenges such as economic prosperity, food security, climate change, resource management, social inclusion, and integration of migrants should be better recognised. A rural proofing mechanism should ensure this is reflected in Union policies and strategies. Rural and agricultural policies should build on the identity and dynamism of rural areas through the implementation of integrated strategies and multi-sectorial approaches. They should promote diversification and foster entrepreneurship, investment, innovation and employment. These policies should also give value to rural identity and enhance sustainability, social inclusion and local development, as well as the resilience of farms and rural communities.

POINT 2: STRENGTHENING RURAL VALUE CHAINS

Union policies should focus on integrated approaches to developing and strengthening rural value chains and local productive networks. They should reflect emerging business opportunities for agriculture, forestry and rural enterprises related to the circular, green, and fossil-free economies. The growing concerns of consumers about the quality of products and production processes as well as their demand for healthy food must also be met. Policies must promote new approaches to horizontal and vertical integration that ensure fair and transparent contractual relations within the supply chain, and legal possibilities for organizing farmers' collective actions. Farmers should be provided with effective risk management tools.

POINT 3:
INVESTING IN RURAL VIABILITY AND VITALITY

Union support for investment in rural areas should focus on generating added value for society. Investments in business development, public and private services, essential infrastructure and capacity building should deliver towards the common EU objectives notably in relation to jobs and green and inclusive growth. They should also provide for self-sustaining initiatives that foster a competitive and diversified agriculture and rural economy. Particular attention must be given to overcome the digital divide and develop the potential offered by connectivity and digitisation of rural areas. Policies should promote rural quality of life, and meet the aspirations of rural youth for diverse and well-rewarded employment as well as facilitate generational renewal. Efforts should be made to extend the reach, scope, and leverage of funding by providing innovative financial instruments. Union support should strengthen rural-urban linkages and align the sustainable development of both rural and urban areas.

POINT 4:
PRESERVING THE RURAL ENVIRONMENT

Land management has a key role in the interface between citizens and the environment. Policies must incentivise the delivery of environmental public goods, including the preservation of Europe's natural and cultural heritage. These consist of a rich diversity of habitats of flora and fauna, and landscape amenities which depend to a large degree on farming and forestry systems. Measures to reward the delivery of environmental public goods and services should reflect the variety of local circumstances. The intrinsic value of the rural environment provides benefits to local economic development, eco-tourism, healthy living, food identity and branding as well as the promotion of the countryside for recreation.

POINT 5:
MANAGING NATURAL RESOURCES

Increased pressure on natural resources resulting from growing demand for food, feed, fibre and biomaterial must be met by coordinated cross-sectorial policy responses. These should ensure the sustainable management of natural resources such as water, soil, and biodiversity, being the very means of agricultural and forestry production. The loss of genetic diversity must be reversed and the maintenance and sustainable use of plant and animal genetic resources ensured through appropriate public and private action. There is a need to develop and mainstream innovative, science-based solutions that allow for producing more with less while ensuring that natural resources are at the disposal of future generations. Effective formats of knowledge exchange and advice should be developed and support provided for the adoption of well-designed land management schemes.

POINT 6:
ENCOURAGING CLIMATE ACTION

Given the critical need to address the climate challenge in rural as well as urban areas, support must be targeted to the implementation of effective mitigation and adaptation strategies. There is significant scope for carbon sequestration and storage in rural areas. Action must go beyond carbon-based solutions and should promote sound nutrient and livestock management. Farmers and foresters should be encouraged to provide climate services and to engage in adaptation efforts. The potential for rural areas to produce sustainable renewable energy as well as bio-materials should be developed through appropriate investment schemes. Priority should be given to further developing the circular economy as well as the cascading use of biomaterials.

POINT 7:
BOOSTING KNOWLEDGE AND INNOVATION

Rural communities must participate in the knowledge economy in order to fully utilise the advances in research and development. Rural businesses, including farmers and foresters, of all types and sizes must have access to appropriate technology, state-of-the-art connectivity, as well as new management tools to deliver economic, social and environmental benefits. Stronger policy focus on social innovation, learning, education, advice and vocational training is essential for developing the skills needed. This should be accompanied by the strengthening of peer-to-peer exchange, networking and cooperation amongst farmers and rural entrepreneurs. The needs and contributions of rural areas should be clearly reflected on the research agenda in the European Union. Industry, researchers, practitioners, knowledge providers, civil society and public authorities must work closer together to better exploit and share opportunities arising from scientific and technological progress.

POINT 8:
ENHANCING RURAL GOVERNANCE

The administrative capacity and effectiveness of regional and local governments and community-based groups must be enhanced, where necessary, through the provision of technical assistance, training, cooperation and networking. Building on the success of LEADER and the European Innovation Partnership for Agriculture, bottom-up and locally led initiatives should be rolled out to mobilise rural potentials. The architecture of the CAP must be based on a common strategic and programming framework that provides for targeting all interventions to well-defined economic, social, and environmental objectives. This should reflect the needs and aspirations of the territories concerned and should respect the partnership principle. The reach, scope, and leverage of funding must be enhanced through an extended development and use of financial

instruments. Rural and agricultural policies must interact with the wider context of national and regional strategies and work in complementarity and coherence with other policies.

POINT 9: ADVANCING POLICY DELIVERY AND SIMPLIFICATION

Flexibility and better targeting in policy design and delivery is necessary, but must not result in unnecessary complexity. Initiatives to restore and build the trust of stakeholders are a priority. It is essential to further streamline the regulatory framework of the Common Agricultural Policy and to further simplify implementation. In addition, smart administrative tools and procedures must be developed, so as to reduce the administrative burden on beneficiaries and national and regional administrations. Proportionality in requirements and sanctions is important. The introduction of e-Governance in the management of support programmes and a wide application of simplified costs options must be given high priority. It is necessary to strengthen subsidiarity and proportionality within shared management of funds and the underlying control systems.

POINT 10: IMPROVING PERFORMANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Policies must be accountable and fit for purpose. Public support to agriculture and rural areas must be subject to a credible monitoring and evaluation system. This should cover the benefits of actions, the efficiency of expenditure, and assess the delivery against policy objectives. Stakeholders must get a stronger role in assessing performance through peer learning and performance reviews. Citizens and taxpayers expect to be informed about the performance and achievements of the policy. This expectation must be met.

Conclusion

We, the participants of the Cork 2.0 European Conference on Rural Development, urge the policy makers of the European Union to:

- Improve public awareness of the potential of rural areas and resources to deliver on a wide range of economic, social, and environmental challenges and opportunities benefitting all European citizens;
- Invest in the identity of rural communities, the potential for rural growth and to make rural areas attractive for people to live and work in throughout the different stages of their lives;
- Build on this momentum and further develop the agricultural and rural policy towards a result-oriented, simple, and flexible approach, based on partnership and reflecting Union objectives as well as the needs and aspirations on the ground;
- Systematically review other macro and sectorial policies through a rural lens, considering potential and actual impacts and implications on rural jobs and growth and development prospects, social well-being, and the environmental quality of rural areas and communities;
- Support this 10-point programme and incorporate its vision and orientations into future policy development.

A FOCUS ON… CORK 2.0

Perspectives on Cork 2.0

Phil Hogan

European Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development

"I witnessed a strong commitment to and passion for the development of our rural areas. The conference venue was alive and buzzing. Ideas floated freely and were debated in a spirit of participation, commitment, and cooperation. Everyone had a chance to give his or her piece of mind and I believe this is why we now have a Declaration for which so many can feel a sense of ownership.

It is a strong Declaration, rich in content and intent. It reflects the needs and aspirations of the rural and agricultural communities, and it gives strong recommendations on the kind of policies needed to unleash the rural potential. I believe it provides an important input and orientation for the up-coming debates on the future of our rural and agricultural policies and I count on your continued involvement and support to ensure that we have a strong CAP that is fit for purpose, accountable, and capable of addressing the challenges and opportunities of the 21st century."

Photo © European Union

Heino von Meyer

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)

"The conference was impressive proof of how creative participatory processes can be. Several themes emerged repeatedly, including the positive contribution of rural areas to solving societal challenges, issues of trust between stakeholders and a renewed rural identity.

What we want is "A Better Life for Rural Areas". This is about promoting rural prosperity, developing and keeping more value in rural areas. But you also need proper access to services and essential infrastructure. Overcoming the territorial digital divide is key.

Farmers have a great responsibility in ensuring environmentally sound management of natural resources – the production base they rely on. But, we also need to pay farmers and foresters for delivering environmental public goods and services. Production and consumption have to become sustainable, low carbon and climate resilient.

To enable these solutions, we need to better align the various actors to boost innovation and knowledge exchange, improve cooperation, partnership and bottom-up approaches. We need to improve our policy and administrative structures to better reflect the contribution that rural areas can make to global solutions and the territorial impact of other macro or sectoral policies.

But we must also remember that we do not always have to wait for policies before we act. Getting all the actors together does not necessarily need a lot of policy. Sometimes we do not need policies, we just need to trigger rural development action on the ground."

Photo © European Union

© European Union

Commissioner Hogan accepted the Declaration from the Chair of the drafting team Heino von Meyer.

"Our Common Agricultural Policy has since [the first Cork Declaration in 1996] moved forward significantly. The aim of our discussion on where the CAP is going should be to: design conditions able to react to the challenges of environment and food security in a better and more flexible way; increase efficiency of the current set of greening measures; and support employment and sustainable growth of rural areas with a focus on small and medium-sized enterprises."

Gabriela Matečná
Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, Slovakia

Franz Fischler

Former Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development

"Congratulations. With the recent Cork 2.0 Declaration, it is now possible to shift the European Rural Development Policy from a vertical to a horizontal approach. The close cooperation between the many different stakeholders assembled at the Cork 2.0 Conference is a message in itself. When rural dwellers are prepared to cooperate and work together in and for rural Europe, they can make a big difference and stimulate the changes necessary for a prosperous rural future.

In 1996, the first Cork Declaration created a second pillar within the CAP. The then assembled politicians and experts were in favour of reducing the dominating market policies and increasing the financial resources available for rural investment, agri-environment and agricultural modernisation. In the ears of many agricultural politicians, this sounded like a little revolution.

Now, with a horizontal rural development policy as the dominating factor for the countryside, we see another revolutionary step. It will be necessary to fight for this new approach when a reform of the CAP and the structural policies will be discussed.

What we must keep is the rural identity and richness of our manifold European rural cultures.

The new Cork 2.0 Declaration also implicitly contains another shift in approach. If we should leave our sectoral thinking behind us, then we must favour system approaches as well as inter- and transdisciplinary thinking. This will require substantial changes in research, administration and policy making.

I would like to encourage all those who will now develop the policy reforms and concrete measures to go for this new approach."

Photo © European Union

Czesław Adam SIEKIERSKI

MEP, Chair of the European Parliament Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development

"The Cork Declaration correctly recognises that agriculture and forestry are not only about production. It is of paramount importance to show to society and the European taxpayer their important functions in terms of nutrition, health, biodiversity, environment, and most importantly food security, but also in generating various public goods, resources and renewable energy while performing prominent social and cultural functions that we often tend to forget.

However, the rural context is changing. A drop in the rural population leads to an increased importance of machines, equipment, plant protection products and feeds. The productive sectors require access to a number of (professional) services and ever more modern means of production. This is all of significant impact for the development of industry and rural areas and provides additional jobs.

Decisions taken after the first Cork Conference to broaden the scope of CAP with elements of rural development were the right course of action. Cork 2.0 gives further inspiration for the creation of a new dimension of the CAP. With this in mind, the Declaration is right to call for 'A Better Life in Rural Areas'. To limit further depopulation of rural areas and from agriculture itself, standards of living and incomes must be improved to bring them closer to their level in cities or other economic sectors."

Photo © European Union

Wolfgang Löhe

Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture, Germany

The Cork 2.0 Conference impressed me very much. It was fascinating to witness with how much intensity and engagement the more than 300 participants from different stakeholder groups, organisations and EU Member States worked to commonly develop approaches for a future policy for the development of rural areas.

It was very satisfying for everyone that the elaboration of the Cork 2.0 Declaration came about through a bottom-up participatory process. Thanks to the excellent work of moderator Heino von Meyer and the tireless efforts of his drafting team, the numerous contributions from the workshops have been successfully captured in the landmark declaration.

Considering the future challenges, the Cork 2.0 Declaration highlights the increasing importance of policy for the development of rural areas as a priority of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), also going above and beyond the current remit of the second pillar of the CAP. This approach is ambitious but also necessary to better exploit the full potential of rural areas in Europe.

The clear commitments to a simplified regulatory framework for the CAP and proportionality in the design of requirements and sanctions are also noteworthy. This is where, from the point of view of the bodies entrusted with EAFRD implementation, there is a particularly strong need for action.

Overall, the Declaration provides important cornerstones, on which the pending negotiations on the future Multiannual Financial Framework and the orientation of the CAP post-2020 can be filled with life.

Photo © European Union

Randel Länts

Committee of the Regions, Viljandi City Council, Estonia

"The work to pull out the ideas from the huge range of stakeholders was very professionally organised and the outcome was very good. But we have to remember that it is just a Declaration – a basis for actions to be agreed upon. It is really up to everyone now to make sure this happens at all levels, including governmental, local and bottom-up.

We need effective 'rural proofing' of other policies and a stronger focus on rural areas in a broader sense. Agriculture is a part of it, but there is much more. If you want young people to come back to rural areas, they do not have to be farmers. There are new opportunities, for example, around distance working and community-based activities.

You cannot force anyone to do anything, but you can help provide the right environment. For example, the closure of post offices is not just about sending letters. If you want to engage in e-commerce you need a way to send your products. This does not have to be a post office in the traditional sense, but you need something. And you need broadband that reaches the final mile to all rural communities. This is an investment that could be easily done.

They key thing for rural areas is that we cannot go backwards. We have to find new solutions to make them attractive places to live and work. This can be community-led, but can also be supported by the Commission."

Photo © European Union

Brendan Burns

European Economic & Social Committee (EESC)

"If we want our rural areas to grow and develop – and if we want politicians to listen to us in rural areas – we have to do this in unison. Rural development is more than agriculture or preserving the environment. It is also about people and how we balance social and economic development while at the same time improving wildlife and the land that we all depend upon.

The first Cork Declaration was an appeal to politicians to recognise these issues and ensure that Europe's remote, mountain and disadvantaged areas were treated with equal importance along with our towns and cities. Regrettably, these expectations and opportunities were ignored.

Twenty years on, Cork 2.0 is a much-needed update. It gives politicians and citizens an opportunity to reverse the decline and value our countryside. This will also help in retaining some of the origins of our history and culture that have moulded Europe and its people.

Rural and remote areas give opportunities to enjoy, explore and improve the quality of life. However, without people living and working on the land, these areas will become nothing more than tourism or environmental 'theme parks'.

Cork 2.0 is a wake-up call. It is up to all of us to implement it, but it will also require clear leadership from the European Commission. I just hope that our politicians and those who live in cities listen and act; before they lose not only the fresh food we grow, but their own customs and values."

Photo © European Union

© European Union

Participants themselves facilitated and took part in small-group discussions within the workshops.

© European Union

All the ideas coming out of the workshops were recorded to be fed into the work of the drafting team.

Sophia Davidova

Honorary Director, Centre of European Agri-Environmental Studies (CEAS)

"When I was asked to formulate in one word my expectations of the outcome of the Cork Conference, I said 'vision'. And I realised the vision for the future was embedded in the Cork 2.0 Declaration.

Why is this vision so important?

First, rural areas are often underestimated by urban citizens. But they are not only places for work, residence and recreation. They are much more than that. They provide ecosystem services not only to rural but to urban populations as well. Rural economies and societies deliver environmental protection and contribute to the sustainable use of natural resources – land, forest and water. The Declaration recognises the rural potential to address global issues, e.g. food security and climate change.

And second, as we know, large parts of rural areas in the EU are occupied by farm businesses. Most of these businesses are family-run. These families are the main contributors to food security. Through their enterprise and flexibility, they enhance the vitality of the rural economy; and they have strong interests in long-term environmental care. The Declaration calls for strengthening the value chains which will integrate farmers and foresters.

I was fortunate to be part of the collective intellectual input to this vision."

Photo © European Union

David Baldock

Institute for European Environmental Policy (IEEP)

"Lying behind the new Declaration is a shared sense that rural policy needs new vigour and a refreshed sense of direction to avoid being relegated in the EU's priorities and having its budget reduced.

Because all rural interest groups were present and worked constructively and creatively together, the Declaration is rather dense in detail, somewhat obscuring the broad picture for the non-insider. However, many delegates seemed to agree with Franz Fischler's concluding remarks that rural development should in future become the core business of Europe's rural and agricultural policy, implicitly incorporating Pillar 1 as a single element in a wider and more strategic framework.

There is a confident tone in the language about improved performance, smart administration rather than mere simplification, addressing new elements such as the climate agenda, digitisation, and the need for policies to be accountable and fit for purpose.

The original Cork Declaration was not formally adopted by the EU institutions, but nevertheless substantially influenced the subsequent evolution of the CAP. It can therefore be hoped that the Cork 2.0 Declaration will similarly contribute towards the defence of rural policy expenditure during 2017 and beyond, as the debate over the post-2020 Multiannual Financial Framework and the CAP develops."

Photo © IEEP

Kristiina Tammets

President of the European LEADER Association for Rural Development (ELARD)

"Cork 2.0 has highlighted the need for broader approaches addressing economic, social, and environmental objectives. The LEADER approach has gained just such a broader perspective this programming period under 'Community-Led Local Development' (CLLD). This can create real synergy of different EU Funds, but to achieve this, we need to work towards simplification and strong cooperation between Local Action Groups (LAGs) and the relevant authorities.

LAGs are promoters of new solutions and innovative technologies in their areas. They have direct links with rural enterprises, municipalities and civil society to build stronger capacity of their region involving local resources and skills of people. In this way, they can respond to the Declaration's call for innovation and better territorial and social cohesion.

We therefore appreciate that the Cork Declaration specifically recognises the LEADER method as a good partnership tool to enhance rural governance. LEADER has indeed been a very successful method throughout the past 25 years and the only instrument that brings the decision-making regarding EU finances to the very local level.

The new Cork Declaration gives us a vision and a broad platform. Now we need to move forward together on concrete issues taking advantage of the bottom-up approach. This can harness the full potential of communities for implementing EU Rural Development policy."

Photo © Kristiina Tammets

Michael Dower

PREPARE Partnership for Rural Europe and European Rural Parliament Joint Coordinator

"We enjoyed the Conference and we thank Heino von Meyer and his team for an eloquent Declaration. We support the references to the role of civil society organisations and were touched by the pictures of welcome to refugees.

We urge that Cork 2.0 be followed by fuller consultation of civil society about future policies for rural development, both 'narrow' (EAFRD Funds) and 'broad' (Structural Funds and 'rural proofing'). This should include focus on the needs of millions of small farmers, socially excluded people and ethnic minorities. People from the Western Balkans and other EU neighbour countries, who are affected by EU policies, should be enabled to take part.

We are greatly concerned that separate processes, already in hand, appear to threaten future funding and staff for rural development. The preoccupation of European institutions with the EU's multiple crises should not deflect them from addressing the needs of rural people. With ERCA, ELARD and our wide network of national partners in the European Rural Parliament, PREPARE will continue to express the voice and to stimulate the positive action of rural people as we move towards policies for 2020 onwards.

We seek to connect and to rebuild trust between the EU and its citizens: we urge the European institutions to do the same."

Photo © Michael Dower

Gerard Peltre

International Association Rurality Environment Development (RED) and the European Countryside Movement (MER)

The Cork 2.0 Conference was timely. The final Declaration accurately expresses the expectations of rural communities for a political signal of recognition and appreciation of their capacity to address the social, economic, cultural and environmental challenges now and in the future.

We support the analyses and broad strategic orientations of Cork 2.0. We also appreciate the strong interest expressed by Commissioner Hogan for the Declaration and his commitment to bring it before the College of Commissioners.

We now propose that the objectives of Cork 2.0 be made part of a European Rural Agenda – as the counterpart to the Urban Agenda. This objective was clearly expressed during the workshop on 'Rural Viability and Vitality'. It is furthermore supported – following a RED initiative - by the MER, the European Parliament Intergroup on Rural, Mountainous and Remote Areas (RUMRA), numerous European organisations and bodies, and also by Ministers.

The Declaration is full of hope. We now await a stronger, mobilising message from the European Commission in support of rural development and of the rural contribution to the objectives of the EU 2020 Strategy and the bottom-up approach. Finally, rather than talk about 'rural areas', we should give precedence to the concept of 'rural territories', which more accurately captures the reality of rural development issues.

Photo © European Union

Sofia Bjornsson

Chair of COPA-COGECA working party on rural development

"We welcome the fact that policy-makers recognise the huge potential the EU agriculture and forestry sectors have for boosting the economies of rural areas and helping to tackle key challenges facing society like climate change, food security, resource management.

To achieve this, the Declaration underlines the need for fair and transparent relations in the food chain so that farmers can get a better return from the market. This is welcome news. The Declaration also addresses the need for business development, innovation uptake, provision of advisory services and promotion of knowledge exchange. We have pinpointed these aspects as crucial for a sustainable production.

Additionally, the Declaration underpins the need for investment in infrastructure and business in rural areas. Investment is vital in helping farmers and their cooperatives to improve their economic and environmental performance, to support the modernisation of farms, ensure generational renewal and help the farming sector in implementing smart technologies that contribute to an efficient use of resources and enhance animal welfare. We need to overcome the digital divide and exploit the potential offered to rural areas by digitalisation so that farmers can benefit from the latest technologies."

Photo © European Union

Emma Berglund

Secretary General , Confederation of European Forest Owners (CEPF)

"We welcome the Cork 2.0 Declaration as an important commitment to ensure sustainable and viable rural areas, of which the EU's 16 million private forest owners are an indispensable part.

It is important that the Declaration highlights the potential of rural areas to deliver solutions to societal challenges, with forestry as an engine of rural growth, supported through needed investments in rural infrastructures, businesses, innovation and knowledge. We need to develop and strengthen forestry value chains and we welcome the promotion of the circular, green and fossil-free economy as opportunities for rural development.

A new element in this second Cork Declaration is the recognition of forestry as key for fighting climate change, especially through carbon sequestration and the delivery of sustainable renewable energy and bio-materials. This is very much welcomed and a crucial aspect moving forward.

In this context, we hope to see a clearer commitment from the EU to the transition to a bioeconomy and a stronger recognition of the importance of forest owners in maintaining carbon sequestration through sustainable forest management. To meet the climate challenge, a tree is not enough – we also need people."

Photo © CEPF

© European Union

Participants saw a photo exhibition of EAFRD projects on the integration of migrants and refugees during an informal evening event.

Thomas Quinn

Policy Officer, Birdlife Europe

"The Cork 2.0 Conference was both well-timed and well-situated, coming exactly 20 years after the landmark (first) 'Cork Declaration on Rural Development'.

On the surface, there was much to admire. There was a commendable new emphasis on broad-spectrum consultation – as Commissioner Hogan stated in his opening speech: "This is your conference. I want to hear what you have to say". And the Declaration itself undoubtedly has some welcome parts: there is a focus on climate action as well as protecting biodiversity and our precious natural resources, such as air and water.

Nevertheless, these 'good intentions' on rural development will only deliver as part of a broader and much needed reform of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). The current imbalances mean that around three times more money is spent on Pilar I, which has demonstrably failed to go 'green' after the most recent reforms. There is, for example, an urgent need to tackle the increasing levels of farmland intensification driving biodiversity to the brink.

During the closing session, Dr. Franz Fischler seized the opportunity to call for an end to the current two-pillar system. If the new Cork Declaration is to be more than just 'lipstick on a pig', the Commission would be very wise to heed Dr. Fischler's sage advice."

Photo © Thomas Quinn

Thyge Nygaard

Danish Society for Nature Conservation, European Environmental Bureau (EEB)

"Cork 2.0 is promising. It suggests that there might be hope for a better CAP in the future. At least, the Cork 2.0 Conference with its renewal of the Cork Declaration cannot be blamed if that does not happen when the next CAP is put together in three-four years.

At the Conference, there was general agreement among the 300 participating stakeholders that the CAP in the last 20 years has not delivered on its goals and to a wide extent has been counterproductive. Therefore, there has to be a change from a focus upon agricultural activities to a much broader focus on rural areas and rural activities.

It was heartening to listen to the speech of former Commissioner Janez Potočnik who said that we need a totally new food system approach in order to meet the challenges we face. The Cork 2.0 Declaration also refers to the UN Sustainable Development Goals. It not only speaks about agriculture, but also about rural value chains, rural environment, managing natural resources and the need for taking climate action.

So far, so promising. All the right words have been used. But now the words have to be turned into action."

Photo © Danmarks Naturfredningsforening

Gillian Westbrook

Chair of the IFOAM EU Council, International Foundation for Organic Agriculture

"I was very happy to see a wide variety of participants at the Cork Conference on the future of EU Rural Development policy. Acknowledging the necessity to place greater value on the potential of farmers to better deliver a multitude of ecological and social benefits as part of their farm business was particularly welcome.

However, the devil is in the detail. What we need now is a strong commitment from EU leaders to work towards fundamentally changing the existing policy framework so farmers are sufficiently paid for all the public goods they provide: from managing biodiversity and water to supporting local job creation.

Currently, less than 30% of EU agriculture spending goes to environmental and climate action and investments in sustainable farming systems account for a mere 1.5%. This has come at the expense of healthy farms, people and our environment.

For too long environmental and social performance has been neglected, with short-term policy fixes simply propping up a failing agriculture model. The next CAP reform must promote a full transition to sustainable farming in order to support rural livelihoods and high-quality food production in Europe."

Photo © Gillian Westbrook

Hans-Olof Stålgren

Coordinator, Swedish Rural Network Support Unit

"There are many impressions to reflect on. The process was as participative as possible and the content of the Declaration was really built by the participants.

However, the lack of trust between different levels that was pointed out was alarming. This is a threat and big obstacle for RDPs and the overall CAP. Also, a development programme asking for innovations, but at the same time requiring detailed descriptions of the development steps and expenses beforehand is also contradicting itself somewhat.

That rural areas are delivering resources and solutions to many of the challenges facing the whole of society is really a strong and important message. Bridging the digital divide and connecting rural and urban areas is crucial.

But the Declaration is in fact only a paper full of words. Now the real work starts to make the words a reality reflected in policies, regulations and implementation. The responsibility for this is not on a single person or institution. All of us who are working for viable rural areas and a thriving rural business fabric are responsible to advocate the points in the Declaration to become policy and action. Let´s go together from declaration to implementation and from talking to doing."

Photo © European Union

Xavier Delmon

Network Support Unit, Wallonian Rural Network

"The first Cork Declaration is and remains for me a founding text. From my first years as a professional in the rural development context in Wallonia (LEADER II) it was an extremely important reference document for me. For the first time, it formally defined the overall guidelines for an essential policy to support the development of rural areas. That is why I am pleased and honoured to have participated in the development of the Cork 2.0 Declaration.

This new Declaration 2.0, elaborated through a rigorous working method that should be acknowledged, clearly identifies the challenges to be met in order to ensure the development of territories. I am particularly satisfied to see included in this new Declaration:

- Encouragement for climate action;
- The need to overcome the digital divide and to develop the potential offered by the connectivity and digitalisation of rural areas;
- Strengthening knowledge and innovation;
- The call for greater equity in the food chain and strengthening of rural value chains.

The Declaration calls for an innovative, integrated and inclusive EU rural and agricultural policy that needs to improve its transversality, implementation and simplification.

It must now translate into an unwavering political commitment in order to give new impetus in support of rural territories in the post-2020 programming period. All of us will be following it closely!"

Photo © European Union

Ave Bremse

Estonian Rural Network Support Unit

"We had very lively and fruitful discussions in the 'Rural Viability and Vitality' workshop on how to make life better and happier in rural areas. The keyword 'trust' was highlighted many times.

We can see that many people in rural areas do not feel happy and safe and many advise their children to move to the cities. A big challenge is how to encourage these young people to return after their studies. For this we need to address how governance at different levels can give people confidence in a better future in rural areas – this is also about trust.

If people can participate in solving local problems, they can trust more in the process. The LEADER method has brought lots of enthusiastic spirit to rural areas and we should not seek to over-regulate it. It is more important to make sure that Local Action Groups are open for new members, new people and new ideas rather than being afraid of small mistakes.

Governments should keep trusting local people and their decisions. During discussions in Cork one could feel the enthusiasm with which we all talked about how to deliver a better life in rural areas. The feeling was really encouraging."

Photo © European Union

RURAL ISSUES, RURAL PERSPECTIVES

Seeking Europe's 'Common Grounds'

Henk Keizer and Manon Martin

Following the Amsterdam Rural Forum in May 2016, a group of artists interested in rural affairs agreed to cooperate in an expanded rural arts network: 'Common Grounds'.

Henk Keizer and **Manon Martin** are experienced workers in the European cultural sector and coordinators of 'Common Grounds', a new network of artists with a specific interest in Europe's rural areas.
ruralroutesproject@gmail.com

FROM RURAL ROUTES...

The Amsterdam Rural Forum organised by the Dutch Rural Network in May 2016 (see p.4) was a perfect moment for us artists, coming from all over Europe, to meet and speak about our work. The overarching theme was the strong potential for arts and culture to open up new opportunities for rural areas.

Some of us already worked together in the 'Rural Routes' network. With the energy and enthusiasm generated in Amsterdam many more artists wanted to join. We decided to extend this cooperation in a new European project of artists who feel connected to rural issues.

We are a group of theatre-makers, visual artists and cultural organisations from all over Europe. We are managing festivals, international tours, exhibitions, open-air events and participatory projects. We want to exchange experiences about the role and results of art in European rural development because we care for the world we live in.

...TO 'COMMON GROUNDS'

After Amsterdam, we decided to continue under a new name: 'Common Grounds'. We noticed that we have much in common with the scientists, farmers, policy-makers and rural development workers. We share many reasons to cooperate. Our artistic work talks about rural issues and we want to connect these with other rural and urban communities.

We want to develop our work in cooperation with NRNs and other rural stakeholders. We will bring the rural stories to the cities and invite the urban audiences to come to the rural. 'Common Grounds' is using arts to connect these different worlds.

In the coming years, we will send artists all over Europe. They will spend time in villages, meet people, learn the villagers' stories, and create art with them. We will organise a European Rural Forum in Aarhus (2017) and in Leeuwarden (2018). We will be applying for European (financial) support to help us to connect artists, rural and urban citizens from all over Europe.

With these encounters, these human relationships, these intercultural exchanges and by facing our everyday realities, we hope to create a common feeling based on a shared European story. We are searching for what binds us in Europe, our 'Common Grounds'.

If you want to support or get involved in our network, please contact us!

The 'Grasslands' project in Denmark turned the site of a derelict village shop into a stage, where cultural events can take place.

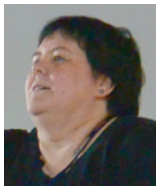
© Birgitte Kristensen

RURAL ISSUES, RURAL PERSPECTIVES

Transnational Cooperation Fair in Estonia

Ave Bremse

The Estonian Rural Network organised a LEADER Fair for Transnational Cooperation (TNC), 24-26 August 2016. It was attended by 125 foreign and 85 Estonian participants who explored inspiration and possible partners for new TNC projects.



Ave Bremse is a leading specialist and coordinator of international affairs at the Network Support Unit of the Estonian Rural Network.
ave@maainfo.ee

LEADER FAIR IN JÄNEDA

We hosted a LEADER Transnational Fair in Jäneda, a small village in north-east Estonia and location of our Network Support Unit (NSU). We really wanted a very participatory event. We wanted people from LAGs, FLAGs, Managing Authorities and EU institutions to talk and communicate more than usual about the opportunities for Transnational Cooperation.

We started with a focus on practical information on LEADER TNC rules. The country rules and deadlines are different and need to be taken into account in planning cooperation projects. For example, in Estonia we have an ongoing application procedure, but in Latvia and Lithuania there are separate deadlines.

'SPEED DATING' – A REALLY SUCCESSFUL METHOD

In the afternoon, we used the 'speed dating' working method to connect as many people as possible in a short space of time. We had the idea in mind and then saw how well it could work at the March NRNs' meeting in Bled, Slovenia.

In case you are not familiar with the method, it involves people sitting in pairs for short targeted conversations. Every 7-10 minutes one of the pair moves to the next person in the line. The method takes preparation from organisers to give everyone a good starting point. You do not want two people from the same LAG talking to each other!

We gave people some key questions to start the discussion. We also asked people to bring any information leaflet or project proposals to share with each discussion partner. This works much better as a way to exchange information than leaving papers on a table for participants to pick up. We have all picked up leaflets we never read.

Once it is set up, the method is very simple. Almost all the participants said it was the most successful action of the Fair. Even some 'old friends' said that they talked to each other in a new way about the possibilities of developing new cooperation projects.

WORKSHOPS

Before visits to local areas hosted by six Estonian LAGs, we held workshops addressing the possibilities for cooperation around 12 themes, including rural tourism, refugees, local food, and arts and handicraft. There are so many opportunities to support rural development through cooperation!

Two special workshops looked already into the future. ELARD organised a workshop on LEADER/CLLD cooperation after 2020 and the Finnish Rural Network presented some "Outlines of Finnish discussions of LEADER 2030+". It is important always to think ahead!

As well as the importance of focusing on local needs, workshop discussions highlighted that the full benefits of TNC projects cannot always be seen in the short-term. Building bridges, understanding, knowledge and skills often lead to positive changes which come through after the 'projects' have come to an end.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

LEADER Fair: www.maainfo.ee/leaderfair

Matti Jaskari
YHYRES LAG, Finland

"August sun and friendly Estonian people welcomed us, the 210 participants of the LEADER TNC Fair, in Jäneda. My expectations were high as this was a chance to meet active people from LAGs all over Europe, learn about good practices and perhaps find a way to start transnational projects. Everything worked like a well-oiled machine. Thank you, Estonian friends, for your hospitality and enthusiasm! I especially enjoyed the 'speed dating' partner search session – eight minutes is a very short time to discuss cooperation ideas, but good point to start!"

Edgars Linde
Latvian Network Support Unit

"Events like this are essential. In addition to structured information on support rules for Transnational Cooperation projects in different Member States, a really important part of this Fair was themed 'partnership search activities'. All participants had the opportunity to find partners in different areas of interest. Representatives of Local Action Groups were happy to be able to meet potential partners and to discuss possible cooperation projects."

Birgitta Söderberg
Vice-chair Upplandsbygd LAG, Sweden

"We have had a very interesting cooperation with Scotland. It can really help to discuss with others in Europe how you deal with different rural questions. The partner searches and workshops in the LEADER Fair used different ways to help us make new contacts with many different regions in Europe. Maybe in the future it is possible that we can organise this kind of cooperative event in Sweden."

Esta Tamm
Manager, FLAG Liivi Lahe
Kalanduskogu, Estonia

"Our fisheries region has actively collaborated with various groups across Europe. But the new programing period will certainly bring more cooperation than before. Both LAGs and FLAGs have a common wish to develop their regions. The LEADER Fair was an interesting event where we could learn from each other and meet possible partners. The simple truth is that some old ideas might be new for others. This is the best point of collaboration."

Graham Galloway
LAG Angus, Scotland

"I previously had very little experience of TNC LEADER projects, so the Fair was hugely beneficial. Despite the large number of delegates, sessions such as the themed 'speed dating', where you spent an intense ten minutes speaking to someone looking for a similar partnership, were very efficient ways of finding someone with shared interests."

'Speed-dating' sessions on possible Transnational Cooperation were extremely popular.

© Estonian Network Support Unit

RURAL ISSUES, RURAL PERSPECTIVES

Swedish Rural Parliament

Staffan Nilsson

The 2016 Swedish Rural Parliament was held on Sweden's largest island, Gotland, 27-29 May 2016. The event is one of the largest gatherings for rural development in Europe and included workshops, panel discussions, exhibitions and field trips. The 2016 edition was organised around the theme: 'Towards a balanced country'.

Staffan Nilsson is one of the two chairpeople of 'All Sweden Shall Live', a national organisation of around 5 000 local development groups in Sweden. It organises a Swedish Rural Parliament every other year.

The Swedish Rural Parliament is an amazing event. It is a meeting place for everyone involved in local groups and organisations, representatives from government agencies and ministries, and many politicians – all the groups which have an interest in and responsibility for local and rural development.

THE 2016 EVENT

The Rural Parliament is a good way to highlight issues concerning rural development and this year, we were helped by the political and media interest in our issues, which is very important. But perhaps most important is the debate between all of us who come from rural areas.

One thing this year's event wanted to achieve was an awareness of the mutual dependency between city and countryside. Food and energy, experiences in nature and raw materials do not come from the cities, but cities cannot manage without them. Unfortunately, this is often forgotten in an era where the urban is the norm.

We see as part of our mission to challenge this standard way of thinking. This year's Rural Parliament was an excellent opportunity to sharpen our arguments and deepen our understanding of how this norm supports and shapes both policy and general opinion.

One of the best things about the Rural Parliament was the feeling of how much power there is in everyone who wants a living countryside and who participates in local voluntary work. And since so many refugees have arrived in Sweden this and last year, I am especially happy when I see how local teams in so many places also make sure that the new arrivals seeking asylum receive a warm welcome.

© Swedish Rural Parliament

The 2016 Swedish Rural Parliament brought together around 600 participants from across the country and beyond.

HOW TO HOLD A GOOD CONFERENCE

The day before the Rural Parliament was officially inaugurated, I participated in an event organised by our youth and gender equality groups called "How to hold a good conference". In our meetings, it is important that no one is dominating or taking time away from someone else. But also that we become aware of how we, sometimes unconsciously, dominate or put pressure on others.

Our young participants made a funny and appealing production with role playing where I played an older activist being patronised by the younger ones. It was very appreciated and resulted in the production of some very important meeting rules.

Malin Ohlsson
Member of #ungapålandsbygden (#Youthinruralareas)

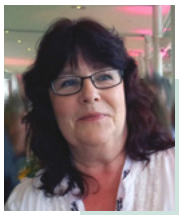
We organised the event "How to hold a good conference" because it is important that we approach everyone in an identical way. We wanted to highlight bullying tactics, as well as tactics to empower others. Around 50 people came – mainly young people, but there were participants of all ages.

A Good Manners Manifesto

We divided people into groups who discussed and then shared their ideas, which were then formed into a 'Good Manners Manifesto'. The content of the Manifesto aimed at making people listen and be considerate, to let everyone get a good experience of the Rural Parliament.

We plastered the Manifesto on the doors in the rest rooms at the conference centre and spread it via social media – with simple means like this you can reach quite a few!

It was a good idea, but a bit spontaneous. We learned that we should have planned it earlier. But it felt like people left the meeting with renewed strength and new perspectives. It is an exciting concept I can recommend – it could be the start to become more inclusive and to look at oneself with new eyes.



Anki Påhlsson
Participant from Boden

Attending the Swedish Rural Parliament, you get very elevated by sharing the experiences of others. It gives you new energy to remember that the same struggles and the same joys exist all over Sweden.

I also really enjoyed the field trips. To learn how the famous Swedish director Ingmar Bergman really cared about the local people in Fårö where he made some of his films and tried to create jobs for them. It was also very enjoyable to visit the sheep farm Fårölamm where you could see the whole chain from breeding to the selling of meat and wool.

Pierre Ländell
Participant from Kisa

The Swedish Rural Parliament was incredibly well organised and I want to give credit to the organisers. It was my first Rural Parliament, but I will definitely participate in more!

I went to two very inspiring seminars. One was about small-scale food production and I heard about a really interesting apple cider business. It has really made me think about the possibility of starting a similar project in my own region.

On the field trip to the forest in Gotland we saw a tar pit, a stream with trout and a local joinery. I was left extremely impressed by the local inhabitants and their ability to make use of everything from their surroundings.

RURAL ISSUES, RURAL PERSPECTIVES

The Ludgate Hub – digitalisation made real

Gráinne Dwyer

The Ludgate Hub is a beacon of innovation for rural Ireland and an extraordinary example of how digitalisation can truly transform an area in practice. The initiative started in August 2015 and the Hub opened its doors in April 2016. It has already started to transform the town.

Gráinne Dwyer is the CEO of the Ludgate Hub, a new initiative in rural Ireland providing superfast internet access, hot desks, co-working space and other facilities in the small town of Skibbereen, West Cork.
info@ludgate.ie

We started this journey just over 18 months ago, with a vision to create a sustainable future for Skibbereen. We knew we could achieve what we wanted to do, but there was a lot of convincing along the way, a lot of people telling us "you're never going to get anyone to Skibbereen".

But we proved that we could. I recently got an e-mail from a man in Los Angeles who said "Gráinne, I've seen you on Twitter and I'm moving my family over to West Cork at the start of the month. Book me a desk." Stories like that are absolutely fantastic. Over 18% of the people who have applied to come into the Hub are from the Irish diaspora.

This really shows that there are people out there who are willing to come home if there is a rationale, if there is a space, if there is a good environment to work. And I think that we have created that with the Ludgate Hub.

ENGAGING THE COMMUNITY

From the start, we knew we had to create a brand for Skibbereen, a way to promote it as a package. We hear so much from rural areas saying "this is closed, this is shut, this is derelict". We really needed to push out a good message, because nobody is going to invest in a town where all you hear is bad news.

It was essential to get the community involved from day one and we worked hard to do this. I remember one community meeting we held and we did not know how many people would show up. We thought it could be 10, it could be 20. On my way there I got a text from someone saying "Gráinne, there's 300 people at the door wanting to know what Ludgate is".

We had people aged from three or four into their 80s, and everybody was so enthusiastic. It was the community support and everybody – family, friends, retailers, service providers, people abroad – offering support that really drove this on and were the core of this success as well.

We worked with everybody to really sit back and see what is good in the town. We have fantastic award-winning food produce. We have nationally and internationally known festivals, such as the Skibbereen arts festival. These are really good traits to promote the town and create that brand again.

We revamped the Skibbereen.ie website. We would not have any connections with anybody outside of Skibbereen unless we could sell the vision to them as well. Creating that brand gave opportunities for global success.

© The Ludgate Hub

The Ludgate Hub is Ireland's first rural digital hub. It provides users with 1000MB super-fast broadband.

© The Ludgate Hub

The Ludgate Hub provides state-of-the-art co-working spaces and meeting rooms for professionals in Skibbereen, in rural West Cork.

© The Ludgate Hub

Eleven business leaders provided a driving force for the creation of the Ludgate Hub.

WHAT IT TAKES TO SUCCEED

The biggest question people ask us is how we did this. The short answer is, with grit and determination and the stubbornness of some passionate individuals to say "this will work".

We have a fantastic team working on this and the Ludgate Board of 11 business leaders working on a *pro bono* basis were absolutely fantastic, meeting on an almost monthly basis. They were essential to the success.

To talk in figures, we have had over a million euros of investment into this whole project. We had a 300 000 euros seed capital fund and were able to put in place a superfast internet connection (1GB per second). This has really encouraged companies outside of Dublin to say "yeah, we'll move to Skibbereen, you've fantastic facilities".

We have also had over 400 pledges of support from companies worldwide. We have had people from West Cork saying "I'd love to help out your tenants, I love your story, we can offer services in kind." This has been a tremendous asset for us and our tenants.

A PROVEN SUCCESS

Since we opened our doors in April 2016, we have had over 100 active members of the Ludgate Hub. We have already exceeded our targets and what is really interesting is that as much as 50% of our day-to-day users are from big corporations such as Facebook, Google, Vodafone and Pfizer. By 2020, over 80% of these will offer remote working, so it is really putting Skibbereen into a fantastic position for the future.

When you go into the centre of Skibbereen you see that the main street is fully occupied. We have a new state-of-the-art secondary school on its way. These are indicators of success. And this is only phase one of our project. Where will we be in two years' time?

When the World Bank suggested that a slight increase in broadband speeds can raise local GDP by 10%, it seemed intangible. We are showing in practice that once superfast broadband is in an area, things will happen. Connectivity is the key.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

www.ludgate.ie
www.skibbereen.ie

RURAL ISSUES, RURAL PERSPECTIVES

Applying 'Theory U' to LEADER

Marga de Jong and Mireille Groot Koerkamp

Community animators in the Netherlands have applied a novel approach based on challenging ingrained ways of working and thinking to stakeholder involvement in LEADER groups.

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Improving our rural areas requires innovation, but we are often guilty of applying old solutions to new challenges. We have ingrained patterns of thinking. In our way of listening, we look for recognition and confirmation of already existing judgements.

In our search for a different way of working, we came across the thinking of Otto Scharmer[1] who makes it clear: "If you do what you did, you get what you got". He points out that we have to learn not only from the past, but to already take into account and 'learn' from the future that is emerging in front of us.

We were inspired by his ideas in the 'Theory U' which is so-called because of the 'shape' of the journey you take. First you have to dig deeper and let go of your ingrained thinking. At the bottom of the curve you have a new understanding of the situation you are in and the areas of potential. Finally, you go up the other side of the 'U' bringing your new ways of thinking and new solutions into reality.

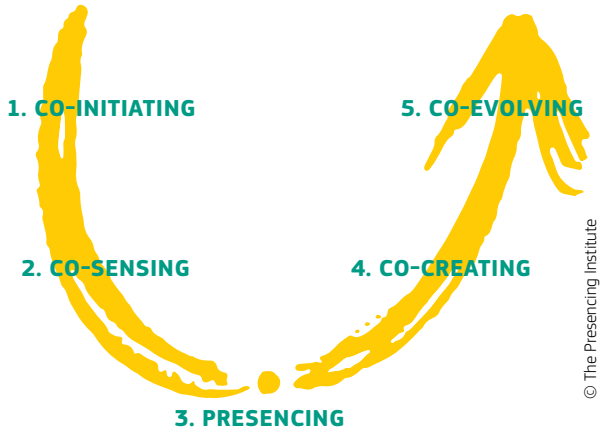
APPLYING 'THEORY U' TO LEADER

We looked at how we could apply the thinking of 'Theory U' to improve the practical work of Local Action Groups (LAGs) in the Netherlands, firstly in Salland (in 2012) and subsequently in Zeeland and Friesland.

Applying the practice meant undertaking a new process of listening to local people to understand the local situation. This involved observation, conversation, interviews, area meetings and 'co-creation' sessions. We tried to combine "learning by reflecting on the experiences of the past" with "learning from the emerging future".

It is not about a one-off event, such as a two-day conference. It is about a new way of working together.

(1) www.ottoscharmer.com



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These processes can work particularly well at local level. In Salland, local people have engaged in regular 'Salland café' meetings where relevant topics for the local area are tabled and discussed. There is a high level of participation from young people bringing knowledge, enthusiasm and energy.

Through this approach, local stakeholders start to see themselves and their area in a new way. People feel the urgency and responsibility to address local issues. There has already been more engagement with and ownership of the Local Development Strategy (LDS) developed by the LAG. Change does not happen overnight, but it can give us hope and inspiration for the future.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

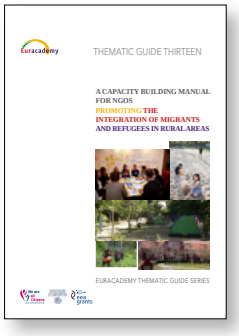
'Theory U': www.presencing.com/theoryu
Salland LAG: www.dekrachtvansalland.nl

Books & publications

Promoting the Integration of Migrants and Refugees in Rural Areas

Capacity Building Manual for NGOs

Euracademy Association



The publication overviews existing European policies on integration of migrants, asylum seekers and refugees, before considering some of the conditions and strategies for integration specifically in rural areas.

Through a range of case studies in different EU Member States, the manual examines both the challenges of increased migration flows to social cohesion within rural communities, as well as successful social inclusion approaches.

The manual provides practical guidance for non-governmental organisations (NGOs) on how to develop and implement effective strategies for the integration of migrants in rural areas.

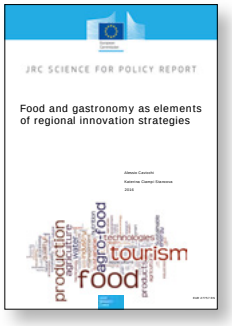
The publication is available in English and Greek.

ISBN 978-960-88634-9-1

Food and Gastronomy as Elements of Regional Innovation Strategies

Joint Research Centre

The publication discusses innovation in the agri-food sector in the context of smart specialisation strategies. In particular, it explores: linkages between food, territory and branding; the emerging phenomenon of 'Food Cities'; and the increasing interest in healthier and more sustainable food products.



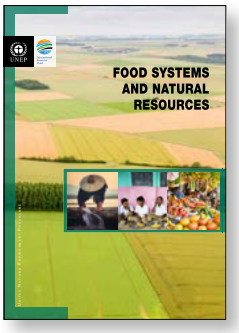
It overviews EU policies, tools and financial instruments supporting Research and Innovation (R&I) activities in the agri-food sector and explores the concept and elements of smart specialisation.

Finally, it provides examples of national and regional approaches to smart specialisation in agri-food from Croatia, Ireland and Lazio (Italy). These examples cover: the stakeholder-driven 'entrepreneurial discovery process'; project selection and activities; collaboration among stakeholders; and challenges faced.

ISBN 978-92-79-56682-0

Food Systems and Natural Resources

Food Systems working group, International Resource Panel



The publication provides an assessment of contemporary food systems in terms of natural-resource use and environmental impacts. It identifies opportunities for transitioning to 'Resource-Smart Food Systems' considering sustainability and resource efficiency essential factors for enhancing food security.

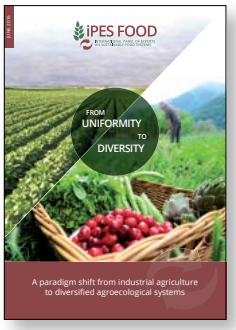
Adopting a 'systems approach', the publication looks at all the resources needed for the primary production of food, as well as for other food system activities such as processing and distribution. It considers not only the set of activities, but also the range of actors engaged in them and the outcomes in terms of food security, livelihoods and human health.

The main publication is accompanied by a summary document, factsheet and infographic on the same topic.

ISBN 978-92-807-3560-4

From Uniformity to Diversity: a Paradigm Shift from Industrial Agriculture to Diversified Agroecological Systems

iPES FOOD



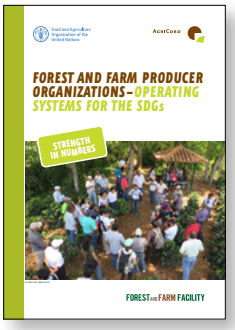
The publication argues that a fundamental shift towards sustainable food systems can deliver simultaneous benefits for productivity, the environment and society.

It reviews the latest evidence on the results from two different production models: industrial farming and diversified agroecological farming. It draws comparisons in terms of productivity, environment, socio-economic, and nutrition and health outcomes. It goes on to map emerging opportunities for a transition to diversified agroecological systems and make specific recommendations on how to achieve this transition.

A key argument is that the shift can be achieved by joining up burgeoning initiatives around alternative food and farming systems, new forms of political cooperation and the development of new market relationships bypassing conventional retail circuits.

Forest and Farm Producer Organizations: Operating Systems for the SDGs

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations



The publication makes the case for farming and forestry producers being key drivers for achieving the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for 2030. Agriculture and forestry have links to all 17 SDGs.

It explains that since smallholder producers control a significant proportion of the world's farm and forest resources, they are a vital part of the sustainability equation. In this context, it examines a range of examples of improving lives and economic wellbeing, strengthening environmental stewardship, developing social cohesion, fulfilling human capabilities, and establishing inclusive partnerships.

The publication concludes that producer organisations generate concrete SDG benefits and makes a call for a set of actions from governments, civil society and the private sector to enable producer organisations to function even more effectively.

ISBN 978-92-5-109287-3

Rural Development Report 2016

Fostering inclusive rural transformation

International Fund for Agricultural Development

The publication analyses global, national and regional pathways of rural transformation and examines their implications for Rural Development policy and programming.

It analyses regional patterns of rural transformation, as well as thematic areas of intervention such as: employment and migration; agri-food markets and value chains; rural finance; agricultural technology innovation; and land and natural resources.

The publication concludes with a call for action for policies and investments across the world to bring poor and marginalised rural people into the economic mainstream so that rural development is socially, economically and environmentally sustainable.

ISBN 978-92-9072-680-7

ENRD PUBLICATIONS

Keep up to date with all the latest news, views and developments in European rural development by reading the various ENRD publications.

These are available on the *Publications* section of https://enrd.ec.europa.eu or you can subscribe by emailing subscribe@enrd.eu. For further information write to info@enrd.eu.

EU RURAL REVIEW

The EU Rural Review is the ENRD's principal thematic publication. It presents the latest knowledge and understanding of a particular topic relevant to rural development in Europe. Themes range from rural entrepreneurship and food quality to climate change and social inclusion. It is published twice a year in six EU languages (EN; FR; DE; ES; IT; PL).

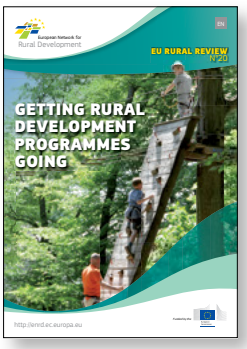
No.22 – Smart and competitive food and drink supply chains

KF-AJ-16-022-EN-C

No.21 – Rural responses to challenges in Europe

KF-AJ-15-021-EN-C

No.20 – Getting Rural Development Programmes Going

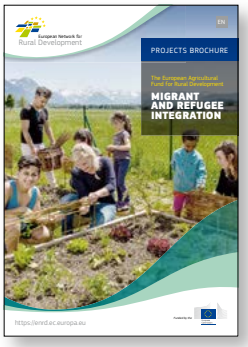


KF-AJ-15-020-EN-C

EAFRD PROJECTS BROCHURE

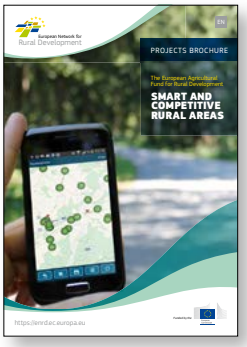
The ENRD publishes brochures presenting good and interesting examples of EAFRD-funded projects. Each edition highlights successful project examples around a particular rural development theme. The brochures aim to showcase the achievements of the EAFRD and inspire further projects. They are published in six EU languages (EN; FR; DE; ES; IT; PL).

Migrant and refugee integration



KF-01-16-688-EN-C

Smart and competitive rural areas



KF-04-16-339-EN-C

Rural Development Priorities 2014-2020

KF-02-15-287-EN-C

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Free publications:

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  from the delegations in non-EU countries (http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/index_en.htm);
  by contacting the Europe Direct service (http://europa.eu/europedirect/index_en.htm) or
  calling 00 800 6 7 8 9 10 11 (freephone number from anywhere in the EU) (*).

(*) The information given is free, as are most calls (though some operators, phone boxes or hotels may charge you).

Priced publications:

- via EU Bookshop (http://bookshop.europa.eu).

KF-AN-16-002-EN-N

ENRD online

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Visit the **ENRD Facebook page** for examples of rural development practices from across the EU – as well as latest news and trends.

Watch videos on rural development projects and thematic issues on the **EURural YouTube** channel.

Follow @ENRD_CP on Twitter for updates on EU Rural Development policy, news and events.

Join the **ENRD LinkedIn group** for debates, exchange and discussion around Rural Development policy and implementation issues.

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