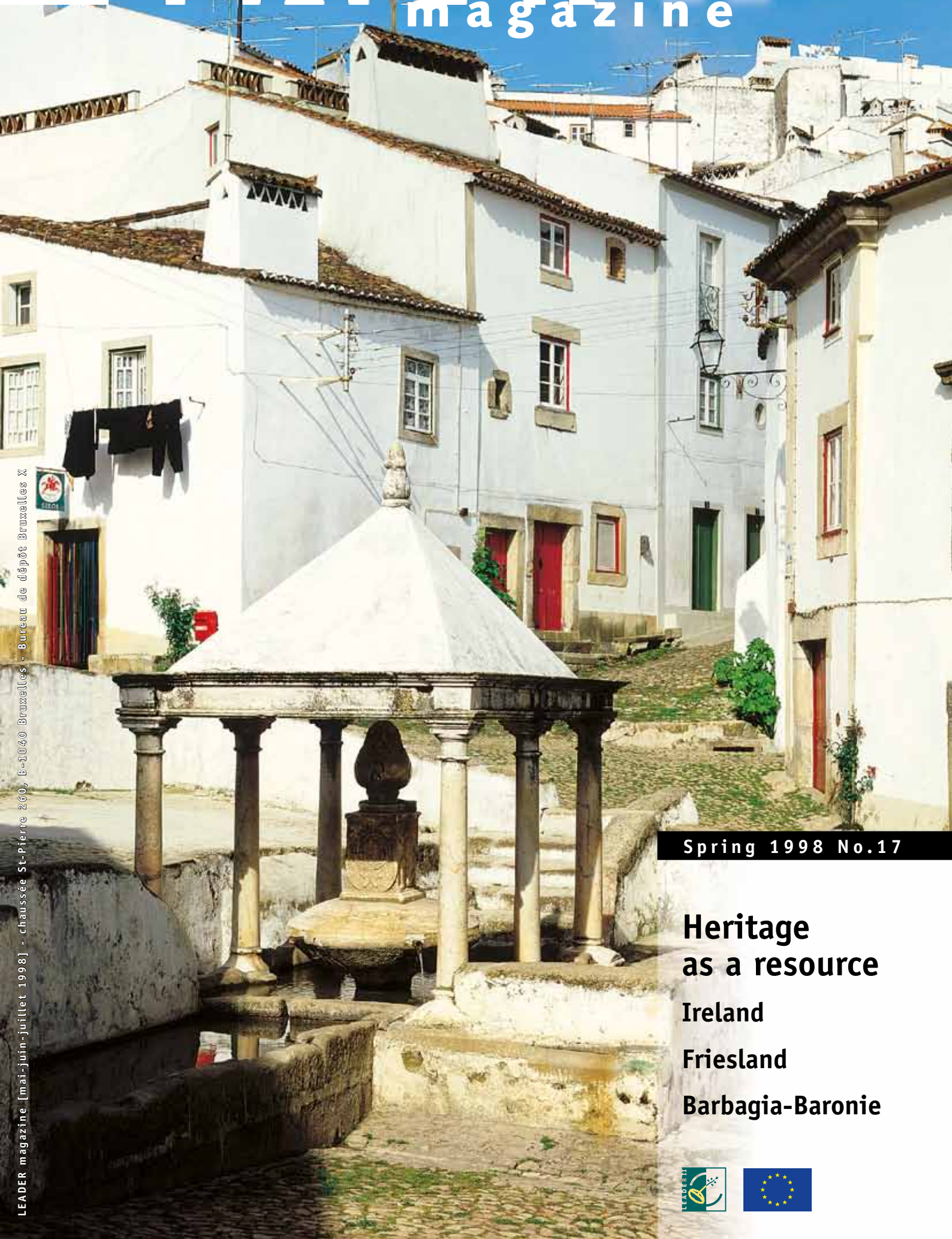


Quarterly journal of the LEADER II European programme

# LEADER II magazine



Spring 1998 No.17

**Heritage  
as a resource**  
**Ireland**  
**Friesland**  
**Barbagia-Baronie**



# LEADER II

## in action



**Country:** Spain

**Action carried out:** watermill eco-museum

**Cost:** ECU 382 000

**EU:** ECU 125 000

**Other private funds:** ECU 178 400

**Private:** ECU 78 600

*"Opened in 1995, the eco-museum in San Roman is devoted to traditional rural life and the utilisation of water as a source of energy. The watermill was renovated with an architectural innovation: a transparent floor enables the visitor to see the old millstones turning in perfect working order. Because the site is also the jumping-off point for walking and cycling tours in the Sierra de los Cameros, one floor of the building also provides tourist accommodation for six. Various cultural activities (concerts, exhibitions, conferences) and sporting events are organised throughout the year and complement the eco-museum's primary purpose."*

**Gil Esteban Gordon,**  
LEADER official



**Country:** Ireland

**Action carried out:** "Forum of Community Festivals"

**Cost:** ECU 64 072

**EU:** ECU 22 661

**Other public funds:** ECU 11 411

**Private:** ECU 30 000

*"The many requests for LEADER co-funding from organisers of local events led our LAG to set up a 'Forum of Community Festivals' in order to better structure the support for the organisation of local festivals and other cultural events. The Forum coordinates the financial and technical assistance for the projects, facilitates their promotion and encourages the organisers who are members to pool their ideas and know-how for greater coherence and quality in planning."*

**Anton Barrett,**  
LEADER coordinator



**Country:** Finland

**Action carried out:** "The Fishermen's Village"

**Cost:** ECU 85 885

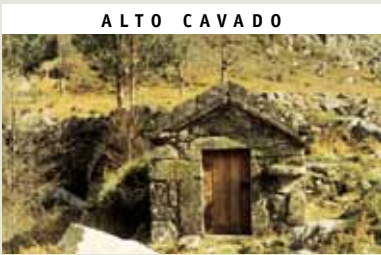
**EU:** ECU 25 404

**Other public funds:** ECU 25 404

**Private:** ECU 35 077

*"This action is part of the integrated development plan of Lango, a village with a strong identity whose area stretches across several islands relatively distant from one another. The project consists of renovating the old port buildings and a fishing stopover point located on another island of the village. Shuttle boats have also begun running between the two sites for tourist and recreational purposes. Technical, accounting and computer training courses for tourist operators and local entrepreneurs are part of the action."*

**Fritz-Olle Slotte,**  
Project leader



**Country:** Portugal

**Action carried out:** restoration of agricultural heritage

**Cost:** ECU 264 340

**EU and other public funds:** ECU 171 821

**Private:** ECU 92 519

*"Our area has a large number of structures of cultural and ethnographic interest: barns, lofts, drying sheds and other examples of traditional farming. Support from the LEADER programme to renovate this heritage is boosting the local identity, instilling a sense of pride and making our region much more attractive to its inhabitants and visitors."*

**José da Mota Alves,**  
President of the LEADER group





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*Ireland's economic, social and cultural dynamism should help this still largely agricultural country overcome the threats that its most rural areas are facing. Interview with Minister Noel Davern T.D.*

**An asset for local development: heritage as a resource ..... 7**



*Giving examples, Michael Dower explains why the use of heritage is a vital component of the local development process. Three accounts from LEADER officials.*

**Putting heritage to work in Friesland (Netherlands): this flat country of ours ..... 16**



*Friesland is turning to new activities to ensure a serene future. The identity and rich heritage of this region, its proximity to major urban centres mean considerable possibilities for the development of cultural tourism.*

**Heritage at the heart of the development of Barbagia-Baronie (Sardinia, Italy): winning back the interior ..... 20**



*The development of tourism on the coast tends to weaken the hinterland of Sardinia. Taking advantage of its natural, cultural and historic heritage could help reverse the trend by attracting holiday-makers inland and by supplying the coast with local products of high quality.*

## In a word...

**Yves Champetier, Director,**  
*LEADER European Observatory*

The LEADER approach is part of a long-term process, since each area has to build its future using its own specific resources. The recent presentation by the Commission of its proposals for Europe's future policy on rural development and the new Community Initiative show, as Commissioner Fischler announced at the LEADER Symposium in November 1997, that European support in the forthcoming years will not be lacking.

The theme of "heritage" dealt with in this issue is precisely at the heart of this long-term course of action: be it natural or cultural, scenic or architectural, historic or artistic, the rich heritage of Europe's rural areas is a resource to be taken advantage of, to be put to work for a new development. For some areas, heritage is even sometimes "the" resource on which will be based the redevelopment strategy and the will to forge a new local identity: this is for example the case of the "Lands that Sing" in Alentejo Centro (Portugal), the "Land of Giono" in southern France, the "Don Quijote" LAG in Castille-La Mancha (Spain), to mention just a few.

A number of LEADER groups have planned heritage actions in their rural innovation programme: in some cases, these are villages that are being renovated to revive their architectural beauty and to improve local services; in other instances, these are derelict buildings that are being restored to provide accommodation for a new type of tourist in search of authenticity or to house innovative activities; and there are even places where traditional festivals are being brought back or new ones are being invented to offer more entertainment, to strengthen the ties between the local people but also to give expression to a renewed identity that looks to the future.

The article by Michael Dower, the success stories of three LEADER officials in Spain, France and Greece, the reports from Friesland (Netherlands) and Barbagia-Baronie in Sardinia show how rural areas in difficulty are seeking - and often succeeding - to take advantage of their past to build their future. They all point to the indispensable need as well to link heritage to the local dynamic so that the actions undertaken in this area are always in the end carried out by and for the local people and generate new jobs and new activities.

Heritage is also the theme of myriad cooperation projects between areas: thus, four LEADER groups are joining forces to develop a road to Santiago de Compostela; two local action groups from Ireland and Scotland whose areas have "twin" abbeys have decided to work together; several LAGs from the Mediterranean basin are planning to cooperate to link together sites from the "Great Greece" of antiquity; etc.

Lastly, the development of heritage can be a reason for solidarity between areas. It is this solidarity that the LEADER groups of Umbria and the Marche in Italy are asking us to show: in autumn 1997 these two regions were hit by a series of earthquakes that, in addition to plunging the local people into a state of confusion and uncertainty, seriously damaged their cultural heritage and destroyed a certain number of facilities built with the help of LEADER. With the support of Dario Fo, winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature, the groups of these disaster-stricken areas are calling on all the members of the LEADER network to participate in a solidarity campaign in each of the areas involved in the Initiative [\*].

Solidarity, cooperation, strengthened or renewed identity, new jobs, new activities, long-term action, the theme of heritage is clearly at the heart of the renewal of Europe's rural areas. <

[\*] See "LEADER Network" section on page 23.



**Ireland's economic, social and cultural dynamism should help this still largely agricultural country overcome the threats that its most rural areas are facing.**

**Ireland is an island nation**, lying in the Atlantic Ocean at latitudes of 51 to 55 degrees north. The influence of the Gulf Stream provides a temperate climate and long growing season. Prevailing winds from the Atlantic bring rain all year round with average rainfall ranging from 150 cm in non-mountainous areas in the West to half that amount in the East. Mountainous regions (in the West and South-West) experience even greater rainfall. Historically an agriculture-based economy, the Republic of Ireland (Eire), which covers 83% of the "Emerald Isle", is sparsely populated (pop. 3.6 million; 53 inh./km<sup>2</sup>) except for a number of urban centres: Dublin (pop. 915,000), Cork (pop. 174,000), Limerick (75,000). In general the land resources in the West of the island are of a poorer quality than in the East, the West also has a lower population density and has experienced a population decline over a period of almost 150 years (depopulation reached 42% between 1891 and 1951).

### **Agriculture dominates**

Agriculture is still a major part of the Irish economy even though it nowadays employs only 10.6% of the labour force and accounted for only 10% of GDP and 24% of Irish exports in 1994.

Grassland accounts for 90% of land use and ruminant livestock - cattle and sheep - are the dominant farm animals. The Beef and Dairy sectors are particularly important, currently accounting for almost 71% of total agricultural output and 80% of agricultural revenue. Large-scale, in-door pig production is very efficient, while the horse breeding industry enjoys an international reputation.

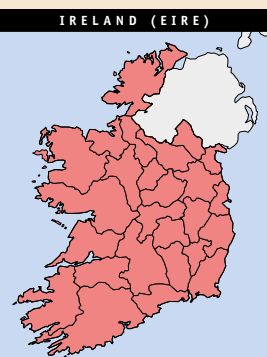
Most types of farming activity in Ireland are practised throughout the country. In most areas, milk production, suckler cow production, sheep production and various types of tillage activity can be found on the same farm or on neighbouring farms. However tillage production and dairying are principally located in the East and South. Sheep farming is carried on throughout the country while suckler cows are a regular feature on farms in the West. While the production of oats, wheat and potatoes is declining, that of barley and sugarbeet is on the increase: the production of barley (in the South East) is now 12 times greater than it was after World War II. Vegetable production is also increasing in the area around Dublin, as is the production of hops. The Midlands have bogs that provide fuel for the domestic market and peat for the horticultural sector.

Agriculture has modernised since the 1960s and expanded under EC membership, until output restrictions were introduced in the 1980s. Afforestation, an alternative land use, has expanded since then.

There are approximately 149 500 farms in Ireland. The average farm size is 22 ha but two thirds of farms have less than 20 ha, and are still much smaller in the Western counties than in the Midlands.

### **"Celtic Tiger"**

Since the 1960s economic development policies have focused on stimulating expansion of the industrial sector both by encouraging indigenous industries to export and encouraging international industries to locate in Ireland with higher grant-aid encouraging industry to set up in the more disadvantaged areas of the West. This policy of differential grant-aid was continued until the 1980s. More recently inward investment has led to a strong growth in high tech engineering, chemicals and pharmaceuticals, telecommunications, software technology, and services, particularly those related to infor-



**Surface area:** 68 895 km<sup>2</sup>

**Land use:** *Forestry:* 5 890 km<sup>2</sup> • *Area farmed:* 43 890 km<sup>2</sup>

**Population:** 3 626 087 inhabitants (1996)  
*under 20s:* 36.18% • *over 60s:* 15.24%

**Density:** 53 inh./km<sup>2</sup> (EU: 115 inh./km<sup>2</sup>)

**GDP per capita (1996):** 14 515 ECU (EU: 18 074 ECU)

**Unemployment rate (1996):** 12.87% (EU: 10.9%)

**Areas eligible under the Structural Funds (1995-1999)**  
Objective 1: 68 895 km<sup>2</sup>; 5.62 billion ECU

**Rurality (1996)**

**"Rural" population:** 48% of total population (EU: 14%)

**Agriculture, forestry and fisheries:** 8.3% of GDP

**Average size of farms/holdings:** 22 ha (EU: 16.4 ha)

**Tourism:** 5.5% of GDP; 108 700 jobs (8.3% of total employment)

Objective 1

mation technologies (Ireland is among the five biggest producers of micro-components). Tourism, which has strongly developed (3.68 million visitors in 1994), is another key sector for economic policies.

The Republic of Ireland is both a Member State and an Objective 1 Region within the EU. Growth in GDP in Ireland, which ranged between 3% and 7% per annum in the past decade, has been high by European standards. Since joining the EU in 1973, GDP has risen from 61.8% of the EU average to 80.3% (1996). Associated with this, emigration has decreased and the population of towns and cities has increased.

Ireland is experiencing a real economic boom but despite the so-called "Celtic Tiger" phenomenon, the lack of economic progress has still left rural areas with acute development problems, especially for more rural areas. The declining importance of agriculture, exacerbated by limits on production, has resulted in the need for alternative sources of earnings in rural areas, which are still losing population, as well as in several counties in the North-West where the primary sector still accounts for 70% of the labour force.

In the past legislation was introduced to try to improve the conditions of rural communities: better access to property for smaller tenants, upsizing of farms which were too small, improvement of infrastructures (water and electricity distribution), resettlement of households from overpopulated coastal counties into the midland plains. Nevertheless out-migration of young people from rural areas persists and has left a somewhat aged population structure largely in more traditional occupations. The strong pull of urban centres in terms of occupations and of services offered is reinforced by the location of decision centres (public and private) in urban areas. The continuing decline in agricultural occupations also contributes to urbanisation and further threatens the quality of rural resources.



Conversion of an old watermill  
into a business centre (Wexford LEADER area)

A "natural" country  
with a young and educated population

Ireland has a green and natural image and is relatively uncongested and unpolluted, having experienced late industrialisation and a predominance of clean modern industry. Its high quality of natural resources is very important for sustaining high quality food production and for providing leisure facilities and amenities for locals and visitors. It is culturally rich with many sites of historical interest. There is a strong identity at community and county level.

A high standard of education among the younger age group engenders openness to new types of careers and lifestyles. Approximately 41% of the population is under 25 and 24% is under 15. Opportunities exist for carrying out modern occupations in a rural setting, including the use of modern telecommunications.

Efforts are being made to relocate public sector services and development agencies at a multi-county or county level and educational services are available up to second level at a sub-county level and for third level at a multi-county level.

LEADER II: emphasis on community  
development and partnership

The LEADER II Programme follows LEADER I which operated successfully in 16 areas in Ireland between 1992 and the end of 1994.

Thirty-four local action groups and two collective bodies have been approved to implement LEADER II which has a total funding of 203 million ECU (83.5 million ECU of Community funding). The two collective bodies ("Irish Farmhouse Holidays" and "Irish Country Holidays") have been funded to facilitate, promote and market the rural tourism concept, particularly through the local group or co-operative approach. The average population size of the areas covered by the local action groups is 65 000. —>







## Noel Davern T.D., Minister of State at the Department of Agriculture and Food with responsibility for Rural Development

**Minister, compared with the situation in many other European countries, the Irish economy is doing extremely well and the international press has nicknamed your country "the Celtic Tiger". Do rural areas benefit from the economic boom which is taking place in Ireland at the moment?**

The Irish economy continues to enjoy unparalleled levels of growth with economic growth of 9% in real terms in 1997. The outlook for 1998 is again very promising with real growth forecast to reach 6%.

In general rural areas are benefiting from the general economic prosperity. The agri-food sector has developed well and even in our booming economy it still accounts for 14% of GDP and employment. The low levels of inflation and interest which Ireland continues to enjoy are, of course, of benefit to all and the low rates of interest payable on loans is also highly conducive to facilitating investment.

Regrettably the economic progress has still left some areas especially those remote from urban centres with acute development problems. Increasingly industry is located in urban centres or in adjoining areas leaving rural areas with a major challenge in attracting sufficient jobs to address long term unemployment and to maintain self sustaining communities.

**What are the main issues and challenges for rural Ireland now?**

Here in Ireland as in other areas of the EU agriculture has been the traditional strength of the economy of rural areas. Over the past 25 years we have seen a sharp decline in farm numbers and in agricultural employment. EU policy changes and international trade commitments are putting further pressure on agriculture and diminish the contribution which it can make to the rural economy generally.

Rural areas suffer from remoteness and diseconomies of scale which make it more difficult for them to attract or indeed maintain jobs in manufacturing industry. It is not surprising then that many of our rural areas have falling and ageing populations. Environmental awareness is quite rightly becoming more and more centre stage and protection of the environment is a major rural development issue. We must ensure that rural development proceeds on the basis of a sustainable approach so as not to exploit our resources for the welfare of the current generation at the expense of generations to come.

### **National agency in charge of LEADER II:**

*Mr. Tony Burke*

*Rural Development Division,  
Department of Agriculture and Food,  
Agriculture House, Kildare Street,  
Dublin 2, Ireland.*

*Tel: +353 1 607 2000 - Fax: +353 1 676 4555*

### **LEADER network national coordinating unit:**

*LEADER II Irish National Networking (LINN) Service  
c/o Mary Sweetman*

*Molyneux House, Bridge Street, IRL-Dublin 8.*

*Tel: +353 1 475 32 99 - Fax: +353 1 475 20 44*

*E-mail: [info@leaderii.ie](mailto:info@leaderii.ie) - Web site: [www.leaderii.ie](http://www.leaderii.ie)*

**As it was already the case for LEADER I, the LEADER II Initiative seems to be particularly successful in Ireland. How do you explain this success?**

There is no doubt that LEADER has been successful in regenerating our rural areas. The reason for its success as well as the enthusiasm it has generated lies in the programme's "bottom-up" philosophy which provides an opportunity for rural communities to involve themselves directly in the development of their own areas. Under the programme local communities are given the opportunity to define the needs of their areas and to co-operate in the development of ideas and the delivery of projects. In providing this opportunity for communities LEADER has given them a major confidence boost and a new sense of control over the destiny of their areas. LEADER has harnessed the community spirit and the LEADER groups demonstrate considerable enthusiasm and commitment to their task. The programme in Ireland has shown that given the opportunity the rural community is more than willing to contribute in a meaningful way to its own development.

The "bottom up" concept of LEADER is ideally suited to Irish conditions. We have a long and proud tradition of voluntary and community development in Ireland. Local communities in Ireland have always demonstrated a willingness to contribute to the improvement of their areas and to the fabric of local, social, cultural and economic life. The considerable voluntary effort aimed at providing social services to the disadvantaged or less well off in our society and the structures both formal and informal which facilitate this effort are part of our culture. The same voluntary and community involvement has been one of the key factors in the success of LEADER in Ireland.

**Do you have specific expectations regarding the future Community Initiative for rural development?**

I welcome wholeheartedly the fact that the European Commission proposes a further Initiative for rural development as part of the Agenda 2000 proposals. I would hope that the new Initiative will operate in all our rural areas and will build on the successful "bottom up" concept of LEADER to date. It is vital that there is a smooth transition from LEADER II to the new Initiative and that the momentum and enthusiasm which have been generated would not be lost. I will certainly be encouraging the European Commission to bring forward its proposals – and the Conference in Brussels in November on which I would like to congratulate Commissioner Fischler, will have been very useful in this respect – as soon as possible in order to avoid a disruptive interval before the new Initiative is implemented. <



## An asset for local development: heritage as a resource

**The future of a rural area can depend on its capacity to successfully use the heritage from its past. Taking advantage of heritage is a vital component of the local development process.**

**BY MICHAEL DOWER [\*]**

**Rural Europe** is fortunate to have an extremely rich and varied natural and cultural heritage. The range of this heritage is very wide. It encompasses wild fauna and flora, natural or man-made landscapes, villages and hamlets with myriad historic and architectural distinctions in the form of buildings but also other works such as bridges, mills or dry-stone walls and a whole range of items (wash houses, roadside crosses, etc.) called “small heritage”. In addition to this physical and building heritage is everything that history has passed down, culture in its immaterial dimension: language and customs, folklore, musical and artistic traditions, dances, local products, culinary specialties, not to mention of course crafts, trades and old know-how.

This diversity is also area-based: each “land” has its own character, a “soul” that is often the pride of the inhabitants and attracts the outside visitor. The actors of development can count on this pride to encourage the continuation of actions that have led to the organisation of this heritage and that can satisfy today’s needs.

*[\*] Secretary General of ECOVAST (European Council for the Village and Small Town), a European network for the protection of heritage and the well-being of rural people, **Michael Dower** is guest professor at Cheltenham & Gloucester College (England, United Kingdom) where he teaches rural spatial development.*





Hop drying sheds are part of the small heritage of Carinthia (Austria)

Heritage features are a resource to be used, and taking examples from various parts of Europe, especially buildings, we will try to show how these features can serve sustainable local development.

### Continuity

Old buildings and monuments were built to meet the social, economic and cultural needs of past generations. They embody the development effort of a specific period in time. They also represent an important asset and a source of inspiration for those who are working in the same sense today.

But pride in heritage and the sense of historic continuity are a recent phenomenon. They have not always been values shared by all rural people. In the 1960s, for example, those who wanted everything to be “modern” were not particularly interested in preserving old know-how. In a number of countries, for a long time, the past evoked hardships, lack of comfort, the “hard life”, all things that people wanted to put behind them by adopting the latest technical innovations.

More or less everywhere in Europe there was a clear break with traditions and techniques, the consequence being that buildings of character were abandoned and specific forms of landscaping disappeared (hedges, dry-stone walls, etc.). Rather quickly, however, the disharmony and erring ways that resulted triggered a reaction to rehabilitate heritage sites, to rediscover their authenticity, to again respect the past.

In certain regions, this continuity in tradition has never been broken and is fully participating in local development. In central Sweden, which is characterised by vast

forest ranges, timber is still the mainstay of the economy and the primary building material. Most homes and commercial buildings are still built with beams and logs, but in a modernised form that meets the most demanding comfort criteria. In addition to the large industrial saw-mills which primarily export timber are some modest-sized firms which still prepare timber in the old way for building. Benefiting from this major outlet which has a good value added, the timber business has generated a number of local jobs. The harmonious association between traditional building and modernity often induces other services: in Gysinge Bruk (Gäveleborgslän), for example, a documentation and consulting centre set up in old buildings helps people choose materials and equipment that respects the architectural tradition. In Stora Kopparberg (Vaestsverige), the famous red “Falun” paint which protects rural buildings throughout Sweden continues to be produced.

In Brittany (France), the architecture is characterised by sturdy gabled structures. Doorways and window frames are made of granite, the furniture is made of oak or some other hardwood. Even if the size of dwellings has often increased considerably, granite and oak are still present, ensuring continuity of tradition and employment for quarriers, woodcutters, stone masons and cabinetmakers. In the North of England, Peak National Park is surrounded by limestone walls which have demarcated grazing land for centuries now. Over the past decades, changes in farming practices have led livestock farmers to neglect these walls and replace them by unsightly and less durable fences. Concerned with protecting an important feature of the landscape, the Park authorities were successful in obtaining State premiums for the restoration and conservation of the walls. The operation made it possible to safeguard the quality of the countryside while creating 20 jobs for full-time specialised craftsmen.

Restored dry-stone walls (Peak District, United Kingdom)





## Old buildings, new purposes

All societies inevitably go through cycles of growth, decline or transformation. The periods of economic growth spur on the construction of new buildings for specific uses. Decline or transformation leads to a change in use, under-use or even outright abandonment of these buildings. But few buildings deserve such a fate: they are more often than not an asset to be put to use to get the local economy going again.

The economic decline of L'Isle-Crémieu in Isère (Rhône-Alpes, France) led to the abandonment or under-occupancy of a number of stone houses in the historic centre. In the 1980s, an ambitious development programme was begun with the help of the ANAH, the "Agence nationale pour l'amélioration de l'habitat" (National Agency for the Improvement of Dwellings). The Agency financed a study to draw up a list of empty prop-

erties that might be rented out. A thousand buildings were identified in this way, and the ANAH contacted the owners to propose covering 50% of the costs to renovate the properties and bring them up to rental standards. The municipality also became involved by granting premiums for the safeguard of the historic nature of certain buildings.

Thirty years ago, the National Trust for Scotland, a foundation for the preservation of heritage sites, took a similar initiative by setting up a fund for the protection of houses of character in the ports along the coast of Fife. The Trust acquired some, then renovated and resold them on the express condition that the new owner respect their particular style. The initiative led to a number of revitalisation actions carried out by other organisations of this economically depressed area.

Germany has plenty of examples of old buildings put to new uses. In Hesse, for example, the "Förderkreis Alte

## Heritage Trails

Taking advantage of heritage to benefit the community and local economy with a view to achieving sustainable tourism is not the preoccupation of the European Union alone. The "Heritage Trails" project concerns two rural areas of Central and Eastern Europe: Dolenjska/ Bela in Slovenia and Dobroudja in Bulgaria.

Initiated and implemented by Ecotourism Ltd, ECOVAST and PRISMA, Heritage Trails benefit from the financial support of Directorate-General XXIII ("Enterprise policy, Trade, Tourism and Social Economy") of the European Commission and the regional authorities of the two pilot areas concerned.

According to the project's officials, a Heritage Trail is "a regional network of natural and cultural heritage sites which is created with a well-defined product identity, in order to support an interesting and varied tourist visit of up to one week."

In each of the two regions, the project team identified those sites which might attract visitors. Working closely with the landowners and local people, it selected sites that had the capacity to receive visitors.

The team then undertook a detailed market study to establish which kinds of visitors might be attracted to the region. It prepared an outline of a Trail which might be marketed and undertook intensive consultation with local authorities and the community to complete an agreed Trail.

This led to the creation of a Heritage Trail Association comprising all the actors concerned by the Trail. The project team helps these associations, particularly in the promotion and marketing of accommodation and tourist attractions and the implementation of quality standards. The Slovenian Trail was ready for marketing at the World Tourism Fair in London in November 1996. The Bulgarian Trail was completed in summer 1997, and its marketing began that autumn. Several tour operators have already expressed interest in the two destinations.

A "Manual on Heritage Trails" presenting the details of the project has been published [\*] and some one hundred people attended the seminar organised as part of the project in Slovenia in April 1997. Representing 22 countries, all the participants considered the Heritage Trails format to offer good prospects for the development of rural tourism, particularly in Central and Eastern Europe. <

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[\*] "Manual on Heritage Trails" Available in English from ECOVAST, c/o CCRU, Cheltenham & Gloucester College, Swindon Road, Cheltenham, GL50 4AZ, England (UK). Tel: +44 1242 544 031 – Fax: +44 1242 543 273.



Training in woodcarving  
(Serranía de Ronda, Spain)

→ Kirchen" (Foundation for Old Churches) association has tried to find new ways to use old disused churches by turning them into cultural centres, multi-purpose rooms, etc. Across Germany, thousands of old unused farm buildings have been turned into comfortable dwellings respecting the original style. There too, a number of associations provide the owners with technical assistance for restoration, remodelling and maintenance. With a little imagination and ingenuity, a whole variety of uses can be found for these structures. In Austria, the development agency of Feldbach (Styria) has set up its offices in the annexes of Kornberg castle. The archways of the citadel of Blaye, north of Bordeaux (Aquitaine, France), serve for the meetings of the regional winemaking association and the offices of the European Conference of Winemaking Regions. In Ireland, the outbuildings of Kilkenny castle were restored in the 1960s to house the Irish Design Centre, a government initiative aimed to stimulate ideas and foster research for innovative quality products. Today these buildings are used for training courses in craft techniques organised by the Irish Crafts Council. In England, the old watermill of Bovey Tracey is used for the shop and exhibition gallery of the Devon Guild of Craftsmen. In Hope, in Derbyshire, traditional rural buildings have been saved from ruin by the Peak Park Trust foundation which has set up a teleservice centre and a series of small workshops. In addition to the technical and architectural know-how that it implies, the reconversion of old buildings can also require financial and legal ingenuity. In Totnes, in

southwest England, a group of 19th century warehouses were sitting idle and doomed to be torn down. A group of residents formed an association and succeeded in finding the necessary funds to acquire the site. The association then created a company with ECU 250 000 in equity capital. The company leased the buildings and obtained an additional ECU 250 000 in bank loans. The total amount (ECU 500 000) was then invested in an initial phase of restoration and conversion. The remodelled rooms were then sublet, making it possible to free up the ECU 500 000 for a second phase of work. When this was completed, the same cycle of subletting was repeated so that the funds could be released for a final phase of restoration. All the buildings have now been restored and sublet as shops, flats (12 dwellings), offices and a restaurant. All these activities have created over 25 jobs. The company, which transferred its main lease to an investment company, can now pay back the loans and the investment of its shareholders. Meanwhile, the original association has continued its vocation by taking on other renovation projects.

## Heritage and tourism

Tourism generally receives priority in rural development programmes (over 42% of the amounts invested during LEADER I went to this sector).

In some cases, like in Barbagia Baronia in Sardinia, the island of La Palma in the Canaries (*see corresponding articles*) or Pays Cathare in France, the local tourism officials are trying to get a percentage of the visitors of the tourist towns or the coast to go to the more remote rural areas. But rural tourism and coastal tourism differ substantially: the coast has the universal attraction of the sea and beaches whereas in the countryside the tourist will be more interested in the character of the places, the special aspects that he will discover, in short, the local heritage. One needs only open a tourist brochure on any rural area in Europe to see that heritage is the main feature. The region to be visited is always "*full of history... endowed with a rich fauna... picturesque celebrations and festivals... traditional crafts... unique gastronomic products...*". But it is much easier to write these kinds of things than to truly offer what is announced: the visitor must be able to *actually* taste, visit, see – and buy – what is local and specific. This means wisely developing the heritage sites in a sustainable manner in the context of integrated local development programmes like LEADER.

Fortunately, the Old World is not lacking in tourist sites, infrastructures or initiatives that bring the visitor in direct contact with heritage, thereby participating in its preservation and in the development of the local economy. Tourist accommodation is a striking example. Throughout Europe there are accommodations of all types and categories, set up in historic buildings or buildings of char-



acter. Among the most sumptuous are certain Spanish *paradores* and Portuguese *posadas* which give the visitor an idea of life in castles, palaces or stately homes. The economic interest grouping "Europe of Traditions", created in June 1997 at the initiative of the LEADER group of **Vale do Lima** (Portugal), comprises five national organisations of first-rate tourist accommodation: "Chambres d'Amis Benelux", "Château Accueil" (France), "The Hidden Ireland" (Ireland), "Wolsey Lodges" (United Kingdom) and "TURIHAB/Solares de Portugal". The aim of the consortium is to promote tourist accommodation in old homes of character throughout Europe and to preserve their related historic heritage. In the United Kingdom, the Landmark Trust offers quality accommodation in a large range of buildings of architectural interest or with a certain originality: the profits generated from this are used for the conservation of buildings by local craftsmen. On the island of Hydra in Greece, an old sponge factory has been converted and expanded to house a hotel of exceptional character. A large proportion of the 19 000 odd addresses listed by the Gîtes de France is comprised of annexes of recon-verted farms or village houses of character. The same is true for accommodation on the farm – rural cottages, bed & breakfasts or guest rooms – marketed by Urlaub auf dem Bauernhof ("Farm Holidays", Germany), Agriturismo (Italy), Privetur (Portugal), Irish Farm Holidays (Ireland) and other networks elsewhere in Europe. Hundreds of youth hostels are in castles, manors, mills, etc. like Kasteel Westhove in Domburg on the Dutch coast. In the United Kingdom, a growing number of camping barns accommodate walkers for modest sums; it is a way of giving a new lease of life to buildings that have become

useless and of ensuring an additional income for farmers. In disadvantaged rural areas, finding the necessary funds to convert a building for accommodation and bring it up to standards can be difficult. As a result, there is the risk of seeing houses become run down or bought up as second residences which is not always of help for the local economy. It is therefore an area of possible intervention for local development agencies. In the small historic town of Specchia (Apulia, Italy), the LEADER group of Capo Santa Maria di Leuca reached an agreement with the owners of a dozen unoccupied houses in the heart of the village. The LAG rents these houses for ten years, renovates them by equipping them with every modern comfort and markets them as tourist accommodation. The profits are distributed to the owners who recover their property at the end of the lease and are free to continue or stop renting. In addition, a tourist information centre has been set up together with a restaurant accommodating fifty which is open throughout the year. A similar initiative in Ambelakia (Thessalia, Greece) has helped bring back to life a number of run-down or unoccupied houses in the village. Heritage sites are also a pretext for a number of tourist activities. Too often, however, these are limited to the classic visit of a castle or church without any particular activity or special event. At the other end of the spectrum, some tourist initiatives use heritage sites for anything and everything, even the most doubtful, as long as they generate profit: the original heritage is then betrayed, distorted. Between these two extremes, numerous actions fortunately try to protect the building of character or other heritage wealth and present it in a lively and honest

■ Thatched roofs require special know-how





■ Transformation of an old village hall into a cultural centre (Kavala, Greece)

— manner and create jobs and income for the local community. The many French eco-museums are a good example of this, as are the great variety of country houses and gardens of character managed by the British National Trust or the town of Alberobello (Apulia, Italy) and its exceptional “trulli” houses with cone-shaped stone roofs. The port of Morwellham is located along the banks of the Tamar, some thirty kilometers from Plymouth in southwest England. Founded 900 years ago by the monks of the abbey of Tavistock, it first served to ship tin from Dartmoor then experienced tremendous development with the discovery of a large copper deposit nearby. After the vein was depleted, around 1900, the port was gradually abandoned. In the 1960s, it had practically disappeared under the mud and vegetation. The valley’s economy was bleak. In 1969, the port was taken over by a local foundation to preserve and “interpret” the place, to draw tourists and to generate income for the area. Since then, over ECU 2 million from private, national and European sources (ERDF) have been allocated to preserve the site and accommodate some 100 000 visitors a year. With turnover of more than ECU 1 million, the site currently provides 20 full-time jobs and 50 seasonal jobs.

One of the great attractions of tourism is its mobility. And many aspects of heritage can be easily incorporated in tourist itineraries or theme circuits. For example, wine trails, pilgrimage roads (such as those leading to Santiago de Compostelo in Spain), but also steam trains (very popular in the United Kingdom, France and Belgium in particular), canals and navigable waterways which in their own way tell the history of a number of regions, etc. are all ways to bring together different aspects of the heritage of the regions crossed (see boxed text on “Heritage Trails”).

In Barenton, in the Regional Nature Reserve of Normandie-Maine (France), a rural group of buildings representative of the regional architecture house the “Maison de la Pomme et de la Poire” (Apple and Pear Centre) where the production of cider, calvados, “poirée” (alcoholic pear beverage) and other drinks is explained. Following marked itineraries, visitors can stop at farms where they can taste and directly buy these products.

## Combining heritage and development

A resource at the service of sustainable development, heritage has a value in itself. It represents the collective memory of the population and is a potential resource for its future. If done properly, the development of a heritage site does not conflict with the satisfaction of current needs, much to the contrary.

More and more, heritage sites are considered important, even when modest. The challenge today is rather to better integrate the protection, utilisation and enhancement of heritage in the local development approach.

The defenders of heritage and local development actors are partners. The development programmes must include in their approach the utilisation of heritage, defuse the threats that put it in jeopardy whenever possible. Conversely, the defenders of heritage must take into account local development needs and take advantage of every opportunity for synergy.

The necessary merger between a heritage policy and the “bottom-up” approach of local development is at the heart of a programme like LEADER. This need was reaffirmed in the “Cork Declaration” of November 1996 (see *LEADER Magazine* no.14). It is also one of the main challenges of the “Strategy for Rural Europe” published by ECOVAST in 1994.

Development agencies are in a good position to promote the awareness of rural communities of local heritage and its usefulness. In the United Kingdom, for example, an action conducted in the framework of LEADER II by the **South Pembrokeshire** group (Wales) includes courses in local history, training in traditional building techniques and the creation by village communities of heritage trails that encourage visitors to stay and consume in the region. The local people in this way participate in the development of their area and take personal charge of the heritage that they have inherited. <





## “Building heritage, small heritage, landscapes...”

Monique Le Clézio [LEADER Centre-Ouest Bretagne, France]

**When the French departments** were created in 1810, Central West Brittany (100 000 inhabitants today), which historically, geographically and culturally was homogeneous, was divided into three areas that were each attached to a different department: Côtes d'Armor, Finistère and Morbihan. This administrative division turned the region into a backwater. On several occasions, then again in 1990 when the LEADER I programme was set up, the local actors decided to rebuild their region by taking advantage of its assets, particularly its strong cultural identity. Several actions to enhance cultural identity were therefore included in the LEADER I programme. One of them aimed to help promote the language, music and traditional dances by organising events: “Festival of the Breton Language”, traditional arts festivals, etc.

### Renovating the building heritage

Two specific actions were organised to renovate the building heritage. The first action, which was directly related to the development of tourism, aimed to spruce up the villages. It was not realistic to want to attract visitors, or even new inhabitants, if the image of the village centres was not improved. Why invest in accommodation capacities, amenities, promotion campaigns geared towards the quality of the facilities or the quality of life if the villages are neglected?

To ensure that the action (costing a total of about ECU 1 million) had an impact, only towns whose proposal met the objectives and criteria approved by the local action group were selected.

These criteria can be summed up as follows:

- > quality of building and religious heritage;
- > tourist-oriented village because located at an interesting site, where accommodation capacities have been developed by individuals or local authorities (holiday villages, rural cottages, guest rooms, etc.);
- > organisation by local boards comprising elected officials, local socio-economic actors and the local people of a global development project. This approach provided solutions for the neglected building heritage (incentive to create rental housing or relocate business activities or community services) and for the need to improve the image of villages (concealment of power lines, use of traditional materials, integration of the urban fixtures, erection of bilingual signs – Central West Brittany is a Breton-speaking region –, planting of flowers in the villages).

Twelve villages meeting all of these criteria were selected, including the village of Spézet (see photo) which is in the Black Mountains. A survey carried out recently highlights the success of the operation.



### Development of tourism and preservation of the countryside

The second action, which was more transversal, concerned small unprotected rural heritage sites (roadside crosses, bread ovens, fountains or wash houses) which were renovated and put to use.

This small heritage belongs to the collective memory and is an integral part of the landscape. Its renovation enabled the creation of theme trails. For example, the “Slate Trail” in Cauro, a 3 hour loop-shaped route, crosses a changing countryside: broad-leaved trees, rocky outcrops of shale which overhang lake Guerlédan. Two quarry workshops were renovated to trace back the industrial history of the site where slate was quarried. The experiment carried out under LEADER I by Central West Brittany has been noteworthy because of the positive effects that it has had on local dynamics and development: voluntary activities have grown, and young families are moving to the renovated villages. For the period 1995-1999, financing has been reserved to upgrade villages under the Objective 5b programme of the Brittany Region in order to spread this experience to the entire eligible area.

Under LEADER II which began here in 1997, heritage sites will continue to be developed through promotion actions involving gastronomy, nature and art (language, music and dance). <





## “Not only sun”

Francisco Dominguez [LEADER Isla de La Palma, Canaries, Spain]



**In 1992**, our local action group began making the 70 000 inhabitants of the island of La Palma (726 km<sup>2</sup>) aware of rural tourism at a time when it virtually did not exist. We managed to convince 74 owners of “casas palmeras” to restore these traditional homes and turn them into tourist accommodation.

In October of that year, the rural tourism association “Isla Bonita” was set up to group together all those involved in the operation: owners, towns, associations, etc. Three technicians were hired to plan and coordinate the association’s activities.

Outside technical assistance co-financed by LEADER I helped define the criteria to be met for the architectural restoration and monitor the progress of the work.

In November 1992, three municipalities presented their first restoration projects (25 houses, or 90 beds) and then obtained co-financing from the Department of Tourism of the government of the Canaries under the REGIS and LEADER programmes.

A study trip was organised to Navarre, Aragon and the south of France. The owners were able to see for themselves how rural accommodation and the “Gîtes de France” operated. A training programme on hosting tourists and managing a tourist business was then set up by the LAG.

In 1993, the municipality of Puntanilla gave up its “Casa Lujan”, a patrician house from the 19th century. Shortly afterwards, a “Rural Tourism Office” was opened together with an ethnographic museum and a centre for the promotion and sale of traditional crafts.

A label was also created using a charter defining a certain number of rules concerning the restoration of buildings (ECU 2 800 000 of which ECU 700 000 under LEADER I) and the running of accommodation.

In January 1994, the first phase of rural accommodation was promoted at FITUR, the international tourism fair in Madrid. The same year, a programme was begun to erect accommodation signs with co-funding by the FUTURES programme of the Spanish Ministry of Industry, Trade and Tourism.

Forty lodgings (164 beds) were rented in 1995. An impact study revealed that 17% of the 1 100 visitors hosted during the first year of operations were from Germany, 24% were from the other Canary Islands, 12% from the region of Madrid, the rest from other Spanish regions and, to a lesser extent, the Netherlands and France.

During the same year, the lodgings were presented at FITUR and at the International Tourism Fair in Berlin. They are also promoted on the Internet.

Tourist activities are organised by various private associations such as “Ibakken” (environment and recreational activities; management of a youth hostel sleeping 48), “Aire libre” (camping) and “Artetur” (discovery of the area and its inhabitants; local crafts).

To facilitate the direct marketing of the lodgings and limit the owners’ dependency on tour operators and travel agencies, the association published a “Guide on Rural Homes” in 1996, describing 60 available houses (298 beds).

In a parallel development, the Isla Bonita association set up a reservation centre that operates with a 12% commission on each rental made through the association.

The restoration and reconversion of traditional rural homes as tourist lodgings now enable the island of La Palma to be something other than a simple “sun destination”. An important part of the local architectural heritage has been given a new lease of life. The associations involved in the operation have created 22 jobs of which 12 are permanent and full time. <







## “Of mills and men”

Emmanouil Yalitis [LEADER Lassithi, Greece]



**Since the 15th century**, a time when the Venetians occupied Crete, the windmill has been the symbol of the Lassithi plateau 860 m above sea level. The smallest plot of cultivable land had its own, and at one time there were about 14 000 windmills scattered across 24 km<sup>2</sup>. These are actually small windmills that primarily served to irrigate the specialty crop grown on the plateau, potatoes.

Beginning in the 1970s, however, the exodus of young people and the decline in farming led to the deterioration of an important part of the local landscape: due to a lack of maintenance, a growing number of these small pretty white windmills was falling into ruin.

Aware of the risk of this unique heritage disappearing, a few local officials came up with a plan to restore them and use this identity-based symbol as an asset for the integrated development of the Lassithi plateau.

In response, local authorities, farm cooperatives, women's cooperatives and cultural associations set up a development agency that became a member of the LEADER I group. A long process of awareness raising among local people was then begun.

Once the idea had been accepted by a majority of the residents, the LAG organised a training programme: 20 people, mostly young people, learned to build and restore windmills with the help of craftsmen, who were often well advanced in years and the only ones to have the know-how. The Polytechnical School of Athens also lent its assistance and each participant in the training course renovated a windmill.

A list of the windmills was then drawn up, and 300 of them were selected for the large-scale restoration operation. This operation, which lasted from April to December 1995, benefited the young people who were hired to do the work and the craftsmen and small local businesses which produced the materials and parts needed to put the windmills back into working order.

The operation was part of a much vaster programme to develop heritage sites which also included the opening of a Museum of Local Traditions in 1995, the restoration of a convent and its conversion into a Museum of Natural History, the creation of small restaurants and tourist accommodation, etc. All these actions aim to benefit day tourism, as the plateau (which is some forty kilometers from the coast) attracts between 180 000 and 200 000 visitors a year.

The restoration of the windmills represented an investment of ECU 279 583 of which ECU 20 000 was allocated for training, ECU 100 000 in wages and ECU 159 583 in local materials.

The economic situation of this hard-to-reach plateau remains very fragile, but the rehabilitation of these windmills which makes the countryside more attractive, the utilisation of traditional local know-how and the substantial increase in facilities for tourists help consolidate existing jobs and in some cases even create new ones and have persuaded the local people that their area has a future. <



Putting heritage to work in Friesland [Netherlands]:

# this flat country of o

**For a long time devoted exclusively and intensively to farming, Friesland is turning to other activities to ensure a serene future. The identity and rich heritage of this region, its closeness to large urban centres are all major opportunities for the development of cultural tourism.**





# ours

**The orchestra starts playing** the final song. The 71 actors and people with walk-on parts invade the enormous four storey-high stage which is supposed to represent a London neighbourhood in the last century. The 700 in the audience loudly applaud these amateur actors of all ages who have just magnificently performed the musical play adaptation of Dickens's "Oliver Twist" [1]. Are we in Soho? On Broadway? Not at all: simply in Jorwerd (240 inhabitants), a small Frisian village which for the past 44 years has been organising an ambitious show in the Frisian language [2]. "The 8 000 tickets for the 11 performances scheduled this year sold out in a few hours," proudly announces Jan Schotanus, who translated the text into Frisian.

*"The success of Jorwerd has spread throughout the region, and 9 villages now have their summer theatre,"* says Pyt Vellinga, president of the cultural association which manages the event. *"You know,"* he says, *"I think that organising a show of this kind can work either in a big city or, if not, in a village like this one where voluntary work and rural solidarity are omnipresent. However, setting up an event like this brings people together and at the same time enriches their cultural and social life."*

## Success story

Jorwerd is one of those villages with an angel watching over it. One of those villages where, no one knows why, the craziest of projects seems destined to succeed. In 1953, only recently rebuilt after the war, the church tower collapsed (!). Far from being discouraged, the villagers decided to organise a show to collect the necessary funds for the second reconstruction. The owner of a large park in the heart of the village lent it for the event. A bank contributed financially to the project. The entire population became involved. The operation was a success. Repeated each year, it has steadily grown: almost entirely self-financed, the 1997 production will have cost ECU 100 000 and mobilised 140 people, most of them voluntary.

And as if this success were not enough, a writer from Amsterdam only recently made the village famous throughout the Netherlands by publishing *"How God left Jorwerd"* [3], the story of contemporary rural life which was an instant success across the country. *"People come from all over the Netherlands to see Jorwerd, its famous church tower, its school, the house of one character or another in the book..."* note Klaas Bijleveld and Sijbe Roosma, LEADER officials for the Province of Friesland. And they add: *"next year, the forty fifth production is coinciding with the one hundredth anniversary of the birth of the poet Jan Jacob Slauerhoff who has his roots here. Luck sometimes works in your favour!"*



Historic building converted  
into tourist accommodation

Like the very opulent-looking architecture of the village, the cultural dynamism of Jorwerd must not conceal the profound problems that rural Friesland as a whole is experiencing: for a long time a model of efficiency and productivity, Frisian agriculture is also having some difficulties because of ground pollution and milk quotas in particular, and an accelerated concentration of farms. These are all factors that have resulted in a major exodus of young people and a certain deterioration of services. *"We had to get out of the situation of only having one activity and develop non-agricultural sectors,"* says Klaas Toering, president of the DBF (Dorp en Bedrijf Friesland), a support network for the creation and development of small businesses in rural areas. *"We identified three possible avenues: local products, recreational activities and tourism. All three are based to a large extent on the utilisation of heritage, be it cultural, architectural, culinary or related to the landscape."*

## Culture and tourism

For the past ten years or so, Friesland has resolutely turned to the development of cultural tourism, using architectural heritage first: behind the endless rows of poplar trees and the apparent monotony of the immense plain wrested from the sea over the centuries are small hidden treasures – churches from the Middle Ages built on hillocks, manors and castle farms straight out of the Golden Century of the Netherlands, villages that look so prosperous that the most humble house resembles a private mansion...

— As early as 1986, the provincial authorities launched the programme “Monument of the Month” which consists of putting the spotlight on a certain number of buildings or sites for at least one month several times a year. Cultural events are organised in tandem, local products are also given a position of prominence and quality documentation is distributed at the regional and/or national level. Since the programme was launched, 78 “Monument of the Month” events have been organised. With the “Action Plan for Culture and Tourism” developed by the Province in 1992, a process began of seeking to combine the creation of enterprises, tourism development and promotion of the Frisian culture as a whole. A foundation was created in order to facilitate the plan’s implementation: “Kultuer en Toerisme yn Fryslân” (Culture and Tourism in Friesland) serves as an interface

between the regional and local authorities, the cultural institutions and the tourist and recreational sector. It also provides technical assistance to all the actors concerned by the development of cultural tourist products. With the help of LEADER I (ECU 150 000), the Foundation began the “stedsloazjeminten” project, reconverting dis-used buildings of historic interest into first-rate tourist accommodation in four of the “Eleven Frisian Towns” (see boxed text). Having acquired these buildings from municipalities for a symbolic price, the Foundation coordinates the restoration plans and supervises the work which is done by local contractors whenever possible. Once restored, the buildings remain the property of the Foundation but are leased to private operators. The action has already given buildings of character renewed use and vitality in three towns, creating 35 jobs.



## A tale of “eleven cities”

The “Elfstedentocht” is to Friesland what the “Tour de France” is to France: a sports event and festival in one that attracts hundreds of thousands of spectators and participants... when it takes place.

This is because the Tour of the Eleven Frisian Towns is a skating competition on frozen canals, which implies a harsh winter, a rather rare phenomenon these past several years: the fifteenth edition of the race was held on 4 January 1997 whereas the event exists since 1909.

An age-old way of living is turned into a sports competition and a fun event: in the past, frozen canals and waterways were an easy means of communication between the Frisian communities in winter. Today, the “Tocht” is a 200 km skating event, a pretext for numerous celebrations in the 11 “cities” crossed.

These are in fact the Frisian towns which have an urban charter. Except for two of them – Sneek and Leeuwarden, capital of the province – none have more than 20 000 inhabitants and several are rather small villages. The entire course of the Tocht covers the northwest of the province, corresponding more or less to the LEADER area.

In addition to the nature of the activity itself which brings together top-level athletes (300 competitors in 1997), casual skaters (16 000 registered), spectators and lovers of socio-cultural events of all kinds, the originality of the Tocht lies in its organisation: it is necessarily largely improvised, since it is usually impossible to know until the last minute if the event can be held, weather permitting.

In this case, a complex mechanism has to be set up very quickly (in less than 48 hours for the Tocht 97) to provide facilities and activities for the hundreds of thousands of visitors who, informed through the media, will descend upon Friesland in the hours that follow. That is why intense and spontaneous mobilisation of the local people is important.

The participation of the inhabitants is such that the miracle occurs each time: not only has there never been any serious incident reported, but the event invariably turns into a massive friendly people’s festival.

Its success and the associated publicity have made the Tour of the Eleven Towns a genuine “engine” for tourism in northwest Friesland: the waterways of the circuit which are the haunt of small pleasure craft have footpaths and cycling ways running parallel along the banks. Each summer a whole range of imitations are organised that pale in comparison with the real event: there is the “Elfstedentochten” for roller skaters but also for carrier pigeons or even for Fiat 500s!

“Friesland, region of Eleven Towns” has become an important tourist slogan, and the impact of the event is very positive for the entire LEADER area: after each Tour there is a substantial increase in the number of tourists, who more and more are inclined to visit villages and sites relatively distant from the event. <





■ The hillock of Hogebeintum has an eco-museum co-financed by LEADER I

*"The main difficulty is not so much to find customers," explains Hieke Joustra who coordinates the project "but rather to complement the attraction of the accommodation proposed by combining discovery activities. That is why we have come up with 'cultural packages', tourist products which include accommodation and access to sites, museums, events, etc. including in the low season."*

## Hillocks

As part of this strategy and around the "Eleven Towns" which comprise the tourist element that unifies the region, the LEADER intervention consists of reviving a certain number of cultural poles located out in the countryside. LEADER I helped, for example, finance the facilities of the interpretation centre in Hogebeintum, a place that explains the history of the "terpen" (hillocks), artificial mounds that served as ultimate protection against a sea that was barely kept in check by dykes. LEADER II has invested ECU 92 000 in the "Unia-Stata" project: rather than try and rebuild at great cost its castle which was completely destroyed in the 18th century, the small village of Beers has decided to raise a metal structure respecting the actual forms and dimensions of the original building, its "skeleton" so to speak. Currently being built, the structure resembles a gigantic sculpture with a startling trompe l'oeil effect. The area around the site – a hillock as well – is also being restored and the new steel "keep" which will be completed in winter 1997-98 will offer the visitors an unrestricted view over the Frisian "platteland".

*"The many social and voluntary activities of the villages is one of the key assets that rural Friesland has to succeed in its restructuring," remarks Jan van Weperen, coordinator of the Noordwest Friesland LEADER group. "The total investments from LEADER II directly devoted to the development of heritage amount to over ECU 1 million, but all these efforts would be in vain without the involvement of the networks of mutual assistance, all these cultural and sport associations which are the wealth and strength of our rural communities." <*

[1] "Oliver!", creation by Lionel Bart.

[2] This language of the Western Germanic group, midway between English and Dutch, is understood by 94%, spoken by 73% and fluently used by 54% of the inhabitants of the province of Friesland (according to a 1984 study). Awaiting to receive official status, Frisian is taught in a number of schools and has administrative and legal recognition at the provincial level. It is the language of communication used by the majority in most of the Frisian rural areas.

[3] Geert Mak, "Hoe God uit Jorwerd verdween", 1996. Atlas van de Litteratuur, Postbus 13, 1000 AA Amsterdam. The title refers to the changes in values (decline in religious influence, in particular) observed in Dutch rural areas.

**Surface area:** 518 km<sup>2</sup>

**Population:** 76 880 inhabitants

**LEADER II financing:** ECU 14 089 900

**EU:** ECU 2 612 489 - **Other public funds:** ECU 5 843 772

**Private:** ECU 5 633 640

**LEADER II Friesland**

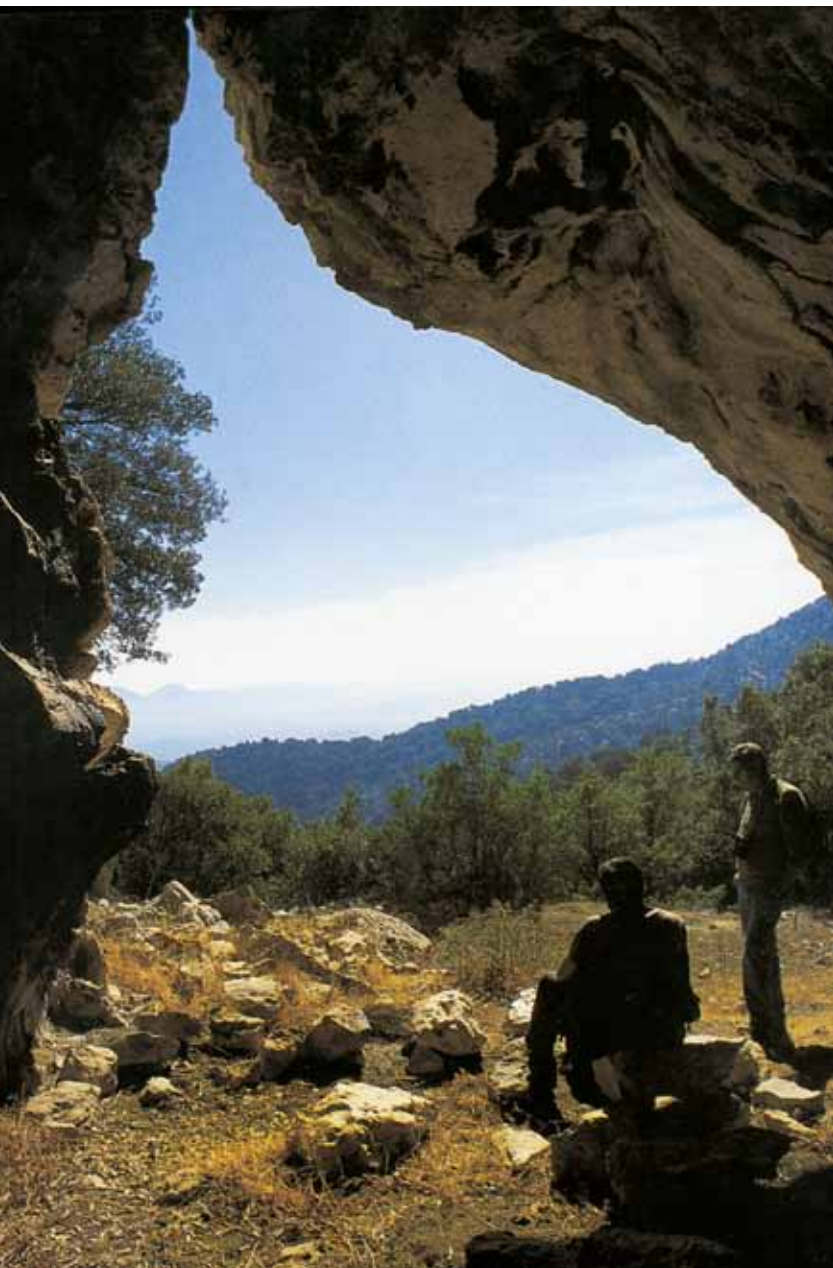
Provinsje Fryslân

Postbus 20120, NL-8900 HM Leeuwarden

Tel: +31 58 292 52 89 – Fax: +31 58 292 56 32

# Heritage at the heart of the development of Barbagia winning back the i

**The tourist development of the coast tends to weaken the inland economy of Sardinia. The development of its natural, cultural and historic heritage could help reverse this trend by attracting holiday-makers to the interior and by providing the coast with local quality products. That is the strategy of the Barbagia-Baronie LEADER group.**



**Luciano Decandia never tires** of pacing up and down the beach of la Cinta, four kilometers of white sand stretching between the turquoise waters of the Tyrrhenian Sea and a lagoon where hundreds of pink flamingos live; opposite is the island of Tavolara, a gigantic grey block, a piece of Sardinia that seems to defy Rome which is situated 150 nautical miles in a straight line from the island.

As an architect, Luciano is fully benefiting from the development witnessed these past few years by the town which overlooks the beach, San Teodoro, his native village. *"2 500 inhabitants in the winter but as many as 60 000 people in August and some 7 000 homes built in the past 15 years to meet demand..."*

Northeast Sardinia has become a fashionable destination since a consortium founded by the Aga Khan began developing the "Costa Smeralda" in 1961, building from scratch several very first-rate holiday centres. Fortunately, there are no towers here disfiguring the landscape: luxury tourism does not go well with concrete. The tourist development which is now affecting the villages located south of the "Emerald Coast" has also spared the coastal environment. Some of the inhabitants keep an eye out for trouble: Luciano is member of the board of directors of the Istituto delle Civiltà del Mare (ICIMAR), an association created in 1989 by some thirty residents concerned with the sustainable development of San Teodoro and its surrounding area. In addition to its publications, conferences and the close links that it maintains with a number of establishments devoted to the study and defence of aquatic and island environments, the association (300 members) is in charge of the creation of a marine nature reserve like the six that already exist in Europe. *"The project is nearing completion,"* says Salvatore Brandanu, president of the ICIMAR, *"and LEADER has had its role to play in this."* The Community initiative has provided ECU 223 000 to build a "Sea Museum" at the entrance of the beach, and already it is being used as the "Marine Reserve Centre".

*"It is the last project that we did under LEADER I,"* explains Gino Dau, director of the local action group.



a-Baronie [Sardinia, Italy]

# Interior

*"It was not planned in the beginning. The devaluation of the lira in 1995 increased the value of our budget in ECUs, generating a surplus of 447 million lira."*

*So we asked the different municipalities [\*] to propose an action that could be carried out quickly. San Teodoro had a project that was ready: to create a 'Centre for Marine Life' comprising a museum, a library, an auditorium, conference rooms and an aquarium." A vast modern building in the form of a prism was therefore built between May and October 1996. It belongs to the municipality but is being managed by the ICIMAR. Construction of the aquarium began in October 1997 under LEADER II.*

## Itinerant tourism

This complex is the second collective infrastructure of importance financed by LEADER in San Teodoro: in 1994, the Community Initiative already helped open a tourist office in an old building in the village centre, an office that is also used for exhibitions, as a point of sale for all the products of the LEADER area and as the local antenna for the LAG. The only coastal town of the LEADER II area, San Teodoro, is in a way a bridgehead for all of Barbagia.

Called the "land of the Barbarians" by the Romans who never truly succeeded in controlling it, Sardinia is a very heterogeneous territory that can be divided into three areas: the coastal area which continues to expand; an intermediate area of hills whose population remains stable, because those who work commute daily to the coast; the mountain area (average altitude: 1000 m) which continues to lose population to the benefit of the coast.

President Giosué Ligios describes the strategy of the LAG: *"in terms of creating infrastructures, we give priority to the mountain area where urgent intervention is needed, but the three areas must have a domino effect: the coast has a pool of potential visitors for the interior. The interior is a supplier of local products of all kinds for the coast. The 'real' Sardinia is there, with its landscapes, its historic vestiges, its traditions, its specific know-how. By taking advantage of this heritage, we are trying to develop an itinerant tourism and create new activities in the most remote villages."*

With a population that has gone from 900 to 300 in less than twenty years, Osidda is considered one of the most threatened villages of the LEADER area. If distance and emigration are for the most part responsible for this decline, they have on the other hand enabled the village to escape the cement mixers: Osidda has retained a certain architectural harmony, an asset that the local action group has been able to turn to good account. Through LEADER, which covered 75% of the costs of the



Quality  
mountain  
products

operation (ECU 250 000), 13 neglected buildings of character were completely restored in the centre of the village. In addition to the 60 beds created, this group of buildings has a restaurant, an exhibition area and a point of sale for local products. Nine owners have formed a cooperative to ensure the collective management and promotion of their accommodation. In this way, they participated in the International Tourism Fair in Milan. The first tourists came in summer 1997, but a major challenge remained to be met: the organisation of holiday activities. Road and walking itineraries have therefore been designed to connect certain natural and historic sites to the village.

## Nuraghi

Archeological heritage is a major asset for Barbagia: Sardinia is the country of the "nuraghi", structures from the bronze age in the form of truncated cones made of rectangular stones assembled without mortar. About 7 000 nuraghi have been counted on the island, and their density is particularly high in the LEADER area which also has "tombs of giants", great nuragic burial places.

Important vestiges from the lower nuragic period (2000 B.C.) have recently been uncovered not far from Osidda: Su Romanzesu corresponds to a vast village built around a sacred well, flanked by terraces on several levels..

Aware of the value of this site which was not at all exploited, the local action group decided in 1994 to develop it, first by setting up a reception centre. After a prolonged and patient effort to convince the owners of the land covered by the site, the LAG finally found developers for the project: Arcangelo Demurtas, veterinarian-cattle farmer, and his wife Meloni Fellicia, teacher.

The project concept clearly sums up the importance given by the LEADER group to heritage sites and historic continuity: the project could have been limited to the construction of a light modern building; instead, it was decided to build a traditional Sardinian farm out of granite. The result is entirely surprising: built between Sep- ➔

tember 1995 and February 1996, the different buildings of the Nuragic Centre of Su Romanzesu truly seem to be one hundred years old. There is a café-restaurant, an amphitheatre used for educational purposes and a small museum of rural life containing a number of tools and artisan objects given or lent by the people living in the surrounding area. Operational since January 1997, the Centre has already received 3 000 visitors in 10 months. *"Without the help from LEADER which provided ECU 220 000, covering 60% of the costs of the investment, we would never have taken the leap,"* admits Arcangelo. *"Three things motivated us: we wanted our five children to be able to earn their living here; we wanted to broaden their horizons by having all kinds of visitors; and we wanted to contribute to the economic development of our village... In the second case, we got off to a very good start: at Easter time, we had the visit of Eric Clapton who came to Sardinia to tape a record with the 'Tenores di Bitti'!"*

### Terra Pintada

With its 3 838 inhabitants, Bitti is the largest town in the area. Here too, LEADER has helped finance several projects involving the development of heritage sites. In addition to creating a museum of rural life on a rather large scale (ten rooms reproducing traditional interiors), the LAG supported the efforts of three young ceramists to set up shop in an old mill that had been abandoned since 1982. Here, everything brings together past and present with taste: the pottery work produced by the "Terra Pintada" enterprise judiciously reconciles tradition and modernity, and the old machinery of the mill has been converted into display shelves and other conveniences, giving the shop-workroom a postmodern atmosphere. *"We cheat a little with tradition,"* jokes Giulia Carzedda, one of the three partners of Terra Pintada. *"Pottery is a common activity in most of the villages of Barbagia but not in Bitti. Because we already had the mill, our first idea was to turn it into a hotel. We went to find the LEADER group to see if we could benefit from any financial assistance. Very quickly it became apparent that the project should focus on this activity which corresponded much more to the place and to our aspirations and skills: two of us have degrees in fine arts, and all three of us are in love with pottery."* LEADER provided ECU 50 000 to rehabilitate the building, buy a high-performance electric kiln and print promotional material. The young business, however, is still very fragile, like the other initiatives supported in Barbagia-Baronie: *"our clientele is still very local, there are still not enough tourists, we have to go and 'sell ourselves' on the coast and on the mainland..."*, say many of the entrepreneurs there.

### Links

Gino Dau sums up the work accomplished but also the efforts that must still be made: *"we now have a good supply in terms of infrastructures, accommodation, craft products, etc. We have increased or consolidated the skills of the operators by devoting a large share of our budget – ECU 270 000, LEADER I and LEADER II combined – to training. In collaboration with the authorities of the various towns and certain public promotional organisations such as "Pro-Loco" (tourism) and ISOLA (Sardinian Institute of Crafts), we have introduced mechanisms for the promotion and marketing of mountain products: points of sale, creation of a consortium comprising 22 tourist operators, publication and distribution of promotional material, organised tours beginning in San Teodoro and Nuoro... But a big effort still has to be made to 'win back the interior', increase tourist flows from the coast, economically 'irrigate' the hinterland."*

*"An amplification of LEADER I",* to use the words of the LAG team, LEADER II puts more emphasis on the links between the actions carried out or implemented: the creation of thematic itineraries incorporating sites of tourist interest, accommodation and visits of farmer producers (cheeses, "carasau" bread, medicinal plants, etc.) is more than ever a priority. In this respect, the **Barbagia-Baronie** LAG also plans to participate more in the LEADER Network in order to take advantage of the know-how of other local groups in this specific area: *"the Sardinians are cautious and discrete people,"* notes Giosué Ligios, *"we first had to make our own way here, all by ourselves, to convince our fellow citizens that our course of action was the right one. Now that we can boast several achievements, we are prepared to convey and enrich our experience."* <

[\*] The LEADER I area comprised 15 municipalities. With LEADER II, this area was split into two. The current Barbagia-Baronie area comprises 7 municipalities, all located in the interior except for San Teodoro.

Surface area: 779 km<sup>2</sup>  
Population: 14 092 inhabitants  
LEADER II financing: ECU 2 595 000  
EU and other public funds: ECU 2 183 000  
Private: ECU 412 000

GAL Barbagia-Baronie  
Via Brigata Sassari 55  
I-08100 Nuoro (NU)  
Tel: +39 784 39 477 – Fax: +39 784 39 476



## Italy: solidarity with the victims of the earthquake

The association of Italian LAGs, Assoleader, is calling on all European LEADER groups to help the victims of the earthquake and contribute to the reconstruction of the damaged areas (essentially in Umbria and the Marche). In concrete terms this means selling a T-shirt designed by Dario Fo, winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature, and bearing the phrase, in the 11 official languages of the Union, "Only solidarity can stop the earthquake". These T-shirts can be "personalised" depending on the area, event, etc. where they are sold. They can be used as an aid in local campaigns in the press, on radio and television. The funds collected in this way will go to the Solidarity Committee (Comitato per una Cultura di Solidarietà, Via Pian della Genna 4/g, Perugia,

Italy). A worldwide campaign has been launched, but the LEADER groups which are local relays are essential in bringing together and uniting the European rural world as a whole.

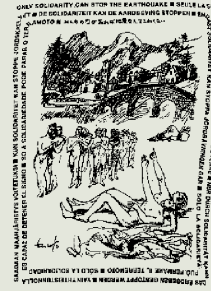
**Contact:** Maurizio Giannini,  
Assoleader,  
Via dei Gigli d'Oro 21, I-00186  
Roma.

Tel: +39 6 68 32 565;

Fax: +39 6 68 96 248;

E-mail: [assoleader@assoleader.it](mailto:assoleader@assoleader.it);

Web: [www.solidarit.it](http://www.solidarit.it)



The motif of  
the solidarity T-shirt  
designed by Dario Fo

## Spain and France: national operational units

Two new LEADER national coordinating units have been operational since January 1998:

- > in Spain, coordination of the LEADER network was entrusted in December 1997 with the public enterprise TRAGSATEC, which works in close cooperation with the Spanish Ministry of Agriculture.

**Contact:** Javier Urbiola, TRAGSATEC, C/Ventura Rodríguez 7, E- 28008 Madrid. Tel: +34 1 396 35 12;

Fax: +34 1 396 37 05; E-mail: [etp@tragsatec.es](mailto:etp@tragsatec.es)

- > in France, the national coordination of the LEADER network was entrusted with a group run by a consultancy firm, BDPA (subsidiary of the "Caisse des Dépôts" group),

which works in partnership with a regional planning agency (SOMIVAL) and a national association for rural development (ANDAFAR). In addition, data concerning LEADER in France continues to be gathered and processed by the CNASEA, a public establishment dependent on the Ministry of Agriculture.

**Contact:** Pascal Roumeguère, coordonnateur, Unité d'animation LEADER, BDPA, 27 rue Louis-Vicat, F-75738 Paris CEDEX 15. Tel: +33 1 46 48 58 34; Fax: +33 1 46 38 34 82; E-mail: [bdpa@bdpa.fr](mailto:bdpa@bdpa.fr)

## LEADER Seminars

The LEADER European Observatory is organising a series of seminars between now and October 1998. Each of these meetings will take place in an area whose LAG has relevant experience in the theme covered. The definitive programme, languages and venue are available two months before the activity is held. (**Contact:** LEADER European Observatory, "Organisation" Unit).

- > **"For sustainable development: the choice of renewable energies"**

Dates: 27-31 May 1998. Languages: Swedish/English/Spanish. Venue: LAG Norra Bohuslän (Vaesterverige, Sweden).

- > **"A changing job scene and new technologies"**

Date: 17-21 June 1998. Languages: English/Spanish/French. Venue: Western Isles, Skye & Lochalsh LAG (Scotland, United Kingdom).

- > **"Finding answers to situations of exclusion in rural areas"**

Date: 30 September-4 October 1998. Languages: English/French/Italian. Venue: South & West Mayo LAG (Ireland).

## LEADER II publications (reminder)

- > **"European Union action programmes and rural development" Directory**  
(Price: BEF 1 800 inclusive of tax / about ECU 45).
- > **"Innovative actions of rural development" Directory**  
(Price: BEF 1 800 inclusive of tax / about ECU 45).
- > **"Evaluation of local touristic potential" (methodological guide).**  
(Price: BEF 300 inclusive of tax / about ECU 7.5).
- > **"Transnational Cooperation between Rural Areas" (methodological guide).**  
(Price: BEF 300 inclusive of tax / about ECU 7.5).
- > **"The collective organisation of a sector for the local valorisation of agricultural resources: the example of cheese processing"**  
(Innovation in rural areas" – Notebook no. 1).  
(Price: BEF 300 inclusive of tax / about ECU 7.5).

- > **"Organising local partnerships" ("Innovation in Rural Areas" – Notebook no. 2).**  
(Price: BEF 300 inclusive of tax / about ECU 7.5).
- > **"Innovation and Rural Development" (Observatory Dossier)**  
(Price: BEF 300 inclusive of tax / about ECU 7.5).
- > **LEADER II poster**  
(Price: BEF 700 inclusive of tax / about ECU 18; additional poster to the same address: BEF 200 inclusive of tax / about ECU 5).
- > **LEADER II map**  
(Price: BEF 700 inclusive of tax / about ECU 18; additional map sent to the same address: BEF 200 inclusive of tax / about ECU 5).

### INFORMATION:

LEADER EUROPEAN  
OBSERVATORY  
chaussée Saint Pierre 260  
B-1040 Bruxelles  
Tel.: +32.2.736 49 60  
Fax: +32.2.736 04 34

### E-Mail:

[leader@aaidl.be](mailto:leader@aaidl.be)

### World Wide Web:

<http://www.rural-europe.aaidl.be>

### "Rural Europe": LEADER on line in 6 languages

The publications (LEADER Magazine, INFO-LEADER, technical dossiers, etc.), the programme of activities, the updated list of all approved LEADER beneficiaries as well as various databases can be consulted on line in 6 languages (French, English, German, Spanish, Italian and Portugal) on the Internet. Several forums are also open.

**Name:** LEADER

("Links between Actions for the Development of the Rural Economy")

**Programme type:** Community Initiative

**Target areas:** Objective 1 regions (development lag), Objective 5b areas (fragile rural areas) and Objective 6 areas (Nordic areas of very low population density) of the European Union. However, up to 10% of the allocations in Objective 5b areas can be granted to non-eligible contiguous areas.

**Objectives:** providing continuity with LEADER I (1991-1994), LEADER II is intended to:

- > encourage model local rural development initiatives;
- > support innovative, demonstrative and transferable measures which illustrate the new directions that rural development can take;
- > increase exchanges of experiences and transfers of know-how;
- > support transnational development projects proposed by those active at local level in rural areas and which express their solidarity.

**Recipients:** LEADER II can assist two categories of final beneficiaries:

- > principally, "Local Action Groups", i.e. a combination of public and private partners jointly devising a strategy and innovative measures for the development of a rural area on the scale of a local community (less than 100 000 inhabitants);
- > other rural collective bodies, public or private, (for example, chambers of agriculture, industry, commerce or crafts, cooperatives, business groups, local authorities, non-profit-making organisations), provided that their more specific activities relate to a plan for the rural development of a local area.

**Types of measures:** acquisition of skills in rural development, rural innovation programmes (vocational training, rural tourism, support for small firms, increasing commercial value locally and marketing of agricultural, forestry and fisheries products; improvement of the environment and living conditions, etc.), transnational cooperation.

The various elements of LEADER II are organised around a "European Rural Development Network", permitting wide dissemination (through seminars, meetings and publications) of innovative measures implemented for the benefit of rural areas and fostering transnational cooperation. The network is coordinated by the "LEADER European Observatory".

**Duration of the programme:** 6 years (1994-1999)

**Community grant:** around 1 755 million ECU, of which over 1 000 million ECU are for Objective 1 regions, financed by the three Structural Funds.



**LEADER  
European Observatory**



**European Commission  
DG VI Agriculture**

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