

Summary of the Rural Networks Assembly meeting

14th of December 2017, Brussels

Summary compiled by Kristiina Tammets

The 4th RN Assembly meeting had following objectives:

- To make recommendations for improving network activities in light of the first comprehensive self-assessment exercise;
- To exchange on the European Commission's Communication on modernising and simplifying the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP);
- To discuss and make proposals for the networks' 2018 priority activities.

Presentations of the RN Assembly are available here https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/news-events/events/4th-rural-networks-assembly-meeting_en

ELARD President Kristiina Tammets introduced the proposed new implementation model of LEADER/CLLD for 2021-2027

https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/sites/enrd/files/assembly4_clld2020_tammets.pdf

Main reflections from the Assembly meeting:

1. Mr Dumitru (DG Agri Deputy Director General) reminded us the importance of Cork 2.0 declaration¹ messages and to feed in discussions on future policies with our experience on the ground. We are in the front of the big challenges that have been brought forward also in the Communication on Future of Food and Farming². The role of innovation and research is growing in the future. Simplification, new delivery model between EU, Member States and local authorities/stakeholders has to be agreed. We all have important role in this process and networking is the main tool to put our efforts together. He invited local actors to participate actively in the debate on future policy design;
2. Innovation and digital agenda are the key words for future (Horizon 2020, multi-sectoral groups, etc). Commission also expects a lot from developing "Smart Villages" concept. Seminar of the "Smart Villages" working group will come soon at the beginning of the year 2018;
3. LEADER approach has proved to be effective. DG Agri is the biggest defender of LEADER and surely supporting the CLLD and LEADER method to continue and develop it even further;
4. Climate change and other environmental topics are extremely important as well as water issues.

¹ https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/sites/enrd/files/cork-declaration_en.pdf

² https://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/sites/agriculture/files/future-of-cap/future_of_food_and_farming_communication_en.pdf



5. One priority is also to create better cohesion between old and new generations - young people, generation renewal and willingness to undertake rural business. There is a lack of good practices in EU in this matter;
6. Next 6-8 months are extremely important concerning the future programming period. New Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) is expected in May 2018 and policy directions will come at the same time. Too many layers make the Common Strategic Framework complicated and therefore it is important to achieve coherence through building linkages with other policy areas. Synergy, cohesion and simplification are the key words;
7. Rural Networks survey indicated the growing need to enhance the involvement of Member States and local level, more support to LAGs and NRNs, capacity building and awareness rising of local stakeholders. It was recommended to establish new platform to connect local and EU levels to bring together rural development communication. It is also important to maximise the multiplier effect within networks and significantly simplify communication in order to enable easy understanding. Communication has to be short and clear;
8. Update of the ENRD calendar is available here
https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/news-events/events/upcoming_en