

AER NEWSLETTER ON RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Read the latest AER and European developments in the field of rural development policies!

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AER NEWS

AER New Position on Cohesion and Definition of Territorial Cohesion adopted by the AER Bureau on 11 June 2008

The AER Bureau adopted a new and more detailed political position on the future cohesion policy on 11 June, in Wroclaw, Dolnoslaskie (PL). The Bureau also elaborated a draft definition of the concept of territorial cohesion, which will serve as a basis for the AER reaction to the EC Green Paper on territorial cohesion, to be published in September 2008. Of particular interest is its emphasis on the importance of synergies to be created at policy level between CAP and Cohesion policy, in order to support a multifunctional development of rural areas. Similarly, the new position calls for the integration of EU rural development policy in the EU cohesion policy, with its full budget; whilst enhanced coherence should be reached as early as the programming stage through common strategic plans. These documents are available at: <http://www.aer.eu/main-issues/cohesion-regional-policy.html>

Important: Launching of RUR@CT and European-wide survey

Rur@ct is a cooperation platform composed of actively engaged rural regions that share operational information for analysing the transferability of their best practices. All these best practices once analysed will be integrated into a database on the website www.ruract.eu. AER participates in the

steering Committee meetings and strongly supports the project.

For further information on RUR@CT, please contact c-leger@cr-limousin.fr

Next AER working group meeting on rural development, 28 October 2008, Linz (A)

The next meeting of the working group on rural development, chaired by Oppland (N), will take place on 28th October 2008, in Linz (Upper-Austria), after the Committee 1 plenary meeting (27/10/2008) and the Conference on innovation. All Committee 1 members are invited to take part in this working group meeting. Agenda and working documents are available under: <http://www.aer.eu/main-issues/agriculture-rural-development.html>

Please send your comments and proposals to the [AER Committee 1 secretariat \(e.delangle@aer.eu\)](mailto:e.delangle@aer.eu)

AER supports the Trans-med Project: Trans-national Commitment for the Rural Mediterranean

The AER gave its official support to the TRANSMED project, (Med Programme) to strengthen the effectiveness and coordination of regional policies for rural development and improve the governance of rural areas through the LEADER methodology. For more information on this project, please contact the AER Committee 1 Secretariat. (e.delangle@aer.eu)

RECENT EUROPEAN DEVELOPMENTS

EU Commission's call for tender for an evaluation of the Farm Advisory System (06/08/2008)

The European Commission has launched a call for tender for a retrospective evaluation of the effectiveness, efficiency, coherence and relevance of the Farm Advisory System within the context of the CAP. The aim of this retrospective evaluation is to assess the impacts of the implementation of the instrument by the Member States with

respect to achieving the objectives laid down in Council Regulations (EC) No. 1782/2003. The maximum budget attributed to this project is € 400.000. The deadline for submitting offers expires on 27/10/2008 and the award of the contract will take place before the end of 2008. For more information, see:

<http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/newsroom/en/305.htm>

Global food crisis and rising fuel prices push EU ministers to protect fishing and agricultural sectors (16/07/2008)

EU agriculture and fisheries ministers gave their backing to a €2 billion emergency aid package to help fishermen adjust to rising fuel prices; which have increased by 240% since 2004. A large majority of them also spoke out against the Commission plans to reduce farm subsidies in the context of its wide-scale reform of the EU's agricultural support rules.

Source: EurActiv

<http://www.euractiv.com/en/cap/ministers-ok-fuel-aid-fishermen-slam-farm-reform-plans/article-174273>

EU Commission approves 31 programmes for the promotion of agricultural products (24/07/2008)

16 Member States will benefit from a €92.4 million budget to support programs running between one and three years and covering organic products, agricultural quality products (PDO, PGI, TSG), dairy products, meat, wine, fruit and vegetables, oil, plants and flowers and products from the outermost Regions. The European Union will contribute to half of the budget, as part of its policy to assist in financing measures that provide information on, or promote agricultural products and food on the EU Internal market. The other 50% of the cost of the program will be met by the professional/inter-branch organisations from the Member States.

<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/08/1206&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

“Organic farming. Good for nature, good for you” - the Commission's new campaign for organic food and farming. (25/07/2008)

The European Commission launched on July 25 its new Organic Farming Campaign that aims at informing consumers, especially young children, about the meaning and benefits of organic farming and food production. This action is part of a wider campaign, which has set 21 initiatives for developing the organic food market and improving standards by increasing efficiency and transparency and thereby increasing consumer confidence.

<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/08/1209&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=enRAPID>

Calls for legislation to be passed on soil degradation (23/07/2008)

Soil degradation is considered to be a serious problem in Europe: as a non-renewable resource, once lost, it cannot be retrieved. In EU Member Countries there are cases such as the United Kingdom, which has been losing 0.6% of their organic matter annually for the past 25 years. This is equal to losing 13 mega tonnes of carbon per year, the equivalent of five million cars. In the context of the Kyoto target of achieving a 27 mega tonne carbon reduction by 2010, the importance of soil conservation becomes obvious. This is why officials from various environmental departments and organisations are calling for stalled environmental legislation on the proposed Soil Directive to be put into law by March 2009. Director of EU Affairs in the Czech Environment Ministry Šafránková reassured the public already by saying that if France fails to push this legislation through during its presidency, the subsequent Czech Presidency will look to finalise negotiations in early 2009.

<http://www.euractiv.com/en/environment/com-mission-urges-solution-soil-degradation/article-174436>

Open letter to EU local authorities inviting them to sign a twinning covenant during the European Development Days (25/07/2008)

Louis Michel, European Commissioner for Development and Humanitarian Aid, has addressed an open letter to local authorities throughout the European Union to participate in an initiative in support of North/South solidarity. He suggests that local authorities conclude a twinning covenant with corresponding authorities in countries of the South and to sign it at the signing ceremony that will take place during the European Development Days in Strasbourg in November. For those interested in the proposal, registration and sending of the proposal to the European Commission are needed by 20 September at the following address: devtwinning@ec.europa.eu

For more information, see:

<http://eudevdays.eu/Public/Page.php?ID=623>

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Congress of European Farmers 2008 - "Visions for the future of agricultural policy in Europe", 30 September – 1 October 2008, Brussels, Belgium

This congress, organised by COPA and COGECA – representatives of European farmers and their agricultural cooperatives -, comes at a time when the world situation for agriculture is rapidly changing: Food markets have become much more volatile. Consequently, this event aims at exploring the fundamental changes occurring in agriculture, at presenting new ideas on the CAP after 2013 and at debating with other stakeholders important questions such as how to ensure that consumers can benefit from healthy, safe and sustainably produced quality food in the future. For more information, see:

http://www.farmerscongress.eu/index_en.html

Open Days 2008: European Week of Regions and Cities, 6-9 October 2008, Brussels, Belgium

OPEN DAYS is organised by the Committee of the Regions (CoR) and the European Commission's Regional Policy Directorate General. A record 217 regions and cities from 32 countries have signed up as partners for the event, considered the biggest annual gathering of EU and regional policy-makers, experts and representatives of banking, business and civil society groups operating in the regional policy sector. As in previous years, the regions and cities have divided themselves into thematic conglomerates, ranging from innovation to technology and research. Seminars and debates will focus on four themes: "Innovating regions: promoting research, technological development and innovation"; "Sustainable development: regional responses to climate change"; "Cooperation and networking: exchange of best practice in regional development"; and "Looking forward: a European cohesion policy

for tomorrow." More information and registration available at the official web portal: www.opendays.europa.eu/

Summit 2008: Good Agricultural Practice, The 9th GLOBALGAP Conference, 15-17 October 2008, Cologne, Germany

Good Agricultural Practices are becoming more and more widely adopted with consumer demand for healthy safe and food produced in a sustainable way. The conference programme offers the opportunity to share the latest developments in Good Agricultural Practices from the leading experts and practitioners joining the conference from around the world.

The conference will provide networking opportunity for professionals involved in primary food production, marketing and regulation. For more information, see: <http://www.summit2008.org/>

European Conference "Europe's rural areas in action: Facing the challenges of tomorrow", 16 -17 October 2008, Limassol, Cyprus

The European Rural Development Network, to which AER applied to become a member, will be launched on this occasion. It will also be an opportunity to review the recent achievements and consider the challenges and prospects ahead, in particular global competition, climate change, land management, diversity of rural areas and local governance. The AER will represent its member regions on this occasion. Any comments are welcome to help prepare the AER statement.

More information can be requested to the [AER Committee 1 secretariat \(e.delangle@aer.eu\)](mailto:e.delangle@aer.eu)

PUBLICATIONS & RESEARCH PROJECTS ON RURAL DEVELOPMENT

PIKES Ltd seeks partner for Project on “Future Development Models for Small Peripheral Centres”

The Pielinen Karelia Center for Regional Development is looking for partners for a project under the Seventh Framework Program. It aims at promoting dynamic model and best practices for small peripheral rural centres (small rural towns and municipal centres) to be submitted by the end of Summer 2008. The project's objective is to create a new community based, integrated and dynamic bottom-up development model and best practices for small peripheral town and rural centres purposes.

To obtain more information on the proposal, please contact :

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AER contributes to RUFUS project

The AER follows closely the evolution of the RUFUS project and has contributed to the first project meeting on June 30, 2008 by offering its expertise on the experiences of the regions in this field. The Rural Future Networks (RUFUS) is a project framed by an evolving reality: the shifting CAP objectives from an agricultural-centred approach to wider rural development have opened space for the multi-functionality of rural areas. RUFUS therefore aims at providing policy makers and stakeholders the theoretical and practical understanding of how CAP measures interact with other forms of public intervention in rural development, and how policy regimes can be combined to ensure a more sustainable development. Further information available at RUFUS web portal: <http://www.rufus-eu.de/>

Financing Agricultural Policies with Particular Reference to Public Good Provision and Multifunctionality – Which level of government? - study of the OECD, June 2008

This study seeks to evaluate financing mechanisms, including the role of different levels of government, with particular reference to public good provision and multifunctionality. Drawing on the public finance and fiscal federalism literature, it develops a framework that is illustrated with references to specific areas of agricultural policy and to country specific materials describing how agricultural policies are designed, financed and implemented.

http://www.oecd.org/LongAbstract/0,3425,en_2649_33773_40789445_1_1_1_1,00.html

Trends in Sustainable Development 2008-2009: Agriculture, Rural Development, Land, Desertification and Drought; United Nations – Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2008.

This report highlights key developments and trends in fields like agriculture or rural development, noting progress in a number of areas while, at the same time, acknowledging that in other areas significant work is still needed to advance implementation of intergovernmentally agreed goals and targets. In what concerns Europe's agriculture, the report highlights that despite limited supplies of land and labour, increasing productivity has occurred in both. It also addresses topics such as the price relationship between world food and bio-fuels demand, explaining that despite prices of some agricultural commodities have gone up since 2000, this has not been enough to reverse the longer-term downward trend.

http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/publications/tr_ends2008/

This newsletter is proposed by the AER Committee 1 "Economy and Regional development" Secretariat. For any comment, suggestion or question, please contact: Justyna Podralska, j.podralska@aer.eu Tel.: +33 (0)3 88 22 74 38 or Raquel Palomino Gonzalez, st.com11@aer.eu, Tel.: +33 (0)3 88 22 74 38