



European Rural Alliance



- The European Rural Alliance (ERA) was founded in September 2005 by rural movements from 16 countries and it was registered as an association in December 2007.
 - The board consists of 9 people from different countries.
 - Finland is responsible for the administration.
 - The first Chairman of ERA was the Professor Eero Uusitalo from Finland
 - Jela Tvrdonova is Chairman of ERA at the moment
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Purpose and activities

The purpose are:

- to promote the interest of rural development in European level,
- to bring together European civil organizations which implement integrated and multisectoral rural development
- to create and facilitate more discussion with those in the commission as well as in the EU Member States.

The activities are:

- organizing seminars and trainings, participating discussions in national and European level, enhancing and activating rural civil society.

Members

- The members have to be national or European organizations having legal capacity and accepting the purpose of the association.
 - **Hela Sverige ska Lev, Sweden**
 - **Slovenian Rural Development Network, Slovenia,**
 - **SYTY, Finland**
 - **VOKA, Slovakia**
 - **Lithuanian Rural Communities Union, Lithuania**
 - **Latvian Rural Forum, Latvia**
 - **PREPARE**
 - **ERCA**



Activities

- Project “European Rural Voice” (EACEA) 2008-2009
The general objective of the project was to give a voice for rural inhabitants at European level and to spread knowledge of EU values and possibilities for rural areas
- Project “*Learning partnerships in mobilizing rural communities through life-long learning*” (GRUNDTVIG) 2010 - 2011
To develop learning partnerships between rural national and international networks and organizations across Europe in the field of rural community mobilization through adult and rural community based training and education and exchange of best practice

Political Statement

- *Rural development needs this new paradigm and the new policy approach, introducing **the third pillar!** with its own regulation and a separated financial instrument/fund established on the basis of its own logic, not as a compromise between agricultural and environmental policies, balancing between the first and second pillars!*
 - *perceive and support rural areas as individual and specific territories and the high quality living space*
 - *enable implementation of various measures via integrated and place based governance*
 - *introduce a new multi-level and multi-sectoral governance approach to the development and implementation of rural policies, giving equal opportunities for all stakeholders*



Overall goal and development priority areas and measures of the future "third pillar" rural policy

- COMPETITIVENESS of rural areas in their broad variety within the entire society
- COUNTRYSIDE as living space and resource base for rural people
- COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE as tools to govern rural communities and regions
- COMPETENCE building the knowledge and skills of rural stakeholders for the development of rural areas
- CIVIL SOCIETY as a strong player in rural development



COMPETITIVENESS

Specific objective: to achieve local and regional competitiveness of rural areas through an empowered, diversified and added-value oriented rural economy, based on local resources, strengths and opportunities

Examples of Measures:

- Sustainable development of natural, material and social/human capital
- Local entrepreneurship and know how, encouraging diversified jobs and income generation activities via the creation and development of micro, small and medium size businesses producing added value products (secondary and tertiary processing of local resources,
- Service development for local people and visitors
- Local and regional "internal market" development (e.g. timebanks and LETS)
- Internal (rural) and external (urban) direct marketing opportunities for rural goods and services
- Local, regional, national and international networks of rural businesses, increasing their competitiveness
- Access to local finances, micro-credits and rural development policy instruments/measures



COUNTRYSIDE

Specific objective: to maintain/ improve a vital and healthy rural countryside, environment and natural resources, providing the high quality of life for rural people.

Examples of Measures:

- Strong legal policy framework for delivering environmental sustainability including measures encouraging carbon reduction.
- Support frameworks which enable community actions to e.g. tackle environmental decline, climate change and the long-term sustainability of ecosystems and resources
- Local renewable energy generation for local benefit
- Land reform and other mechanisms to enable local access to / management of local natural resources
- Maintenance and improvement of countryside, rural landscapes and community environments - e.g. green zones, recreation areas
- Support the development of accessible infrastructure
- Support for alternative activities in environmental protection areas.



COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE

Specific objective: to enhance the effective and efficient governance of rural areas.

Examples of Measures:

- Place-based policy instruments, supporting integrated territorial actions, based on partnerships and local strategies - an extended LEADER approach
- Strong, effective and high quality management structures for local governance at local level
- Fiscal decentralization in favor of local communities with a higher share of taxes remaining at local level
- Local autonomy - strong, small municipalities or villages with mechanisms for local governance (e.g. initiatives and referendums)
- Empowered human scale communities with greater involvement in decision making processes at local level.
- Effective community development processes



COMPETENCE

Specific objective: to enhance knowledge and skills of rural society - internal and external - in order to enhance local autonomy

Examples of Measures:

- Support for place-based knowledge and research for undertaking local development
- Access to tertiary education, life-long learning and training opportunities in rural areas
- Direct and appropriate access to and dissemination of information in rural areas
- Access to appropriate technical assistance, participative feasibility studies, programs and plans
- Use of existing knowledge and skills, including involvement of elderly people for life-long learning in rural areas
- Measures to attract educated people and youth to live in rural areas



CIVIL SOCIETY

Specific objective: to develop vital, active, self-supportive rural communities, with active citizens able to support and develop their rural areas

Examples of Measures:

- Enhancement of social capital
- Strengthening and empowerment of local community institutions for local autonomy.
- Development of social enterprise
- Improvement of the demographic balance in rural areas
- Retention of young people in rural areas
- Improvement of the built fabric of rural communities
- Supporting local innovation in communities.
- Improved systems for rural network creation and development
- Provision of essential public services and facilities
- Provision of affordable housing



Unity and Diversity

Let's form an alliance for territorial rural development and make our voice heard together!

- **CELAVAR**
- **Village Action Association of Finland**
- **VOKA**
- **All Sweden shall live**
- **Lithuanian Rural Communities Union**
- **Latvian Rural Forum**



Contact information

ERA secretary

Peter Backa

tel.: + 358 40 5950 444

e-mail: peter.backa@ssc.fi

www.europeanrural.eu