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National Rural Parliament as a voice of rural citizens

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Implementing organisations





Kick off Meeting for the EU Financed Project “National Rural Parliament as a Voice of Rural Citizens”, Financed by EU

CNVP Foundation in cooperation with the RDN of RM (Rural Development Network of Republic of Macedonia) and the ARD (Action for Rural Development), on April 10th, in the EU Info Centre, have conducted the **kick-off meeting of the project “National Rural Parliament as a voice of rural citizens” - NRP.**

Based on previously identified needs and constrains of civil society organisations from rural areas the project was designed to strengthen the civil society influence on local and national policies concerning rural development. This will be achieved through enhancement of rural CSOs capacities for networking and advo-



city in order to influence local decision making processes and contribute to strategic partnerships with the local and national Government.

The NRP project is a 30 months project, funded by the European Union and implemented by the above mentioned three partner organisations.

The action will involve minimum 40 grass root CSOs working in rural areas, on average minimum 5 CSO's from 8 planning regions in Macedonia, including also minorities and many ethnic groups. The main working method will be training, coaching and learning by doing. These methods will empower rural CSOs to be actively involved in the decision making processes and increase their voice in the society.

Final beneficiaries from the project are all people living in rural areas.

At the end of the two and a half year period the project expect to reach the following four results:

- Enhanced transfer of know-how among rural CSOs related to rural challenges and decision making
- Built management capacity of rural CSOs to lead rural development processes
- Developed research and analysis skills of rural CSOs
- Facilitated effective dialogue between rural CSOs and local/ national government





Civil Society Organizations Will Work Together to Improve Rural Development Policies

During May and June, 2017, the “*National Rural Parliament as a voice of Rural Citizens - NRP*” project, organized 7, out of 8 planned meetings with CSOs in the Southeast, East, Southwest, Northeast, Pelagonija, Vardar and Polog region, in order to encourage them to discuss the possibilities for their greater involvement in creation of policies related to rural development and to identify CSOs that work actively in the field of rural development. Approximately 130 representatives of CSOs attended the meetings organized in: Pehchevo, Strumica, Struga, Tetovo, Bitola, Ku-

manovo and Negotino. The eighth meeting will be organized on July 13th in Skopje for the CSOs in the Skopje planning region.

The project organized these meetings with CSOs, to present planned activities and to encourage more active participation of the organizations in the process of capacity building for networking and advocacy. In this way, the project aims at strengthening the influence of civil society through its involvement in the development of public policies, civil dialogue and decision making to improve the living conditions in rural areas.





The meetings with the Civil Society Organizations in the 8 planning regions of the Republic of Macedonia will be used as basic input for development of a register of active CSOs working in the area of rural development. Within this activity, the project will conduct field inquiry to identify as much as possible rural

CSOs working on topics related to rural development.

The implementation of the “*National Rural Parliament as a Voice of Rural Citizens - NRP*”, funded by the European Union, started in March 2017, by the three partner organizations: Connecting Natu-



ral Values and People Foundation (CNVP), the Rural Development Network of the Republic of Macedonia (RDN of RM) and Action for Rural Development (ARD). It is anticipated the project activities to include 40 local organizations in rural areas, approximately 5 CSOs in each of the 8 regions in Macedonia, including minorities and different ethnic groups. The main method of work will be training, coaching and practical learning, which will encourage greater participation by the rural CSOs in the decision-making processes and creating strategic partnerships with local and national authorities.





MICRO – Increasing Competitiveness of Microenterprises in Rural Areas



The Community Development institute – Macedonia has been working on implementing the MICRO - Increasing Competitiveness of Microenterprises in Rural Areas Project, as part of its activities for support and development of enterprises in rural areas in the Republic of Macedonia, in cooperation with its partners from Ireland, Spain, Greece and Italy. The project is supported by the Erasmus+ EU Programme.

The MICRO Project encourages de-

velopment of basic and cross-cutting skills such as entrepreneurship, ability to function within the internal EU market and self-employment through an innovative approach. This approach of the MICRO Project relies on its bottom-up approach, motivated by the demand, and consolidating the expertise of interns attending vocational education and training, as well as experts in given areas.

The innovative method also relies on the open approach to using the re-

sults, so that MICRO is becoming an open platform not only for training and capacity building, but also for networking, facilitating cross-border exchange and cooperation and identification of partners for rural microenterprises from EU member states.

In the course of implementation, MICRO has been supporting development of high-quality work-oriented solutions in the field of vocational education that could be implemented in existing microenterprises in order to strengthen their competitiveness.

For more information, please visit: <http://www.microsmetraining.eu>





Rural Coalition – Kumanovo Activities in the Civil Sector

► **Successful implementation and completion of the project** “Market Economy and Institutional Capacities” – this was marked by final presentation of the results achieved within the project, which attracted wide media attention. 5 public debates in 5 planning regions in 5 towns were organized in the country (Kumanovo, Strumica, Gostivar, Struga, and Prilep), where institutions and farmers discussed their relations, capacities, efficiency and effectiveness of the institutions and service provision, as well as the extent both parties influence the establishing the relations of market economy. Additionally, a detailed analysis was carried out of the work of five key institutions in the sector of agriculture and rural development (Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management, Agency for Financial Support of Agriculture and Rural Development, National Extension Agency, Food and Veterinary Agency, State Agriculture Inspectorate) in terms of service provision, efficiency, effectiveness, transparency, availability to citizens in correlation with the number of employees in each institution and the annual budget or funds at disposal to each institution for operations; the final result of the project was a published analysis with



recommendations to institutions derived directly from farmers for the purpose of improving their work. This analysis was distributed to the institutions and is available on the following link: <http://rural.mk/projekti/realizirani/pazarna-ekonomija-i-institucionalni-kapaciteti/> Added value to the project was the designed map of institutions to be used by farmers at any time, so that they can identify competencies of separate institutions in order to avoid going from office to office if they need to exercise their rights or carry out their obligations. The project was financially supported by the Foundation Open Society Macedonia.

► **Promotion of the brochure** “*Laws Exist, Implementation is Lacking – the Law on Agriculture and Rural Development – Grounds for Development of Competitive Farming*” containing the analysis of the Law on Agriculture and Rural Development, with an emphasis on legal pro-

visions that affect farmers the most and that draw upon their rights and obligation, all for the purpose of better informing the farmers on what they can base their demands when there is a need for this within their communication with the institutions, or regarding the sections related to regulation of their relations with buyers and final consumers. The brochure was a final product of 8 months activities of the Rural Coalition, implemented as part of the IPA 2 Mechanism for Civil Organizations project implemented by EUROTHINK, Eco-Awareness, Reactor and Zenith, in the process of sub-granting, within the IPA Programme on Civil Organizations and Media 2014. The brochure including developed guidelines on improved implementation of the Law on Agriculture and Rural Development, covering also the field research on the extent of the knowledge of farmers about the law, is available on





the following link: <http://rural.mk/proekti/realizirani/zakonite-gi-ima-primenata-ja-nema/>

► The Rural Coalition successfully completed the process of **drafting a strategy for organizational development for the period 2018-2020**, including a reviewing of the past vision, mission and method of action of the organization. The process was comprehensive and started in February 2016 by identifying the needs of the organization and the target groups, followed by a thorough process of screening the capacities of the Coalition as a network, the capacities of member organizations of the Coalition, as well as analysis of human and technical resources at disposal to the Coalition and its members. The process was monitored by national and international experts in the area, with full technical and logistical support by the TAKSO office in Macedonia; the process ended in June this year, and covered



two workshops with international experts regarding networks and coalitions, followed by working groups for drafting different sections of the strategy with a national mentor including a three day workshop and three working session of the groups

that directly participated in the drafting of the strategic document. It has been planned for the strategy to be adopted at the Annual Assembly of the Coalition in September-October this year; its implementation is planned to start in 2018.





Education of Individual Agricultural Producers to Use Standardized Seeds and Seedlings Material

The Association of Producers of Garden and Flower Varieties HORTI ECO from the Village of Dobrejci, Strumica region, has started with the implementation of the project on **Education of individual agricultural producers to use standardized seeds and seedlings material**, financially supported by the Municipality of Strumica. In cooperation with the communal enterprise Ko-

munalec – Strumica, several areas in Strumica were beautified by planting seedlings of Pelargonium zonale, Begonija semmerwingse daerk elegance, Calibrachoa superbells double ruby, Surfinia table dark red. The Project engages young people from rural areas in the Strumica region, who are provided with opportunities to learn more about planting methods and growing standard seeds and seedlings. Pupils from the Dimi-



tar Vlahov Secondary Municipal School studying horticulture were also involved and had an opportunity to acquire practical experience under supervision of several professors and the communal enterprise Komunalec – Strumica. One of the activities is to raise the awareness of young people on production and use of standard seeds and seedlings.





Visit of the Golden Grape Festival in Melnik

Horti Eco Association from Strumica organized a visit for 55 farmers from the region of Strumica to the Golden Grape Festival in Melnik, Bulgaria on 12 February 2017. They had an opportunity to taste different kinds of wine of native grape varieties produced according to old traditional methods, such as the famous Melnik wine of the variety Wide Melnik Vine. The festival invigorated the town with hundreds of domestic and international guests to taste the red elixir and to enjoy the magic of the Melnik sand pyramids. The goal of this festival is to popularize wine as a national product and develop the region as a wine tourism destination, contributing to preserving tradition and improving conditions of rural living.



10th International Fair on Livestock and Poultry – Zootechnia 2017 held in Thessaloniki

On 4 February 2017, Horti Eco Association from Strumica organized a visit for a group of 75 farmers from Macedonia from the Village of Dobrejci, Strumica region, to the 10th International Fair on Livestock and Poultry – Zootechnia 2017 held in Thessaloniki, Greece. At the fair



farmers had an opportunity to get acquainted with new technologies applied in the livestock sector, and also the latest designs of farming machinery, equipment and input material. The goal of the visit was to exchange experience and ideas, to

demonstrate practical application of new techniques and technologies in agriculture, to extend and encourage their application in our country, to initiate cooperation and partnerships, as well as to replicate innovative production methods.



Activities Implemented by LAG Skardus



In the past period LAG Skardus successfully implemented the project Solar Dryer. The goal of the project was sustainable and useful management of natural resources by using solar energy. A solar dryer for fruits, vegetables, herbs and tea varieties was procured with capacity of 120 kg. The project was supported by AIRE and the Swiss Embassy.

On 23 March 2017, a presentation of the solar dryer and training on its use was carried out at the premises of the Municipality of Jegunovce, as



part of the final conference of the project of Expansion of Small Businesses. The event was covered by two local media. For more information, please visit:

<https://youtu.be/K9wCd3TjDQg>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YTgXEY38PE8>

LAG Skardus held its First Assembly on 25 May 2017, at the premises of the Municipality of Jegunovce. The assembly was attended by the LAG members and other interested supporters of the LAG.

Currently the LAG is implementing the project Renewable Energy – Ecological Product. The goal is sustainable and useful management of natural resources by using renewable energy. The project is supported by AIRE and the Swiss Embassy. The project duration is July to September 2017.

For more information on the work of LAG Skardus, please visit <https://www.facebook.com/lag-skardus/> <http://leaderjt.simple-site.com/>





The CeProSARD Team Successfully Completed the Polog Energy Net Project

As part of the activities implemented by CeProSARD in cooperation with the Centre for Development of the Polog Planning Region, a final event on the significance and the need for integrated energy planning in the Polog Planning Region was held in Gostivar on 26 May 2017 as part of the project Polog Energy Net.

Practical examples on energy efficiency included in the Guide on integrated energy management were presented at the event. Participants had an opportunity to visit the mobile laboratory Eco-Caravan. Ms. Nertila Dika promoted the significance of using renewable energy resources and implementation of energy efficiency in front of the participants at the event and representatives of the Regional Network on Integrated Energy Management (IEM).

PologEnergyNet project was implemented within the framework of the project on Strengthened Civil Or-



ganizations on Participative Transition and Implementation of the 2020 Energy and Climate Package, funded by the European Union, as a sub-grant by Milieucontact Macedonia, Front 21/42 and the Training Institute KOCKA.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X2WwdrdMrXQ>

<http://www.ceprosard.org.mk/MK/Aktuelnosti/info.aspx?cid=334>





Balkan Bazaar of Domestic Handicrafts

In the period from May 3rd to May 6th, 2017, at the Square Skender Beg in Skopje, the Balkan Bazaar of Domestic Handicrafts was organized by the association of artisans ARTI CRAFT from Skopje and the Municipality of Cair. Several stands were decorated with the artistic handicrafts made by artisans from the country and the region, which attracted numerous visitors.



Within the program, on May 5th a fashion show titled “Ethno Trend” was organized in which the fashion studio Ethno Beba from Kumanovo participated. Since its establishment in 2001, to date, Ethno Beba has grown into a leader in the production of contemporary clothes inspired by the Macedonian tradition and folklore.

“Recognizing the need to preserve the cultural heritage of Kumanovo,

with the very formation and experience, Ethno Beba, started learning, producing and presenting creative artistic handicrafts and souvenirs, which with their diversity reflect our culture, customs and have a long tradition in our region “- said Gordana Mitrovska Beba.

At the event was also presented the collection called “Golden Notes” by Dragana Stojkovic, from Uzice.





National Committee on Family Farming



CDI Tetovo has been implementing a project on establishing a National Committee on Family Farming, as part of its programme activities in cooperation with the Rural Development Network of RM and the Federation of Farmers of RM. The project is supported by the World Rural Forum and Civica Mobilitas.

Within the framework of the project a workshop was held on the inter-

nal structure of the NCF at Hotel Romantique – Veles between 14 and 16 March 2017. Participants at the workshop discussed two topics – organizational structure and channels of communication, and specifications of family farming and its role. Workshop results had been shared with the workshop participants followed by their adoption at the first NCFF assembly.

The RDN of RM carried out a survey



NCFFM

Within the framework of its program activities, the National Committee for Family Farming of the Republic of Macedonia (NCFFM), will organize four trainings in the course of September 2017 in order to strengthen the capacities of the persons and associations / organizations directly involved in the work of the family farms, or help them. More information on the following internet page:

www.ncffm.mk/aplikacija

on the state of family farming in RM. Findings were presented at the first NCFF assembly.

The FFRM organized a workshop on strategic planning in Skopje on 25 and 26 May 2017; at the workshop, SWOT and PEST analysis were made and strategic goals of the Committee were set.

The strategic plan was adopted at the First Committee Assembly held on 29 June 2017 at the Faculty of Agriculture and Food. Also a Declaration for establishing NCFF was also signed.

4 two day workshops have been planned for September open for all interested parties; applications are available on the internet page of the NCFE.

For more information on the project please visit

www.ncffm.mk





Skopje Travel Market 2017



The 7th International Tourism Fair **SKOPJE TRAVEL MARKET 2017** was organized by the Skopje Fair in cooperation with the Chamber of Tourism of RM and the Rural Development Network of RM. It was held in the period between 6 and 8 April 2017.

Several Local Action Groups as well as members of the Network working on preserving old crafts had an opportunity to present themselves,

alongside travelling agencies, tour-operators, hotels from Macedonia and companies producing hotel equipment. Participants used the event to promote their regions, the fair visitors, held meetings, made new contacts and partnerships with representatives of the business sector and local authorities.

Participation of stakeholders at the fair was supported by the ALTER Project – Active Local Territories for Economic Development in Rural



Areas, whose goal is to strengthen the capacities of civil organizations contributing to sustainable socio-economic development of rural areas in the Western Balkans and Turkey, for the purpose of active creation and implementation of policies to result in strong civil society in rural areas and increase of regional development by networking and co-operation.





Workshop for Preparation of BRDN's Strategy and Action Plan Held

From May 15th to May 17th, 2017, in Skopje, a workshop was organized for preparation of the Balkan Rural Development Network's 5 years' strategy and 2 years' Action Plan. Representatives of the rural development networks from Serbia, Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Albania, Kosovo and Macedonia, as members of the BRDN, were working jointly, to develop a strategic document and to envision the actions needed to achieve the strategic priorities.

The workshop was supported by We Effect as part of the activities implemented by the Rural Development Network of the Republic of Macedonia within the project "Support Balkan Rural Development Network - BRDN as a functional regional platform for cooperation of rural networks". The project's activities focus on capacity building of the Balkan Rural Development Network (BRDN), in order to increase sig-



nificantly the ability of its member organizations, which play a leading role in sustainable socio-economic development, to dialogue with Governments influencing policy, and decision-making processes in the rural areas. Capacity building actions for BRDN relates to internal governance, financial and project

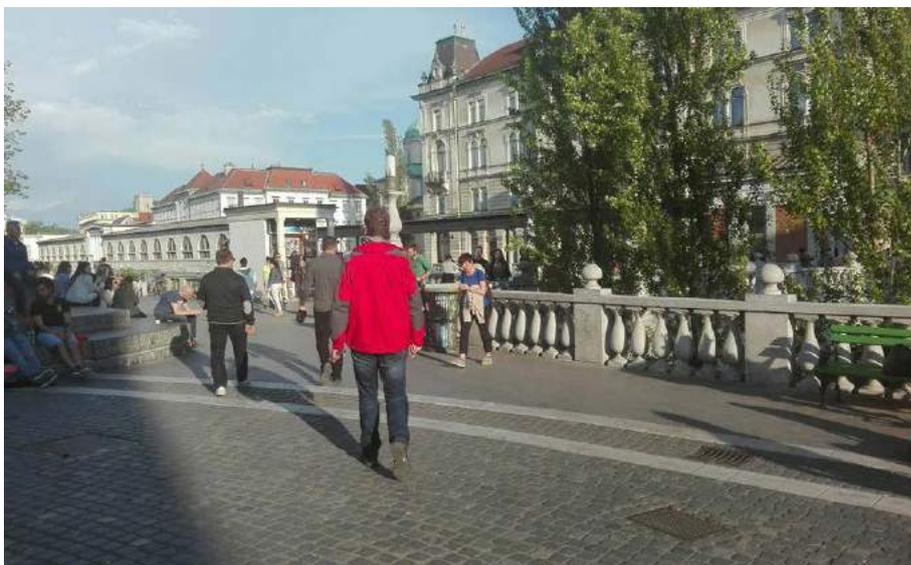
management, long-term planning, funding diversification and networking. Strong focus of the project is put on the support to rural women in the process of capacity building and inclusive networking as a basis for decreasing the negative influence of the disadvantages arising in the rural areas.





38th SWG Assembly Session and Meeting of the Rural Development Networks From South Eastern Europe

The rural development networks from the Republic of Macedonia, Serbia, Croatia, Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Albania and Kosovo, as members of the Balkan Rural Development Network, were invited by the Regional Rural Development Standing Working Group in South Eastern Europe – SWG, to participate on the 38th SWG Assembly Session, held in the period 09th – 12th April 2017 in Ljubljana, Slovenia. The Assembly was organized with support from the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food of Slovenia.



At the Assembly, the BRDN members had an opportunity to present their networks and the Balkan Rural Development Network in front of the SWG delegates. Within the event, BRDN had its own meeting where current and planned activities were discussed. The representative of the Rural Development Net-

work of the Republic of Macedonia presented the project “Support Balkan Rural Development Network - BRDN as a functional regional platform for cooperation of rural networks in the Western Balkans, funded by We Effect and announced the upcoming strategic planning workshop.



LEADER/CLLD Gathering: “Role of Bottom-up Approach Renewing ESI Funds for 2021-2027”



CLLD, as well to address the necessity of the rural stakeholders in Macedonia for greater practical knowledge and support in developing the capacities for implementing LEADER approach.

Approximately 50 participants attended the gathering, representing Local Action Groups (LAGs) and LEADER networks, members of the European Parliament, the European Commission, the ENRD, cooperation partners across Europe, etc



The Rural Development Network of the Republic of Macedonia, as member of ELARD - European Leader Association for Rural Development, participated at the LEADER/CLLD gathering: “Role of bottom-up approach renewing ESI Funds for 2021-2027”, held on 31st May in Brussels.

The main topic of the gathering was the renewal of rural development policy for the 2021-2027 programming period, while the panel discussion was focused on strengthening the bottom-up approach and local level participation. The gathering was great opportunity for RDN's representative to learn from the European countries' experience in implementation of LEADER and

Organizers:



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