

STATEMENT FROM THE EUROPEAN RURAL PARLIAMENT

Brussels, November 13, 2013

A people's vision for rural Europe

We, the participants of the first European Rural Parliament, present the following.

The delegates to the European Rural Parliament were drawn from 30 countries and over 70 rural organisations. The European Rural Parliament represents rural communities across Europe to promote the rural social agenda. Ours is ***"A people's vision for rural Europe"***

It is our aim to achieve a more ambitious approach to integrated rural development in our rural communities. The approach we promote is multi-sectoral, place-based and locally focussed and based on participation and partnership. We also enable rural people and organisations to play a leading role in this process

All Europe shall live!

Our rural areas and people are a precious resource for the whole of Europe. This resource is not just the land and natural resources contained in rural areas, but the experience, skills, rich culture, diversity and capacity of our rural people and communities. This is the spirit of Europe. But, rural people face many special challenges in sustaining themselves into the future. These challenges vary from place to place and over time, but fundamental to them are the issues of sustaining small and often isolated populations, combatting the pressures of centralisation, urbanisation, out-migration and maintaining competitive employment and servicing. The 2013 European Rural Parliament addressed these and other issues, the main outputs of which are contained in the appendix.

We wish to emphasise that we highly welcome the fact that LEADER is preserved in Rural Development, and that the option is in place for member states to use Community Led Local Development. However, we are deeply disappointed about the decision of European institutions to severely cut into the Rural Development budget and to allow member states to move substantial funds from Pillar 2 to Pillar 1, direct payments.

A working partnership for the future

The work of addressing the sustainability of our rural communities can only be undertaken through vital local democracies and a strong partnership and between those who make policy affecting our rural areas, and those who live and work within them.

We are calling on policy makers at European, national and regional levels to join us in a functional partnership, and to enter into dialogue with us to enable our rural communities to live and thrive across Europe!