



ROAD Report - Main theme event: Communities, NGO's, small enterprises and farms as partners in Local economies

Participation: The event involved **45** citizens, including **34** participants from **Slovenia**, **3** participants from **Hungary**, **2** participants from **Slovakia**, **1** participant from **Finland**, **1** participant from **Czech Republic**, **1** participant from **Montenegro**, **1** participant from **Latvia**, **1** participant from **Poland**, **1** participant from **Croatia**.

Location / Dates: The event took place in **Janževina, Janški vrh, Slovenia**, on **08/10/2019**.

Short description: The aim of the event was International conference on LOCAL ECONOMIES. We started with the three presentations, including Rural stakeholders and their needs, Local partnerships responding to the needs, Manifestations of the local economies, Survey (ROAD – Civitas Romania). In the second part of the conference the participants formed smaller groups and worked in different topics. Conclusion debate was held in plenary session.

Main suggestions or policies:

General conclusions:

- Rural stakeholders are responsible to find the consensus/equilibrium while sharing the rural space with different groups of interest
- State supported programmes and alternative movements should build more intensive (Top-down : Bottom-up) exchange and cooperation
- Areas where different stakeholders, state, local communities and civil society co-operate, are in prosperity trends, rising the life-quality of majority

For CLLD - to be implemented well in the next programming period, we have to simplify the program. The following objectives must be achieved:

- Participation of all four EU funds
- Combine CLLD management into one governing body
- Establish one joint paying authority
- Uniform rules for all funds included in the CLLD
- Simplify the implementation of the CLLD program

Sub-event. CIVITAS Romania. Research on Cooperation in Local Economies

Participation: The event involved **66** citizens, including **62%** from **Romania**, **8%** from **Latvia**, **6%** from **Armenia**, **Belarus (5%)** and **Bulgaria (3%)**. The remaining **17%** of the people questioned were in equal share from **Finland**, **Sweden**, **Denmark**, **Belgium**, **Italy**, **Lithuania**, **Serbia**, **Albania** and **Greece**.

Location / Dates: The survey took place via internet from **01/06/2019** to **07/10/2019**.

Short description: The aim of the event was **Research/survey on Cooperation in Local Economies**.

Main suggestions or policies:

Based on the analysis of the questionnaire answered by 66 respondents, the following main conclusions can be determined:

- the level of local economic cooperation is influenced by economic, social and organizational factors that foster or discourage socioeconomic cooperation in rural areas;
- according to the analysis the most popular entities or possibilities that enable cooperative actions are partnerships projects and the Local Action Groups;
- from an economic perspective the most significant factors that motivate various actors to join common initiatives are the easier access to financial resources (when making part of a partnership) and the extended possibilities to distribute the created products or services, consequently to create a larger customer base;

- from an infrastructural perspective the access to public services such as electricity, water, internet was pointed as being imperative necessity to successful operation of joint ventures;
- next to this, from a human resource perspective the access to local knowledge was also considered important motivational aspect. The conducive factors that drive various stakeholders to get involved in collaborative action are the creation of diverse employment possibilities and the creation/use of local products/services;
- regarding the attitude towards competitors, there was a large compliance with the benefit of sustaining collaborative relationship with these, as there was a common agreement on the statement that competition instigates earlier achievement. Nevertheless, there was a mutual and wide uncertainty regarding the threatening nature of competitors;
- when considering to take up innovative approaches the greatest partners to appeal to were considered to be the Local Action Groups, universities and NGOs. The latter ones were also seen as helpful sources of information together with the local public institutions yet, the internet was pointed to be the main source of information for everyday professional decisions;
- the main sources of funding for common initiatives are the non-refundable funds from EU, own funds and non-refundable funds from other sources such as private foundations for example;
- the greatest economic contribution of joint initiatives on an entity was the possibility to get better access to projects/investments and the support in diversifying the business activities on the local market;
- the greatest economic contribution of a partnership to the rural areas is through offering increased access to education and training possibilities, increasing the quality of local products and services, offering wider employment opportunities and also bringing more financial resources;
- in general, as social and organizational drivers to collaborative action are considered to be: the possibility for more frequent communication with the partner organizations and the chance to strengthen personal and professional connections not only at local but also regional level;
- by joining a partnership, there is greater opportunity to learn about the partner's behavior in certain situations, trustworthiness and also to gain more information about the local environment through the joint actions. On the other hand, the reduction of stress and workload does not seem to be a strong motivational factor to join a partnership;
- when creating a partnership in rural areas the greatest demographic challenges are the lack of skilled human workforce and the ageing population;
- from an operational perspective, the level of management capabilities, of interaction, communication but also the level of trust and consideration of ideas are seen to be good or very good. Greater improvements are required in terms of ownership and the involvement of the community in the decision-making process. Further on, relationships are also believed to have a prevalent influence when it comes to decisions;
- Local Action Groups and NGOs are considered to be the most significant actors in the creation of partnerships;
- from a social and operational perspective, joining common initiatives increases the level of mutual respect between partners, improves communication between the associates and strengthens connections and relationships. Partnerships also support a better image creation and in most cases are seen to contribute to a better promotion of the local culture, yet not sufficiently;
- most effective elements that facilitate a better functioning of partnerships are the organization of events and availability of information on legal framework;
- in general, the available ventures for conferences/meetings are considered to be of high quality nevertheless, business centres are believed to demand more improvements;
- in general, the main barriers in the creation of healthy and effective cooperation are considered to be the following: lack of financial resources, lack of strategic planning, lack of communication and lack of cooperative mindset; the greatest distribution of opinions was related to the level of nepotism and corruption and the influence of political orientation;
- the survey offers evidence on the fact that cooperation works quite well within NGOs and LAGs and there are good opportunities in the local economies of rural areas for interaction and for joint initiatives;

Events supporting ROAD. 5th Slovenian Rural Parliament, organized by the Slovenian Rural Development Network (Društvo za razvoj slovenskega podeželja).

Participation: The event involved **359** citizens, including **342** participants from **Slovenia**,

3 participants from **Hungary**, **2** participants from **Slovakia**, **1** participant from **Finland**, **1** participant from **Czech Republic**, **1** participant from **Montenegro**, **1** participant from **Latvia**, **1** participant from **Poland**, **1** participant from **Croatia**, **2** participants from **France**, **1** participant from **Germany**, **1** participant from **Denmark**, **1** participant from **Belgium**, **1** participant from **United Kingdom**.

Location / Dates: The event took place in **Moškanjci, Slovenia**, on **09/10/2019**.

Short description: The aim of the event was 5th Slovenian Rural Parliament – to raise the voice of rural people.

Main suggestions or policies:

5th Slovenian Rural Parliament gathered more than 350 participants from 18 countries. In the first part general introductions were made by the European Commission, by the Slovenian Government (Minister of Agriculture) and Slovenian Parliament (Chairman of National Parliament). Hosts and representative from the European Rural Parliament also gave few ideas about the future of the rural areas. Organizer of the 5th SRP Slovenian Rural Development Network introduced the contents. Reports from 9 working groups followed with elaborated conclusions in the following topics:

- 1.Support to the sustainable farm incomes
- 2.Strengthening of marketing and increasing the competitiveness
- 3.Value chains
- 4.Climate change and efficient resource management
- 5.Biodiversity
- 6.Young and new farmers
- 7.Social inclusion, local development of rural areas (LEADER/CLLD) and local economies
- 8.Food quality, health and animal welfare
- 9.Knowledge transfer, innovations and digitisation in agriculture

More at the www.drustvo-podezelje.si.

All suggestions from the reports and from the final plenary debate were taken by the Ministry of Agriculture and noted from the representative from the European Commission. Slovenian Government promised to incorporate the suggestions into the future policy measures.