



# PREPARE NETWORK

the voice from civil society

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# Overview

- ▶ About PREPARE Network
  - Activities
  - involvement
- ▶ Basic terms about networking in rural development



# PREPARE PARTNERSHIP

The PREPARE partnership is a group of European and national non-government umbrella organizations. The partnership was created in 1999, and has expanded as new national rural movements have joined



# PREPARE – Partnership for Rural Europe

- ▶ National networks for rural development in 10 EU member states: Sweden, Finland, Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia, Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary and Slovenia and in one EU candidate country: Croatia
- ▶ Two EU-level NGOs: ECOVAST, Forum Synergies
- ▶ Recent focus: South Eastern Europe, Ukraine, Belarus and Turkey



# PREPARE involvement in:

- ▶ Coordination Committee of the European Network for Rural Development
  - ▶ European Leader Sub-committee
  - ▶ Advisory Group for Rural Development at the European Commission
  - ▶ Thematic working groups of the ENRD
  - ▶ European Rural Association – ERA
  - ▶ European Rural Communities Association – ERCA
  - ▶ Convention for Sustainable Urban and Rural Europe – CURE
  - ▶ Agricultural and Rural Convention – ARC
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# PREPARE activities (1)

- ▶ Multi-national activities (e.g. Annual Gatherings):
  - 2003 Slovakia (Pocuvadlo)
  - 2004 Bulgaria (Chiflik)
  - 2005 Lithuania (Birstonas)
  - 2006 Czech Republic (Velehrad)
  - 2007 Poland (Przemysl)
  - 2009 Slovenia and Croatia
  - 2010 Macedonia – FYROM (Ohrid)
- ▶ The Gatherings are preceded by „Travelling Workshops” – field visits (exchange by practitioners)



# PREPARE activities (2)

- ▶ Support to strengthening civil society in specific countries (e.g. South–Eastern Europe, Ukraine, Belarus, Turkey)
- ▶ Support to PREPARE partner organisations and the new national networks (capacity building – small scale, flexible projects e.g. study visits, national meetings)
- ▶ Networking (website, newsletter)



# PREPARE activities (3)

- ▶ PREPARE Scholarships – trainee exchange programme financed by Fondation de France
- ▶ Cooperation with the European Commission (membership in the official advisory bodies) and national governments
- ▶ Cooperation with other European networks (ERA, ERCA, ELARD)





# Inspiring joint action

- ▶ TEPA – Training of European Partnership Animators (to develop training programme and materials, network, pilot trainings)
  - a joint project by Czech, Hungarian, Polish, Slovakian and Slovenian partners, Swedish partner as evaluator
  - financed by Socrates–Grundtvig
  - implemented Oct. 2006 – Oct. 2008
- ▶ The Rural Voice



# Transnational exchange about Rural Parliaments

- ▶ Aim of PREPARE is to strengthen civil society and promote transnational cooperation in rural development
  - useful exchange of know-how
  - encouraging new countries to apply new methods of democracy
  - raising the voice of civil society from rural areas
  - intensifying exchange among member organisations



# Why is civil society important in rural development?

- ▶ Trends in most new Member States: transformation of agriculture and industry (loss of jobs), lack of opportunities, depopulation of many rural areas
- ▶ Failure of traditional „mainstream” policies (agricultural support, infrastructure schemes)
- ▶ New approach – territorial, integrated, bottom–up, partnership–based (e.g. Leader) – e.g. OECD „new paradigm” of rural development



# New approach to rural development

- ▶ Territorial – aid addressed to territory, not to individual projects
- ▶ Need for partnership (involving three sectors: public, private and NGO)
- ▶ Integrated approach – linking various aspects (agriculture, SME development, environment, social policy, education, health etc.)
- ▶ Bottom–up – the initiative lies with the local people



# Rural civil society

- ▶ Traditionally very strong in „direct democracy” countries such as Sweden, Finland
- ▶ Emerging and getting stronger in new EU member states
- ▶ Not limited to NGOs – also informal groups, citizens’ groups
- ▶ Often organised at national level



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