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Balkan Rural Development Network

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MEMBERS OF THE BALKAN RURAL DEVELOPMENT NETWORK

MRRBiH
Mreža za ruralni razvoj u Bosni i Hercegovini

NETWORK FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT OF MONTENEGRO

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HRVATSKA MREŽA ZA RURALNI RAZVOJ

NETWORK FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SERBIA

RURAL DEVELOPMENT NETWORK OF KOSOVO

RURAL DEVELOPMENT NETWORK OF THE REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA

ANRD

Balkan Rural Development Network officially established!

Since its informal establishment in March 2011, the Balkan Rural Development Network – BRDN, with the joint efforts of its members, has started to become recognizable among many relevant international organizations and public institutions, at regional but also at EU level, as a potential leading actor in the rural development in the Western Balkan region. The BRDN members have worked hard during the past 8 years and dedicated a lot of their time and energy to lay solid pillars, upon which they can build eminent figure among all rural stakeholders in the region and wider. With formalization of BRDN, they are now moving a step forward towards becoming a stronger social asset for the Balkan rural communities that will significantly contribute to development of sustainable rural areas in the region. The founding assembly of BRDN was held in Skopje, on December 6th, when the rural development networks of North Macedonia, Montenegro, Kosovo, Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, signed the registration documents as founders of the Network. The other two BRDN partners, the rural development networks of Serbia and Albania are joining later as full-fledged members. This way BRDN will continue to represent more than 200 rural development associations from the region and

will advocate for the interests of more than 9 million rural people from the Western Balkan countries: Albania, Bosnia, Croatia, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia.

"I expect that BRDN will prove to be a social asset for the Balkan rural communities, that will be able to utilise the opportunities and strengths of today, in order to annul the challenges of tomorrow and contribute to innovative and sustainable solutions to the current and future social and rural development issues," said Petar Gjorgievski, the newly elected President of the Balkan Rural Development Network - BRDN.

Matija Zamljacanec, as representative of the Croatian Network for Rural Development, was elected for Vice President of BRDN with mandate of 3 years. The founders unanimously adopted the BRDN Statute and 4 years strategy that they jointly developed. Thanks to the support of the Swedish development organization We Effect in the past 2 years, BRDN managed to lay dawn firm basis of the organization and prepare all crucial documents that give directions and goals in the future work.

Balkan Rural Development Network

BRDN Gender Equality and Communication Policy Prepared

The members of the Gender Equality Hub of BRDN gathered in Skopje for a two-day workshop, on September 19th and 20th, where they learned how to identify gender roles and needs, as well as to use practically the gender analysis tools. This helped them in the preparation of the Gender Equality and Communication Policy, which shall support the achievement of equality between women and men to ensure sustainable rural development.

This policy expresses the commitment of the BDRN to promote gender equality in all segments of its operations, from the organizational structure of the network and its members to the planning and implementation of operational activities. The policy outlines the Network and its members' direction for gender mainstreaming in all activities, including efforts to analyze and address the specific needs and roles of women and men, appropriate for each intervention.

The Gender Equality and Communication Policy is offering an introduction of basic steps for involvement of Gender sensitive communication in the work of BDRN as well as designed two-years Action plan of the BRDN's Gender Equality Hub.

Balkan Rural Development Network

4th European Rural Parliament and 2nd European Rural Youth Parliament (ERYP) held in Spain

In the period from 6th to 9th November, 2019, a total of 335 delegates representing 38 European countries, including rural people, representatives of civil society organizations, researchers, national governments and institutions of the European Union, gathered in the village of Candás, Asturias region in Spain, for the 4th European Rural Parliament. This event calls for "a truly attuned rural agenda" between civil society and the political organizations that design policies, where "inclusive cooperation and partnership at all levels are combined to ensure that rural Europe thrives". 5 representatives of the RDN of NM participated at the event and discussed with other rural actors on different topics concerning rural development in European countries, contributing with suggestions and proposals regarding the rural policies to be addressed through the Candás Declaration. The Declaration gathers together the demands of the European rural population and will be taken to Brussels in January 2020 to be presented to the EU institutions together with the Candás Manifesto.

This Declaration also includes the ten calls to action identified by the 66 young participants from 15 countries of the 2nd European Rural Youth Parliament (ERYP), which was previously held in Candás, between 4th and 6th November.

This Declaration, endorsed and signed in the third plenary of the ERP held on November 9th, gathers together the debates on which work was carried out throughout the week, both in the Youth Parliament and in the subsequent one, on the current trends posed by the challenges faced by the European rural population. Questions such as what is the political and economic price to pay for departures, exodus and growing populism, are national governments and the EU too attached to thinking about growth combined with a dominant urban Agenda, is sectoral thinking, programming, management and financing the best solution for rural communities and the economy, are these demands based on.

During the exhibition organized within ERP, the Balkan Rural Development Network presented its goals and efforts towards improvement of the Balkan rural areas, as well as the activities implemented towards organizational development supported by the Swedish development organization We Effect.

Rural Development Network of North Macedonia

RURAL DEVELOPMENT NETWORK
OF NORTH MACEDONIA

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Annual Assembly of the Rural Development Network of North Macedonia held

The Annual Assembly of the Rural Development Network of North Macedonia was held in Dojran on September 3. Some of the most active members of the RDN attending were informed about current and planned activities and initiatives of the Network focused on strengthening its capacities and improving its influence in the processes of rural development at national and international level. Activities were presented for institutional development of the RDN and for develop-

ment of the capacities of the Balkan Rural Development Network supported by the Swedish Development Organization We Effect, as well as the project Networking and Advocating for Green Economy, funded by the European Union.

One of the most significant events this year was the first National Rural Parliament in the country, held between 12 and 14 June 2019, as a final event to the project National Rural Parliament as a Voice to the Rural Population, supported by the EU.

A discussion was initiated by the coordinator of the LEADER thematic group of the Rural Development Network, about LEADER as an efficient tool for development of rural areas and a topic of specific interest to the RDN members.

The Study Circle as a method for learning that exists for more than a 100 years and is particularly developed in Scandinavian countries, was presented at the Annual Assembly in order to encourage associations to think about opportunities and advantages of its application in rural areas.

Members attending were active in discussions and expressed great interest to get involved in future activities of the Network and to contribute to achieving the goals of the Network.

BRDN Members at the International Day of Rural Women Celebration in North Macedonia

13 representatives of BRDN member networks, participated at the event in North Macedonia organized on the occasion of the International Day of Rural Women, celebrated each year on October 15th.

This year's celebration of October 15 - International Day of Rural Women was a continuation of last year's event and an opportunity to review the cooperation between the institutions and NGOs, as well as to see the results of the Declaration on Improving the Economic and Social Position of Rural Women which was signed by the National Federation of Farmers - NFF, the Rural Development Network of North Macedonia – RDN of NM, the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy and the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy.

The event also hosted a public discussion on the theme "Ownership of Agricultural Land and Property - Challenge for the Rural Woman". Within the discussion, Marijana Jovovic, as representative of the Rural Development Network of the Republic of Montenegro, shared information about the current and former situation of the rural women in Montenegro, which is similar to the other Balkan countries. Only 12.9% of holders of family farms in Montenegro are women and 3% of women own agricultural property.

"We know that in the Republic of North Macedonia there are facilities for rural women applying to existing measures to support agriculture and rural development through the national program for rural development and IPARD, but I consider it necessary to increase the stimulation of women entrepreneurs and to support women who would be future carriers of projects by providing more information, encouraging, giving business ideas and providing business connections through various ways of networking." said Petar Gjorgievski, the President of the Rural Development Network of North Macedonia.

The event is organized annually by the Rural Development Network of North Macedonia and the National Federation of Farmers. This year the event was supported by the Swedish development organization We Effect and was visited by approximately 200 representatives of government institutions, civil society organizations from the country and the Balkans, and other rural stakeholders.

Albanian Network for Rural Development

ANRD
ALBANIAN NETWORK FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT
RRJETI SHQIPTAR PËR ZHVILLIMIN RURAL

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Three traveling workshops

Three traveling workshops[1] (two to three days activities) were organized after a one-year effort of the ANRD toward stakeholders engagement at all levels. All this serves to address the need for a more functional ANRD organization at local level, as well as the creation of a nationwide, inclusive and bottom-up platform of rural development. As a result, the ANRD has established and is making continuous effort to consolidate four regional forums - Drini, Arber, Vjosa and Egnatia. These forums are broad public-private partnerships conceived as interaction and consultation spaces between stakeholders to exchange information, transfer knowledge and build capacities in sustainable agriculture and rural development. The establishment of the four forums reflects the ongoing efforts of the ANRD to influence the rural agenda and at the same time to strengthen the capacities of various actors regarding the country's integration processes and reforms toward alignment with EU rural development policy.

[1] The three travelling workshops were organized in the frame of 'Consolidating the role of Albanian Network for Rural Development toward a functional model of bottom-up and participatory perspective in national rural agenda' project, supported by the European Union and implemented by ANRD member organizations - Institute for Democracy and Mediation, AGRINET and AGROPuka.

First travelling workshop 'Partnerships for sustainable rural development' organized on July 18-19, integrated travelling with the workshop and aimed at building of partnerships between civil society organizations and public institutions, as well as increasing their participation in decision-making processes for the wellbeing of residents in rural areas of Albania. Nearly 20 participants which represented various actors of rural development joined this activity. The travelling enabled meaningful knowing of rural realities, opportunities to meet new people, to listen and talk to each other. *To know more about our Travelling Workshop, please read the full report in English.* https://anrd.al/anrd-events/inside-the-travelling-workshop-partnerships-for-sustainable-rural-development-18-19-of-july-2019/

Second travelling workshop along the wine and olive route, organized from 14-15 November, landed a fresh perspective to facts, ideas, realities and characters that often go unnoticed, even though they are always striving to be evidenced in their daily endeavors towards development and prosperity. The workshop took participants through the rural area of Central Albania (Tirana-Durres region), traditionally known for soft hillside landscapes, lined with vineyards and olive groves, for diverse agricultural and livestock production, rich tradition, culture and human capital but at the same time a territory where the countryside collides strongly with aggressive urban development that threatens the balances and sustainability of the area's future.

The target area was intentionally selected as it provides the ideal sub region (based on its cohesive development potential) for a LEADER Local Action Group. We hope such a workshop would stimulate the process of LAG creation for the whole area in the near future.

The third travelling workshop 'The reality of youth in rural areas amidst challenges and aspirations for the future' was organized from 12-14 of December 2019. A group of 20 young people enthusiastic about rural development have marked the beginning of the rural youth movement in Albania. Participants engaged in a dynamic three-day program tried to answer the following questions: What is the reality, needs and challenges of young Albanians? What are their aspirations? How can rural policies respond to their perspective? What can youth do to influence processes and reforms to improve their livelihoods and rural future?

Walking through the stations of the travelling workshop the young people unveiled interesting answers for the above questions, lively engaging in discussions and identifying solutions, new ways of networking, advocating and participation in the decision making.

The main output of the activity is a Youth Resolution on the rural youth priorities and aspirations toward sustainable livehood in rural Albanian communities.

More information can be found here: https://anrd.al/news/launching-anrd-youth-hub-through-travelling-workshop/

Youth rural movement in Albania kicks off - ANRD has launched the Rural Youth Hub. The hub involves rural young people, enthusiasts, students, entrepreneurs, farmers who are enthusiast and motivated to play an active role and contribute to rural development processes and decision-making. The hub will enable rural youth to exercise their 'voice' and influence rural decision-making, to make such processes youth oriented and closely linked with the current needs and interests of rural youth. It is important to understand the current situation of rural youth (needs and priorities) and their aspirations and dreams (future vision) for their rural communities. To do this, we need to take up a radically new view of rural reality – to see the rural world from youth perspective.

"We decided to stop writing unfinished letters," said one young rural enthusiasts on the creation of the ANRD Youth Hub.

First Edition of Pro Rural Women

An opportunity to recognize the important role and contribution of rural women in agriculture and rural development and revitalize joint efforts to improve the situation through pro-rural women policies

On the occasion of the International Day of Rural Women, the Albanian Network for Rural Development (ANRD) with the support of three member organizations - Institute for Democracy and Mediation (IDM), AGROPUKA and AGRINET – organized the first edition of the 'Pro Rural Women' event to raise awareness on the International Day of Rural Women and at the same time to draw public attention to sustainable support in addressing the challenges facing rural women in our country.

About 150 women and girls from rural areas of the country gathered at the First Edition of the 'Pro Rural Women' organized on October 15, in Tirana. Next year, 'Pro Rural Women' with the intention to become an annual tradition, will travel to the municipality that is rated as 'Pro Rural Women Municipality' for the respective year.

Rural women were invited at the panel to voice their challenges, needs and aspirations. The platform of the **2nd Rural Albanian Parliament**, planned to be held in the spring of 2020, was presented at the event. This nationwide platform will integrate a gender perspective into its program to mobilize political will and support to empower rural women and girls.

More information could be found here: https://anrd.al/anrd-events/first-edition-of-pro-rural-women-15-october-2019/

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