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Balkan Rural Development Network Newsletter No.9

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Emerging Europe Award for the 2nd Balkan Rural Parliament

The 2nd Balkan Rural Parliament organized by BRDN, during June 2021, in Ohrid, N. Macedonia, was short-listed by the Emerging Europe Awards for the People-first Economy Initiative category.

At the Future of Emerging Europe Summit, organized in Brussels, on June 23rd, BRDN received a certificate of recognition (third place award) as an acknowledgment for strengthening regional cooperation and contributing to the representation of communities in policymaking for rural development.

During their visit in Brussels, the BRDN President and representatives of the BRDN Secretariat, met with representatives from relevant organizations and institutions including ENRD – European Network for Rural Development, DG AGRI Unit D.1 "Rural areas and Networks" and CIVEX — Commission for Citizenship, Governance, Institutional and External Affairs, European Committee of the Regions.

During the meetings, we discussed, exchanged ideas, presented BRDN's work in the Western Balkan region, and discovered opportunities for establishing partnerships and cooperation at the EU level.

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Enhanced knowledge of the BRDN members on the EU CAP

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For the Western Balkan countries, rural development and agriculture (as a major part of rural development) are important priorities in the European Union accession process. To increase the contribution of the BRDN members in this process, BRDN organized training on the EU's common agricultural policy (CAP). This policy, representing a partnership between agriculture and society, and between Europe and its farmers, is of high relevance for BRDN's work in agriculture and rural development in the Western Balkans.

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Community action for accelerating the development of Uma Village

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On June 3, 2022, in Uma village, Municipality of Gevgelija, an event for celebrating the completion of the first community action in Uma village was organized by USAID's Community Development Program, implemented by the Rural Development Network of North Macedonia, in partnership with Local Action Group (LAG) Bojmija.

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Networking opportunities for members of the Rural Development Network of North Macedonia

The Rural Development Network of North Macedonia hosted a two-day event for networking of members and a presentation of the Network's sustainable business model in Struga on June 8 and 9. Around 30 representatives of civil society organizations took part in a fair for civil society organizations and the presentation. The event was organized within the project "Organizational development of RDN and development of sustainable models for food security in local communities" supported by the Swedish organization for development We Effect.

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Kick-off of new cross-border project IDEAS: "Innovation, Development, and Employment in the Agri-food Sector"

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A new cross-border project IDEAS: "Innovation, Development, and Employment in the Agri-food Sector" kicked off in June. The Rural Development Network of North Macedonia, together with the Foundation for Local & IT Development - Gevgelija and American Farm School from Greece, is part of the implementation.

The overall objective of the project is to identify, support and kick-start new businesses in the agri-food sector that have innovative potential and who can become multipliers of the advantages of the region. Based on the identified needs and priorities IDEAS will focus on Smart Agriculture in both countries and Food Health and Safety in the Republic of North Macedonia. The project is financed and supported by Interreg IPA CBC Programme "Greece - Republic of North Macedonia" 2014-2020.

Launch of a new project National Strategy for Food Security

The new project Preparation of a National Strategy for Food Security was launched on June 30 at an event in the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management in Skopje, where Minister Ljupco Nikolovski gave remarks.

The project is supported by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), while the Rural Development Network of North Macedonia will participate in the implementation. The project's main goal is the preparation of a National Strategy for Food Security by establishing an inter-institutional coordination mechanism.

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