

ROUND TABLE DISCUSSION TALLINN

Title: *Effectiveness and Sustainability of Innovative and Good Practice in Rural Area Development*

Rationale: Recently the European Parliament released a policy study titled “How to Improve the Sustainable Competitiveness and Innovation of the EU Agricultural Sector”. The study reviews the extent to which the current CAP and related EU policies promote sustainable competitiveness and innovation in agriculture, and assesses the current legislative proposals for CAP reform. It finds that the current policy does not realise its potential and that, although the reform package represents an improvement, particularly in its proposals for Pillar 2, more could usefully be done. Recommendations are made to strengthen the balance of the package and improve proposals for each pillar of the CAP. Key ingredients include better advice, knowledge transfer, more use of locally tailored, strategically planned measure-packages, fuller sustainability-proofing and new incentives for innovation.

The document aims to orientate and influence the policy in the next period.

Among the outlined key policy implications are:

- Greater clarity on the definitions of sustainable competitiveness and innovation are needed to ensure these terms are clearly understood by all those involved in CAP policy development and implementation;
- Guidance and funding need to foster much more active and interactive kinds of network behaviour, in respect of the National Rural Networks (NRN), the European Network for Rural Development (ENRD) and the new innovation partnerships. New innovation networks could also be promoted for whole territories and sectors, both within and between Member States, to increase the diffusion of learning from successful examples in specific places and contexts.

The EP concludes that in order to promote sustainable competitiveness and innovation in European agriculture, there is a need for the CAP to do more to:

- highlight the importance of knowledge and capacity building at regional, national and supra-national levels, among all beneficiaries and stakeholders;





- stimulate directly the development and adoption of mechanisms to encourage collaborative working, especially at the territorial and issue- or sector-specific levels (where concerted effort between actors will produce the greatest results);
- increase the use of LEADER-style, strategic, multi-objective and partnership-based planning and delivery mechanisms within the framework.

Objective: To contribute to the policy-oriented discourse on Pillar 2 of the CAP – Rural Development Policy

Justification of the topic: Innovation is understood as the process that adds value or solves a problem in new ways and seen in the development of improved cost-effective ways to address problems and opportunities faced by rural communities.

Pillar 2 of the CAP in the next program period is envisaged as the facilitator, enabler and promoter of innovation in rural areas.

The most important innovations are those that:

- Change the way small holders and other rural people invest, produce and market their products and manage their assets;
- Help rural people get organised, communicate and interact with partners;
- Influence policies and institutions.

The discussion will search to establish what innovative and good practice in the Estonian rural areas have proven effective and sustainable or have the potential to generate endogenous growth and can therefore be reproduced and multiplied through knowledge and partnership networks.

Each session will start with a 10 to 15 minutes key-note presentation.

