

# ERCA NEWSLETTER 1/2011

The European Rural Community Association is the network for national and regional rural and village movements

## First outlines for a German village movement

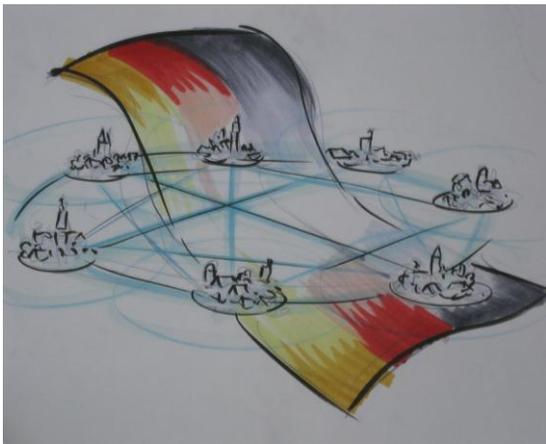


Illustration by Heyko Stöber.

This conference was an important achievement. In May, ERCA, in co-operation with the Rosa-Luxemburg-Foundation, organised an International Village Conference in Berlin. The theme was "Villages in Action" - The Power of Rural Communities and of the Village Movements. 220 village actors, representatives of NGOs, scientists and politicians took part, among them about 40 participants from 15 European countries. ERCA played an important role the

conference, with 5 of the 8 plenary speeches by ERCA board members.

The conference aimed to bring to the attention of people in Germany the work of the European village movements in order to discuss how these experiences could be of use in Germany. Following discussions, including with 3 German Members of Parliament, on the purpose and possibilities of a village movement in Germany, a group was established to examine how a national village movement might be established, under the special structure of a federal state.

There was agreement to repeat a similar conference in 2013, possibly in the format of a "Rural Parliament" or "Parliament of Villages". This may be organised by actors of two or three of the German "Bundesländer" (Federal States), in order to analyse and discuss how villages, regions and federal states could be involved in networking and in joining a village movement. The full report of the International Village Conference will be available from the beginning of November 2011 at: <http://www.rosalux.de/event/43471/international-e-dorfkonferenz-2011.html>

## European networks increase cooperation

ERCA has initiated a process to increase co-operation between the three rural networks ERCA (European Rural Community Association), ERA (European Rural Alliance) and PREPARE (Partnership for Rural Europe). Given the considerable common interest, membership and purpose of these networks, it was felt that stronger links would be of benefit to all.

Most importantly it would help to streamline and increase the services they deliver for the rural communities of Europe. The first co-operation meeting will take place the 11<sup>th</sup> of November, 2011 in The Hague, Netherlands.

## Dutch Rural Parliament takes over national parliament

The fourth Dutch Rural Parliament will take place in the Houses of Parliament in Hague at the 12<sup>th</sup> of November this year. Why there? The first three were held in the countryside. Now we go the Parliament itself to tell what is going on. The advantages are: more direct contact with the politicians and their work in the Parliament; more attention by the press and other media; convenient: a lot of services will be offered to support this Rural Parliament for more results.

The theme will not differ much from the last Rural Parliament, but another approach will be used. Three commissions consisting of “experienced

villagers”, scientists and experts will publish their reports about the declining number of inhabitants in many parts of the countryside, the sustainable villages producing their own energy, participation and civilian initiative.

During the Rural Parliament the reports will be discussed by the participants. In a meeting politicians will give their opinions, conclusions and proposals. By a letter to the Chairwoman of the Parliament the reports, remarks and suggestions will afterwards be offered to the Dutch Parliament.



### Book release in Estonia

The ninth Estonian Rural Parliament took place the 3-7 of August 2011. The theme was “Back to the Countryside”. For the international guests the event started with a two days study trip. The conference dealt with the CAP reform. Representatives from ERCA member countries shared their experiences in organising Rural Parliaments, and a handbook on Rural Parliaments of village movements was presented and launched by PREPARE.



### ERCA's website running

Visit ERCA's brand new website at [www.ruralcommunities.eu](http://www.ruralcommunities.eu). There you will find information about rural community associations and networks all over Europe as well as more info about ERCA and how to become a member. You will also find updated information about upcoming activities. If you have any useful information for the webpage do not hesitate to e-mail us through the contact form. We hope you will find the information useful!



### XII Rural Parliament

The date for the twelfth Swedish Rural Parliament has now been set to the 6 - 9 September in 2012. It will be held in the southeast region of Blekinge. The program is still being prepared, but it has been decided that the 6<sup>th</sup> will be “the international day” of the event. The Swedish Rural Parliament was the first ever and has been the source of inspiration to other national Rural Parliaments in Europe.