



Newsletter from ERCA November 2018

Dear ERCA members and board members!

I will give you some information and comments from myself as president of ERCA!

First, I want to thank you all for that you could participate in the zoom meeting initiated by Peter Backa on the discussion we have on the future of ERCA and our work. The question is how we can take this further. This will be a work in the first place as said in the meeting for ERCA board. We will come back on this.

It is time to give you some news which are good for us all and for our work to support rural development in our countries and in Europe.

We have been once more engaged from ERCA and especially Vanessa Halhead to work a lot and support the application done from the Finnish side to as for the ROAD project under the European programme *Europe for Citizens*. As you all know from the mail sent out from Vanessa and Kim Smedslund/SYTY the application was successfully approved.

Vanessa and I participated in the first Steering Group meeting held in relation to the ELARD conference in September in Portugal. The first decision was to examine the evaluation done for the host of next European Rural Parliament. As you know from Vanessa the next host was chosen and will take place in Spain, Asturias region

2019. Dates are not finally decided. We will keep all of you informed on the progress and way forward. We also hope that all of you will have possibilities to actively take part in some of the ROAD way projects.

Rural Network Assembly

Here's a report after I had the opportunity to participate for ERCA in two different meetings held by the EU Commission in Brussels. ERCA has a place in when the Commission set up the Rural Network Assembly, I have informed you earlier about this when this Assembly was set up. It is an annual meeting of all those involved in rural programs, authorities, paying agencies and civil society. For those who want to know and see a little what this is and how it works, I attach a link to the basic document that is in English.

https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/sites/enrd/files/2015_0215_eurn_strategic_framework_governance_bodies_vfebruary.pdf

For this assembly there is a steering group where ERCA shares two seats with some other organizations in a rotating system. This steering group met on 22 November with the task of discussing and recommending the agenda for the coming annual meeting.

Dialogue Group for Rural development

26 of November European Commission held the Civil Dialogue Group, CDG, for Rural development. I have before informed you that ERCA got a seat when Civil

Dialogue was reformed. The EU commission have several CDG for different agricultural crops/animals etc and one for rural issues. Still even after reformed composition of the group it is rather heavy dominated by COPA/COGECA.

During the SG and CDG there is presentations both for the actual and the coming programme period. My intention is to give you a broad overview. The meetings mostly focused on the proposal for the next programme budget period.

I insert links to different documents which can broaden your knowledge.



Based on these two meetings and a little more, I would like to inform you about how the EU Commission thinks of a future CAP - Common Agricultural Policy - where rural programs are in the second pillar. The first contains as you know agricultural direct payments, the second environment, investments and rural program

Cork 2.0 Declaration

However, I would like to start by adding a link to the declaration adopted in an interactive process two years ago, which was called Cork 2.0. This was a follow-up to what happened twelve years ago, where a Cork declaration was adopted, which was a initial declaration for rural development and an important launch for the rural programs within the CAP. Here we have a link to the declaration from Cork 2.0, "A better life in rural areas":

https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/sites/enrd/files/cork-declaration_en.pdf

I think we should see this declaration as a strong commitment from EU Commissioner Phil Hogan for our rural areas all around European Union but also whole Europe.

Based on this declaration, the Commission reported the actions, proposals and follow-ups that were made. This mail contains an **inserted attachment** that you can open if you are interested to see the result.

Future Budget and CAP

On 2 May 2018, the Commission presented its proposal for the future budget 2021-27.

Here you have a link to the whole proposal to the EU Council and European Parliament:

https://publications.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/078d2f46-8322-11e8-ac6a-01aa75ed71a1/language-en?WT.mc_id=Selectedpublications&WT.ria_c=677&WT.ria_f=2790&WT.ria_ev=search

On 1 June, the Commission presented its proposals and legislative texts to the future agricultural policy, including rural policy in the CAP, here is a link to a short press release and you can find it in different language:

http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-18-3985_en.htm

The link below provides a brief description of the EU Commission's proposal for the future CAP:

https://ec.europa.eu/commission/sites/beta-political/files/budget-may2018-modernising-cap_en.pdf

But you can find the entire draft regulation and legal texts on this link in all EU language:

<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=COM%3A2018%3A392%3AFIN>

My Comments

These two major issues about future budget and future agricultural / rural policy consider the Commission is two different processes. But, they are very well connected. How the budget will affect unless the principles of the future CAP so affect the extent of CAP. The Commission, of course, has tactical motives for treating them as two different processes, so it does not get stuck in the budget process. The Commission has a strict timetable for the Council (Governments of the Member States) and the co-determination of the European Parliament to be able to make a decision in time for a budget to commence from 1/1 2021. Everyone knows that there are major uncertainties: Brexit, a newly elected European Parliament in 2019 and a new EU Commission at the end of 2019. On questions, the Commission responds - there is no Plan B in speculation about what happens if you do not make decisions on time. It is a tactical approach to keeping pressure on those who will decide. But we know and understand that the current budget period / CAP may be extended for one or two years. It remains to be seen.

As we also know, (ex the Swedish position is about budget, and regardless of political party. The EU budget should decrease). Finland has a slightly more pragmatic attitude, yes, the budget may be just over 1% of GDP when Brexit has occurred. In the end, it will be a compromise. The one who jumps off his last position usually gets very little back as payment.

As for the future CAP, you can see in the document COM (2018) 392 but also in the shorter documents contained in the links above some things that are interesting. Both so-called pillars are retained, but Member States should make a common national strategic plan covering the entire CAP policy, including rural programs. This is according to the proposal for a regulation submitted to the Commission as early as 1/1 2020. Which means that member countries are likely to start work now. It means to all of us that, if we want strong rural programs

in the CAP, we must influence at the national/regional level. Impact and response will be national in our countries. Actions and impact on the Commission and the European Parliament have very limited benefits now. The proposals is there and in the light of a new parliament in spring 2019, according to the EU Commission's comments, the fact is that parliamentarians in practice already show less interest.

That means we have every reason to keep an eye on this, especially how rural policy is being designed in the strategic plan.

Another thing that may be of interest to note is that, as with English acronyms, it is called NRN - National Rural Networks, that is, in Sweden, the Rural Network and proposes replacing it with the "Single EU CAP Network". It will also replace two other networks located under ENRD and EIP Network. At the meeting, I asked the Swedish Agriculture Agency's representative if now the rural network has to change its name, and it seems so, but is somewhat unclear. The proposal for a "Single EU CAP Network" means that it will handle the entire CAP, i.e. both Pillar 1 with direct payments to agriculture and some other, and Pillar 2 with environment, disadvantaged rural and rural programs. What it means in practice remains enough to see. On the other hand, it is clear that the network will also handle the strategic plan, which I think is good. On the question why changing names, the answer was: "Yes, but Rural Development is under the CAP in the second pillar".

Another presentation was an interesting study from the OECD, if you are interested there is a link here:

<http://www.oecd.org/cfe/regional-policy/Rural-3.0-Policy-Note.pdf>



Some final words

Of course, there is much more to think about the future rural policy in Europe and not just in the European Union.

But as I wrote above, the impact is probably most important now at the national level. The proposals are from the EU Commission, and they are now in the hands of our governments. If a new EU parliament or a new Commission will change something is impossible to misuse.

I am also fully aware that we are members of, and want members, across Europe. I am aware of the Standing Working Group that exists between the ministries in the Western Balkans countries. What I try to keep in mind at our EU meetings, not least because I, it is my opinion

, hope that they may become part of our cooperation in the Union in a near future!

If you see that I have missed any in the mailing list, please forward!

Sorry if there are writing errors or not perfect English.

Best Regards

Staffan Nilsson

