

EUROPEAN RURAL COMMUNITY ALLIANCE



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Website
www.ruralcommunities.eu

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Merging ERCA and ERA

We are very happy to announce that agreement has been reached as to the merger of two important European rural networks: the European Rural Alliance (ERA) and the European Rural Community Association (ERCA). In the future they will work as one organization: the European Rural Community Alliance (ERCA). This greatly strengthens the position of this important network for the rural communities of Europe.

The first Board of the new ERCA was elected in November 2013 and Staffan Nilsson of Sweden was elected Chair of the Board. The membership of ERCA will involve approximately 14 countries.

We are also currently seeking to identify appropriate organizations and inviting membership from countries which have not previously been involved. Further details can be found

on the website:

www.ruralcommunities.eu

If your organization is interested in membership, please contact:

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ERA will continue as an independent organization until the end of 2014 to finalise the implementation of one project, but otherwise all work will now be carried forward under ERCA.



European Rural Parliament in Brussels 13 November 2013



The first European Rural Parliament

One of the most important projects of the new ERCA is the development of the European Rural Parliament. The first European Rural Parliament was successfully held in Brussels on November 13, 2013, as a partnership between ERCA, ERA and PREPARE. It was attended by representatives from over 30 countries, comprising 70

organizations, more than 10 European networks and many local development groups.

A full report of the event is to be found on:

www.europeanruralparliament.com



Lucia Fernandez de Soto, Spain, speaking during the European Rural Parliament.

The European Rural Parliament project has the following objectives:

1. To enable the voice of the rural people of Europe to be heard at European level
2. To ensure that the interests and well-being of the rural communities of Europe are strongly reflected in European and national policies
3. To promote self-help, common understanding, solidarity, exchange of good practice and cooperation among rural communities throughout Europe.

Work is now well underway to prepare for the second ERP in 2015. This will be held elsewhere in Europe, hosted by one of our national member organizations. In September, partners from across Europe will meet in Estonia to discuss the process for organising the next ERP. This will involve collecting the main issues and ideas from each country, to feed into the ERP debate. More information on this process will be available later in the year. We hope you will want to get involved in this exciting opportunity.

Rural Sweden gathered

The Swedish Rural Parliament took place in May 16th-18th in Sandviken, the county of Gävleborg. The aim of the 2014 session was to strengthen the village action movement and influence rural politics for the coming national and European elections during this year.

A rural parliament is a major meeting-place for the rural movement, where inspiration, seminars and exhibitions unite with dialogue and delight. It takes place every second year in different parts of the country.

During the parliament days some key issues of political importance were discussed in a joint process with an election strategy from all Swedish counties, called Open Space. Almost 30 international guests also participated in the process.

Five out of eight leaders of all Swedish political parties represented in parliament attended the Rural Parliament's final day, Sunday May 18. They were participating in a conversation and Questions & Answers session about their views on the future development of Swedish and European rural areas.

Over 750 persons, representing village movements, other organizations and authorities, participated. Many exhibitors showed examples of local rural development in the region nearby, as well as authorities that presented how Sweden will implement multifunds for the coming programme period in local led development.

The food was mostly local produce from the area and ecologic.



International guests and Swedish hosts in the international meeting place during the Swedish Rural Parliament in Sandviken. see above. Five of the Swedish party leaders were discussing rural politics on Sunday, below.

