

MANIFESTO

MANIFESTO OF THE NATIONAL RURAL PARLIAMENT LED BY RURAL CIVIL SOCIETY SECTOR OF THE REPUBLIC NORTH MACEDONIA

HAVING MET	in Krushevo in June 13-14 2019
UNDERSTANDING	the crucial role of rural areas in the economic development and quality of life of rural population in the Republic North Macedonia
CONCERNED	about the existing rural – urban gap in incomes, job opportunities and prospects for young people
BUILDING	on the priorities expressed by the Civil Society Sector from rural areas in preparation for the meeting of the Rural Parliament
CONSIDERING	strategic national documents for agriculture and rural development, and 2016 Cork 02 Declaration „A Better Life in Rural Areas,,
CONVINCED	about the central role of stakeholders in the process of alignment to the EU and preparation for EU accession
DEDICATED	to act as an independent voice supporting the interest of rural citizens

**WE DECLARE OUR VISION AND REQUESTS TO THE GOVERNMENT FOR
TRANSFORMING RURAL AREAS TO AN ATTRACTIVE PLACE FOR WORK AND RESIDENCE, PROVIDING ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY, JOBS, GROWTH AND BETTER QUALITY OF LIFE.**

#BETTER QUALITY OF LIFE THROUGH INTEGRATED RURAL DEVELOPMENT

The needs of rural population are complex and the issues are more social than agricultural. Better quality of life in rural communities should be provided for everybody – old and young man and women. The calls for a switch from the longstanding tradition of rural development. It is necessary to develop an effective mechanism for consultations and coordination between government institutions, responsible for different aspects of rural life.

#SUSTAINABLE RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Government policies should take a balanced approach to integrate the three dimensions of sustainability of rural areas- social. Economic and environmental. Sustainable development necessitates policies and environmental measures to mitigate the consequences of the climate change, protect agricultural land, and farmed and wild biodiversity. Organic agriculture and other agri – ecological technologies have to be promoted to sustain the health of ecosystems and people. Civil society sector requires the Government to provide better management of national parks in order to maintain this invaluable asset.

#KNOWLEDGE, INFORMATION AND INNOVATIONS

Rural Parliament calls on the Government to bridge the rural information and knowledge gap. The Government should invest in creating a functional Agricultural Knowledge and Information System (AKIS), similar to AKIS in the EU Member States, and should be ready to competitiveness of rural areas and encourage the business sector investments.

#RURAL YOUTH AT THE CENTRE OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT POLICY

There is an extensive process of rural out – migration of young people in Macedonia, driven by the unequal opportunities for education, careers and social life. The interests of rural youth should be put at the Centre of rural development strategy and the policies should include specific measures targeted at young people. Investments are necessary in better education and vocational training to close the gap between quality of education and the needs of modern economy, sport facilities, child care, to mention some. Improvement of the quality of roads and public transport is necessary to facilitate commuting to rural towns. The provision of transport of young people to places of education and training is necessary to support their upskilling and career opportunities. **#GENDER EQUALITY AND INCLUSIVENESS**

Rural development policies should be gender sensitive and increase the capacity of rural women and their organizations to drive in all aspects of rural life. Municipalities should provide support to training in leadership, business entrepreneurship, IT, new technologies, which is paramount to achieve better involvement of female in economic and social development, and overcome some deeply rooted prejudices. It is necessary to use the experience of NGOs and donor community in this process.

#STRENGTHENING THE BOTTOM – UP APPROACH

Civil Society in rural areas should be an active participant in LEADER type projects and should search actively to secure funds for Local Action Groups (LAGs) to develop solutions to local problems where the 'one-size-fits-all' national policy could not be effective. Strengthening the bottom up approach will also facilitate the alignment to the EU strategy for Community – led Local Development, which puts people experience challenges on the 'driving seat' for finding local solutions.

#CSOS FROM RURAL AREAS AS AN EQUAL PARTNER IN THE POLICY DIALOGUE

It is necessary to strengthen the role of civil society as an equal partner to Government at each level of rural policy dialogue. Local problems cannot be successfully solved without the participation of the stakeholders community. Similarly, on the way to the EU, CSOs should work closely with the government institutions necessary for accession to and functioning within the EU.

#CAPACITY BUILDING OF CSOS

The Rural Development Network, together with government and educational institutions, NGOs and donor community, should work to increase the capacity of its members to better communicate the needs of rural population and increase their technical expertise on issues related to integrated rural development.

#STRENGTHENING OF REGIONAL COOPERATION

Regional cooperation builds understanding between neighbors, cements the democracy and provides cross – fertilization of ideas and actions of countries in the Balkan region. CSOs from rural areas should continue to actively participate in the regional cooperation, play a central role in the regional initiatives, and take a lead in further cooperation and projects in the area of rural development.



„This project is funded by
the European Union.,”



Building a Greener Economic Environment

