

RURAL DEVELOPMENT NETWORK OF
THE REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA



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1

Community Development Institute CDI- Tetovo

Rural Development Activities

Honey and bee products fair

The Association CDI-Tetovo, in cooperation with and supported by SWG and the ABDA Program, as well as the Macedonian Environmental Society, organized the Shar Mountain Fair for Honey and Bee Products, for the purpose of encouraging cross-border cooperation between the Republic of Macedonia and the Republic of Kosovo in the Shar Mountain region, as well as promoting rural development and production of healthy food. The fair began at 11:00 hrs on April 23 at the Antonio Restaurant in Jegunovce. It included a debate on cross-border cooperation and rural development that allowed for exchange of opinions and experience on honey and bee production and rural development.

As a result, a catalogue of bee producers was developed including contact details and other information. Exhibitors of honey at the fair were awarded plaques and certificates of gratification for their participation.

More information on the honey and bee products fair, including the e-catalogue of bee producers may be found on the website of CDI - Tetovo: www.irz.org.mk.



Establishing the Local Action Group LAG Skardus

The CDI - Tetovo has been working on development of local potentials, improvement of living conditions in the community, and rural development, as part of its program activities. A local action group (LAG) is in the process of being established on the territory of the municipalities of Jegunovce and Tearce.

On grounds of prior discussions on establishing a local action group (LAG) for the area of the municipalities of Jegunovce, Tearce, and Tetovo, and on grounds of the Law on Associations and Foundations (Official Journal 52/10), a Founding Assembly was held for the Local Action Group LAG SKARDUS Tearce - Jegunovce, at the premises of the Municipality of Jegunovce.

The Association for Rural Development - Local Action Group - LAG Skardus is a voluntary, non-profit, non-governmental, non-partisan association, established by free association as an initiator, driver and creator in mobilizing local potentials by means of organizing, educating and providing support for improving the living conditions and the overall development of the rural area on the territory of the municipalities of Tearce and Jegunovce.

The Association CDI - Tetovo is actively involved in the establishment of the LAG Skardus, as a member of the coordinative body, and provides administrative and technical support.





Activities Realized by the Foundation Elena Luka

In the frames of the **Program for Improving the Conditions for Quality Growth and Development of Children and Youth**, the Foundation Elena Luka implemented the project "Plan Your Future" and has awarded five high school scholarships to five girls from the following rural municipalities: Lozovo, Mogila, Center Zhupa, Chashka and the capital city Skopje. The candidates who met the criteria listed in the announcement were entitled to receive scholarship. The student's success and monthly income of the family were taken into consideration in the ranking. In the upcoming period the Foundation will award five more scholarships to students who come from rural areas.

Within the **Program for Socio-Economic Empowerment of Women and Youth**, the Foundation Elena Luka realized the project "Economic Empowerment of Single Mothers by Providing Technical Support and Trainings". Through this project the Foundation Elena Luka supported six single mothers to start a business or to expand an existing one. Every single mother was granted with financial support for the purchase of technical equipment, working materials or was provided training in the amount of 100,000 Denars.

Also through this program, the Foundation Elena Luka in cooperation with the highly reputed fashion house Elena



Luka has held five free of charge trainings for designers, modelers, handwork and tailors, for five women and girls.

On July 8th 2016, the Foundation Elena Luka organized a meeting with women entrepreneurs. More than 20 women potential entrepreneurs as well as entrepreneurs from 12 different towns in Macedonia had the opportunity to meet Ms. Elena Pandeva, successful woman in business and entrepreneurship. She shared her experiences and gave the audience very useful advices gained from her past work.

On July 29th 2016, the Foundation Elena Luka arranged a meeting with women from the Municipality of Center Zh-

upa. There, the creative director of the fashion house Elena Luka, Mr. Dejan Sidorovski and the modeler and authorized person of the Sector for Production, Ms Natasha Kocева Arsovska, met the women from the Municipality of Center Zhupa. They had the opportunity to see the handcrafts designed by the women from Center Zhupa and to discuss opportunities for further cooperation.

The Foundation, in the frames of its Program for Preventing all Forms of Violence Against Women, has provided education for youth in order to introduce them to the concepts of gender and development, non-discrimination and gender-based violence.

Within these activities, in the period from January until July 2016, 18 trainings were delivered gathering around 400 young people around following themes: gender and gender equality, preventing discrimination and preventing gender-based violence.

High-school pupils and students were involved in this education and the trainings were organized in the following towns: Skopje, Veles, Pehchevo, Kumanovo and Berovo.





3

The Team of CeProSARD Developed Registry of Potentials for Rural Tourism in the Polog Planning Region



The Center for Promotion of Agricultural Practices and Rural Development – CeProSARD, in the first half of 2016 developed Registry of Potentials for Rural Tourism in the Polog Planning Region, for the needs of the Center for Development of the Polog Planning Region – CDPPR.

The registry was developed in the frames of the Innovative Solutions for Better Access to Services at Local Level

project implemented by UNDP in cooperation with the Ministry of Local Self-Government (MLS). The aim of this project is to enable MLS to enhance the capacities in promoting local Self-Government to better serve citizens.

The team of CeProSARD has made a research and visits to the municipalities in the region. Within project activities, consultation workshops were held in the premises of the Center for Develop-

ment of Polog Planning Region and the Municipality of Gostivar. Representatives of the municipalities, the business sector – owners of hotels, restaurants, tourist agencies, mountaineering associations, and also NGOs and other relevant stakeholders dealing in the area of rural tourism in Polog Planning Region actively participated at the meetings.





Activities completed by POLYMATH 13 – member of the RDN of RM

- In 2016, the Association for Development, Education and Environmental Ethics – POLYMATH 13 from Bogdanci, in cooperation with the Macedonian Environmental Society – MED from Skopje, began with activities related to promotion of plant diversity at the Important Plant Area 'Bogdanci', including monitoring of the endemic plant species of *Astragalus physocalyx*, its habitat, population, and potential threats.

Astragalus physocalyx found at the IPA 'Bogdanci' is a sub-endemic plant defined as endangered on the Red List of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). In Macedonia it can be only found in the vicinity of Bogdanci, in the kermes-oak woods. In addition to Macedonia, this significant plant can also be found in Bulgaria and Turkey. POLYMATH 13 carried out presentations at the primary schools in the municipality, as well as an education trip with secondary school students at locations where *Astragalus physocalyx* can be seen.

On July 6, a visit to POLYMATH 13 in Bogdanci was paid by Evis Chan from



Plantlife from the United Kingdom. The goal of this visit was field monitoring of the Important Plant Area 'Bogdanci', as well as presenting activities for conservation of key species of plants and affirmation of plant diversity. This project is managed at international level by Plantlife, a non-governmental organization from the UK and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). National manager of the project for Macedonia is the Macedonian Environmental Society (MED) and POLYMATH 13 is a local partner responsible for activities carried out at the IPA 'Bogdanci'.

- This year, the same as last year, POLYMATH 13 organized meetings with citizens of the Bogdanci Municipality in order to encourage them to undertake activities to contribute to environmental protection and to motivate them to care for the community. The meetings covered varieties of topics such as community mapping, permaculture – methods and advantages from composting, construction with natural materials, and rainwater harvesting and use.

- On March 19 at the City Park in Bogdanci, POLYMATH 13 organized an event to mark the global Earth Hour initiative, allowing for Bogdanci to be written on the map of towns that switched off the lights to send a message to save the Earth. Students from the 'Bogdanci' Secondary School contributed to the event, including performance of the choir and the orchestra of the school, as well as individual performance by a music duo, and prose reading.

- The last meeting of the working groups in the process of the Green Agenda within the framework of the USAID Municipal Climate Change Strategies Project was held on April 28. This meeting, held at the site of the newly built drinking water reservoir, final-





ized the activities carried out in the past period. The newly built drinking water reservoir with the capacity of 500m3 will bring about better quality of water supply and will allow for more efficient water supply system management, in turn contributing to energy saving. The USAID Municipal Climate Change Strategies Project is implemented by Milieucontact Macedonia, in partnership with the Municipality of Bogdanci, the Rural Development Network of the Republic of Macedonia and POLYMATH 13.

- Between 17 and 19 June, POLYMATH 13 participated at the first joint workshop within the IPA Project 'Stronger CSOs for participative transposition and implementation of the EU 2020 energy and climate package', implemented by Milieucontact Macedonia, in partnership with the training institute 'Kocka' and Front 21/42. In addition to POLYMATH 13, this work-



shop was attended by nine other civil organizations in the role of partnership organizations. The main goal of the project is improving environmental management by creating conditions for efficient participation of civil organizations in the decision making process.

- In July, POLYMATH 13 in partnership with AGRO-VINKA, both members of the RDN, completed the implementation of the project initiative 'Be a Beekeeper!', which was supported by the USAID Adaptation to Climate Change in Agriculture Project, implemented by the Rural Development Network of RM. This initiative included a series of activities and succeeded in encouraging cooperation among beekeepers in the municipalities of Bogdanci and Vinica, for the purpose of affirmation of the potentials and the sustainable use of natural resources for development of beekeeping.





5

Accomplishments of the Women Organization “Cvet” from Krushevo

During the first half of 2016, the women organization “Cvet” has realized numerous activities in Krushevo and surrounding rural areas.

In January, supported by a donor, they shared Christmas presents to children from surrounding rural areas: Aldanci v., Norovo v., Buchin v., Presil v. and others. The event was followed by a children's performance in all these villages.

The same month they celebrated Vasilica (name-day of holy Vasilij) by organizing a charity event, followed by a religious ceremony.

Traditionally, the International Women's Day, March 8, was celebrated and a fashion show was organized where the women organization “Flower” presented its new products.

After establishing cooperation with one Greek company, on March 15, “Cvet” started making designed swimsuits in compliance with company's requirements. The products were made by the young members of the organization with support and tutorship from the experienced older members of “Cvet”.

In the same period the women were making handcrafts for the Ethno Fair that was held in June 2016. Krushevo.





Capacity Building Activities through Project Mechanism

RDN continued with the implementation of Project Mechanism, intended to raise and strengthen capacities of RDN member organizations regarding project management practices.

After receiving 17 applications for short term projects' implementation, the Administrative Body, consisted of representatives from RDN organizations, held two meetings in April and conducted an assessment of all applications on two levels: technical competence (submission of all required documents) and content competence. The Administrative Body presented the evaluation findings to the Managing Body which made the final selection of 7 project applications. The list of the selected projects was published on RDN website and Memorandums for Cooperation were signed between RDN and the selected applicants in the end of April.

The implementation of the seven project initiatives selected within the 3rd Call for support of project initiatives of RDN member organizations announced through the RDN Project Mechanism, commenced from May 1st, 2016. Given the diverse character of projects and timetable for their realization, RDN projected a flexible time frame for their implementation. RDN



gave a 6 months mandate to 14 of its member organizations for realization of the following project initiatives:

1. **"Become a Beekeeper!"**
2. **"The Magical Path of Organic Production"**
3. **"Educating and Supporting Young Beekeepers from Struga Region BEEKEEPING – PROFITABLE BUSINESS"**
4. **"Educating Agricultural Producers on Environment Protection from Overuse of Fertilizers and Pesticides"**
5. **"Traditional Specialties of Maleshevo Region"**
6. **"Forest Fires' Influence on Rural Development and Climate Change"**
7. **"Better Environment"**

During June and July, the implementing organizations reported successful implementation of project activities:

- The partner organizations "Agro Vinka" and "Polymath 13", organized trainings for affirmation and development of beekeeping which included field visits of bee communities where the beekeepers had the opportunity to exchange experiences and compare different methods of beekeeping. The trainings organized within the project initiative "Become a Beekeeper", gathered participants from the municipalities of Bogdanci and Vinica. An experienced trainer transferred its knowledge about planning, organizing and managing bee communities, and explained different ways to improve technological procedures for increasing yields and to reduce the risks of lowering the yields and the number of productive bee communities.

- "The Magical Path of Organic Production", in June, brought farmers in the villages of Novo Selo, Drazhevo, Konjarevo and Gatrovo to visit kiwi





and aronia organic farms. Then later, in July, this project initiative organized another visit, this time in Vinica, where the visitors had the opportunity to inform and exchange experiences related to organic beekeeping, but also to acquire knowledge about goji berries production, a culture that is new to our region and requires more specific treatment in cultivation.

“The Magical Path of Organic Production” is implemented by the Association of vegetable and flower producers “HORTI EKO” and Association of women farmers “AGRO – VINKA”.

- The project “BEEKEEPING – PROFITABLE BUSINESS”, finalized its activities with a promotional event where the brochure and video material on beekeeping process in Struga region were presented. The Association Creative Center “RURBANKULT” and the Association of beekeepers “MATICA”, through the activities aimed to educate and support young beekeepers in the region of Struga. The final goal was to increase the number of beekeepers as well as the quality and quantity of production potential of honey and honey products.

- Around thirty recipes of local food specialties, developed into a brochure named “Traditional Specialties of Maleshevo Region”, were promoted on July 13th 2016, at the traditional ethno fair “Celebration of St. Paul’s Day in Pehchevo”. The visitors from our country and neighboring Bulgaria, had the opportunity to taste some of these specialties and they were delighted by the look and the taste of the food. The food promotion had a humanitarian character and the funds were donated to the Home for children with disabilities in Berovo. This brochure was prepared within the project initiative “Traditional Specialties of Maleshevo Region” implemented by the Association Center for Herbs and Forest Fruits “Ambrosia” in partnership with the Ecological association “Solza”, both from Pehcevo.





7

The First National Conference on Climate Change and Macedonian Agriculture Held

On March 31st, in Strumica the first National Conference on Macedonian Agriculture and Climate Change, was organized with mutual cooperation of the project "Institutional Support to FFRM" We Effect – FFRM, USAID Adaptation to Climate Change in Agriculture project and the Swedish Embassy in Macedonia. The event aimed to present the negative influence of climate change to the agricultural production and to share measures and techniques that would help farmers to reduce adverse effects in vegetables, orchards, vineyards and livestock.

"The Republic of Macedonia is yet at the beginning of realization of the strategic goals for addressing climate change. The agricultural producers and rural families, as direct beneficiaries of

the land and the natural resources, are the most dependent on these decisions and solutions. The challenge of dealing with climate change is a long process which requires huge support through public awareness and joint engagement and cooperation of all agricultural stakeholders." - noted in his remarks, Petar Gjorgievski, president of the Rural Development Network of the Republic of Macedonia as implementer of the USAID Adaptation to Climate Change in Agriculture project.

"Climate change will have the most negative influence on the agriculture. Therefore these gatherings are useful for us, the farmers, to learn and familiarize with new agricultural technologies for climate change adaptation which will help to protect the produc-





tion.” – said Nikola Stamenov, president of FFRM.

The professors from the Agricultural Institute and the Faculty for Agricultural Sciences and Food in Skopje, shared the results and achievements of the implementation of different adaptive measures in agricultural production. A couple of farmers also shared their experiences and positive examples.

Climate change is a reality all around the world, and according to the experts' analyses, Macedonia can expect extreme temperature variations which will have negative effects to the agricultural sector. As roughly half of Macedonia's rural population is economically dependent on agricultural production, the need for prompt action and practical adaptive methods is growing.



Conclusions of the First National Conference on Macedonian Agriculture and Climate Change

1. Due to the negative impact of climate change such as increase of air temperature, intensity of solar radiation, heat waves, intensive precipitation, hail, as well as shortage of rain during the vegetation period followed by long drought periods, agricultural producers in the Republic of Macedonia face large challenges in dealing with it.
2. Challenges in dealing with climate change are a process where agricultural producers should invest their capacities in adapting production to this phenomenon, but also seek large support by the public (raising public awareness) and joint efforts, cooperation and coordination of all relevant institutions.
3. Continuous evolution regarding selection of new cultures, new technologies and new practice of agricultural production management with reference to climate change results in the need for involving science and research expertise to ensure implementation of sustainable agricultural production.
4. New technologies and acquired knowledge, as well as raising the awareness of agricultural producers regarding adaptive measures to climate change should be transferred by actively involving the agricultural advisory services as part of their regular practice in providing advisory services for successful planning and realization of agricultural production.
5. The future policy of Macedonia regarding agriculture and rural development should take into account the need for adaptation of agricultural production and promotion of farming practices that are compatible to the new climate conditions and contribute at the same time to preservation of natural resources.
6. The Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water-Economy should make a needs assessment of agricultural producers for the purposes of additional support and adaptation of agriculture to climate change within the framework of the support measures of the agriculture and rural development programs.
7. Coordination is needed among institutions and organizations from the region for the purposes of timely exchange of information and experience, as well as set up of similar measures that would contribute to successful practice in overcoming negative effects of climate change. Cooperation is particularly important in creating joint regional climate change prevention system.





8

Video on Climate Change Adaptation in Livestock Produced

Climate change has a negative impact to livestock production. Cattle endure heat stress due to summer heat and by trying to adapt they eat less, resulting in reduced production results compared to the desired. Taking into account the fact that livestock production is a type of production that contributes to end products such as milk, meat or eggs to bring profit, out of the food produced in the fields, the need is obvious for application of adaptation measures during summer heat when temperatures in farms are well above temperatures considered optimal for the livestock.

The Rural Development Network of the Republic of Macedonia implementing the USAID Adaptation to Climate Change in Agriculture Project in cooperation with professors from the Faculty of Agricultural Sciences and Food applied adaptive measures, which are cheap but efficient in mitigating negative impact climate change has in livestock production.

In order to help the livestock breeders to cope with climate change negative influence, the project prepared video material explaining different measures for adaptation. This video is available

on the Rural Development Network's Youtube channel in three languages: Macedonian, English and Albanian.

Links:

Macedonian: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5urKLVZ5xYs>

English: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6scQK6DVUr0&feature=share>

Albanian: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ru833maszH4&feature=share>

9

Raising Public Awareness about Lumpy Skin Disease in Dairy Cattle

Within the envisioned USAID Adaptation to Climate Change in Agriculture project activities, RDN initiated cooperation with the Food and Veterinary Agency in raising the awareness and capacity building of NEA advisors and livestock farmers, regarding the emergence of lumpy skin disease in dairy cattle. This new disease which originates from the African continent is transferred through vectors such as mosquitoes, ticks, flies and is a direct result from the changing climate. Unfortunately, the disease has been spreading rapidly during May and many livestock farmers in Macedonia have lost their cattle.

In order to inform the livestock breeders and NEA advisors about the symptoms of the disease and advise them how to prevent the livestock, USAID ACCA project, assisted by the project expert on dairy cattle Prof. Metodija Trajcev Ph.D., prepared informative leaflets and posters to be distributed to interested stakeholders. These informative materials were partly shared through the workshops organized during June aiming to educate livestock breeders and NEA advisors about the lumpy skin disease. Approximately 200 stakeholders attended the five workshops organized throughout the month in: Strumica (June 3rd), Bitola (June 7th), Gevgelija (June 8th), Kochani





(June 10th) and Kavadarci (June 14th).

While the professor from the Faculty of Agricultural Sciences and Food explained the characteristics and symptoms of lumpy skin disease and elaborated the preventive on-farm measures which should be undertaken to inhibit spread of the disease, the inspectors from Food and Veterinary Agency speaking from the aspect of government institutions, shared information on different preventive measures that are taken on a national level and advised the livestock farmers to ask for vaccination of animals.

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ШТО ПРЕСТАВУВА БОЛЕСТА ЈАЗЕСТА КОЖА КАЈ ГОВЕДАТА?

Болеста јазеста кожа (BUMPY SKIN DISEASE) кај говедата претставува вирусно заболување кое се манифестира со појава на треска, зголемена телесна температура, појава на јазлици по кожата на телото, млечната жлезда, на лијавите и вентралните органи, како и со отекнување на кожата, а понекогаш и со упукување на заболениот животин.

Оваа болест има сезонско-вселовно значење, затоа што значително ја намалува млечноста кај кравице, доведува до појавата на стресовите кај биковите и упукување на некои од заболениот животин.

Појавата на оваа болест има карактеристича за Јужна и Источна Африка до 1970 година, која се прширила ка северозапад од Африканскиот континент. Од 2000 година и ретистратура во некои земји на Средниот Исток. Во Европа првпат е регистрирана во Унгарија во 2013 година, во Грција во 2015 година и Бугарија во 2016 година.

Детект. оваа болест е присутна и во Република Македонија.

Ова се земје во предвид приготвено на ширење на оваа болест на побавно ниво и ако се знае дека сѐ од главна важност на променуваче на болеста се коморидите, тогаш е повеќе од очигледно констатирање на климатските промени врз појавата на болеста.



КОГА БИ ТРЕБАЛО ДА СЕ ПОСОМНЕВАМЕ ДЕКА ВО МОЈАТА ФАРМА/ОДГЛЕДУВАЛИШТЕ СЕ ПОЈАВИЛА БОЛЕСТА ЈАЗЕСТА КОЖА И КОГА ДА ТОО ТРЕБА ДА ГО ИНФОРМИРАМО МОЈОТ МАТИЧЕН ВЕТЕРИНАР ИЛИ АГЕНЦИЈАТА ЗА ХРАНА И ВЕТЕРИНАРСТВО?

Доколку кај некои од животните во фармата/одгледувалиштето се забележи некои од следните промени:

- ▶ зголеменување на телесната температура (до 40°C),
- ▶ појава на јазлици промени на кожата на телото и млечната жлезда (мимето),
- ▶ падло намаалување на млечноста,
- ▶ појава на исцедок од носот,
- ▶ абортус,

КАКО И НА КОЈ НАЧИН ЖИВОТНИТЕ ВО МОЈАТА ФАРМА/ОДГЛЕДУВАЛИШТЕ БИ МОЖЕЛЕ ДА СЕ РАЗБОЛАТ ОД БОЛЕСТА ЈАЗЕСТА КОЖА?

Животните од оваа болест може да се заразат на некој од следните начини:

- ▶ со убоди од инсекти носители на причинителот кои бидат и цикади, крп, како што се: комарците, шпанските муви и крвотисите;
- ▶ со директен контакт на здраво со заболено животно;
- ▶ преку храна, вода, кикмет, опrema за млеко и други предмети и средства кои се користат во фармата/одегледувалиштето, а кои се контаминирани (болна во допир со заболени животни);
- ▶ преку тесен контакт прекозно или со контакт со заболено животно.



ДАЛИ БОЛЕСТА ЈАЗЕСТА КОЖА ПРЕСТАВУВА ОПАСНОСТ ПО ЗДРАВЈЕТО НА ЛУДЕТО?

Болезта јазеста кожа не е опасна за луѓето, не се пренесува на нив и некои од заболени животни и користама/фармите предмети, односно не претставува закана.





10

Public awareness video material on project success story published

As a result of USAID Adaptation to Climate Change in Agriculture project activities regarding on-site training and implementation of climate change adaptive measures in orchards, one young farmer from the Strumica region reached a decision to organize his apple orchard in accordance with the project suggested climate change adaptive measures. With the support from the NEA advisor from Strumica region, he applied for support from the National Rural Development Program

for young farmers and was approved financial support of approximately € 10,000.00 (75% from the Government, 25% farmer) for purchasing and installation of UV nets, grinder and additional equipment. In May, RDN visited the farmer and recorded his statement and the orchards covered with UV nets. This successful story was packed into a video material in three languages (Macedonian, Albanian and English) and shared with other farmers through RDN's Youtube Channel striving to mo-

tivate them to adapt their production to climate change.

Links:

Macedonian: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m0nHEw_T1HQ

English: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2F37h9QbGNQ>

Albanian: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pTeaBr7_YHc

11

EU LEADER approach promoted in the East and Southeast Planning Region of the Republic of Macedonia

In January, RDN hosted a joint meeting with the Managers of the East and Southeast Planning regions and discussed USAID Adaptation to Climate Change in Agriculture project projected activities regarding LEADER approach affirmation in the two regions. Current situation of the regions, municipalities and stakeholders of each region were discussed in order to develop a proper capacity building plan and applicative time table for the stakeholders.



The capacity building activities for further expansion of the LEADER approach philosophy in the two regions commenced on February 18th, in Do-

dojan. There in front of around 30 stakeholders from Valandovo, Gevgelija, Bogdanci and Dojran, RDN in cooperation with the Center for Development



ER approach in Dojran and Shtip, in March, RDN started organizing workshops for detailed presentation of LEADER methodology and its seven characteristics: local development strategy based on territorial approach; “bottom-up” approach; public-private partnership: Local Action Group (LAG); innovation activities; multi-sectorial approach; networking and implementation of projects for cooperation. During March 2016, 5 similar workshops were organized in: Gevgelija on March 3rd, Stip on March 14th, Kocani on March 15th, Bel Kamen near Radovis on March 28th and again in Kocani on March 29th. More than 100 representatives of local self-government, civil and business sector from the southeast and east planning region of Macedonia attended these workshops which were envisaged through the capacity building component in order to strengthen all stakeholders’ capacities and increase their participative planning in the decision making process, important for the community.



of the Southeast Planning Region held an informative workshop to present the activities related to EU LEADER approach and to emphasize the significance of LEADER as a future IPARD measure in the Republic of Macedonia. Another workshop of this kind was organized on February 22nd in Stip, which was attended by more than 30 representatives of local self-government, civil and business sector from the east planning region of the Republic of Macedonia.

After the initial promotion of EU LEAD-





First General Assembly of PREPARE AISBL Held

On June 11th, in Brussels, PREPARE Partnership for Rural Europe held its regular Organizing Group meeting and the First General Assembly as a legal structure i. e. PREPARE AISBL. The Rural Development Network of the Republic of Macedonia – RDN of the RM, as PREPARE partner, now became one of the current 14 PREPARE AISBL's full members. After reporting on activities realized during 2015, further actions were agreed related to the upcoming PREPARE 2016 Gathering/ ALTER project's multi-national thematic meeting in September 2016 and Black Sea Travelling Workshop foreseen for October 2016. The representatives from Albania and Finland invited other PREPARE partners to the first national rural parliaments in their countries, intended to be organized next year. Future ac-



tivities related to the European Rural Parliament 2017, were also discussed at the meeting.





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Cooperation with BRDN on execution of EU funded project ALTER

(Active Local Territories for Economic Development of Rural Areas)

The Rural Development Network of the Republic of Macedonia has actively cooperated with BRDN (Balkan Rural Development Network) member organizations (Rural Development Networks of Croatia, Serbia, Montenegro, Bosna and Hercegovina, Kosovo, Albania) and CSO organization from Tur-

EU funded project ALTER (Active Local Territories for Economic Development of Rural Areas). This joint activity, to be implemented in 2017 in seven countries aims to strengthen the capacity of the CSO networks, of the CSOs already in their membership and of other CSOs to contribute to sustainable socio-economic development in the Western Bal-

kans and Turkey, and to promote their partnership with public institutions and their involvement in decision-making and governance processes, for the well-being of rural communities in those countries. The actions have a primary focus on networking, capacity building and advocacy.

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ELARD representative visiting Macedonia

On May 26th and 27th, the President of the European LEADER Association for Rural Development – ELARD, Ms. Kristiina Tammets, together with two representatives of the Estonian National Rural Development Network and the Estonian Ministry of Rural Affairs, visited Macedonia. The Rural Development Network of the Republic of Macedonia – RDN of the RM, as member of ELARD since 2011, organized this two-day visit, with the support of the USAID Adaptation to Climate Change in Agriculture project.

At the debate organized in Skopje on May 26th, ELARD, as a union of more than 1250 Local Action Groups from 22 countries, presented the experiences gained through the implementation of the LEADER approach in the EU countries and its role in these processes. The representatives of the Estonian National Rural Development Network and the Estonian Ministry of Rural Affairs shared the experiences acquired in the process of LEADER implementa-





tion in Estonia. Ms. Biljana Kostovska, head of IPARD Managing Authority within the Ministry of Agriculture Forestry and Water Economy of the Republic of Macedonia, presented the activities related to LEADER approach as part of the new IPARD measures within the new programming period 2014-2020. The president of RDN of the RM, Mr. Petar Gjorgievski, introduced the participants with RDN's realized activities and support in the process of affirmation of LEADER approach in

Macedonia and establishment of pre-LAG initiatives.

During May 26th and 27th, the Estonian delegation visited pre-LAG initiatives in Kumanovo region – LAG “Aber 2015” and LAG “Glasot na seloto”, in Strumica region – LAG “Belasica-Ograzden”, and also members of the LAG initiative in the region of four municipalities – Gevgelija, Valandovo, Dojran and Bogdanci. The delegation visited some of the historical and natural

heritage of these regions, which represent potentials for development of future initiatives. Also, the field visit in Kumanovo involved a stopover at “Eco Green pulp” - a plant for paper recycling and production of tray - pads for eggs. The company is a member of the LAG “Aber 2015”, as a representative of the business sector. Another example of local initiatives was the “Local Campaign for Coping with Climate Change Effects”, implemented by NGO “Planetum” and the “Festival of Wild Figs” implemented by NGO “Slow food Ograzden”, both members of the pre-LAG Belasica-Ograzden. The guests were also impressed by the Gabrovo waterfalls and were familiarized with the project of the Center for Development of the Southeast Planning Region and the Municipality of Strumica which included arranging the surrounding area of the site.



The meetings realized over the two-day visit, resulted with opportunities for further cooperation in strengthening the capacities of the stakeholders of these pre-LAG initiatives through transfer of knowledge and experience related to the LEADER approach implementation.



ELARD celebrates the new presidency for 2016-2017

Estonian Kristiina Tammets elected first female president of ELARD (European LEADER Association for Rural Development)

On Feb. 16-17 the 11th General Assembly of ELARD took place in Brussels, the main aim of which was to summarize the Czech presidency and introduce Estonian presidency's goals and action plan for 2016-2017.

The representative of Estonian Leader Union, Kristiina Tammets (manager of LAG Tartu Rural Development Association), was elected as the association's new president, while Pedro Brosei from Portugal and Radim Sršen from the Czech Republic were elected as new vice-presidents. Kristiina Tammets is the first female president in ELARD's nearly twenty-year history.

According to Kristiina Tammets, ELARD leadership is a team work, and the main thing is to meet the expectations of our members, who represent the needs and interests of people in rural areas across Europe.



ELARD is an international non-profit association set up to assure the balanced and sustainable development of rural areas. The European LEADER Association joins together more than 1250 local action groups from 22 countries (Czech Republic, Croatia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom, Bosnia and Herzegovina).

The Rural Development Network of the Republic of Macedonia is a member of ELARD since 2011.

