

**ERCA**

**EUROPEAN RURAL COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION**

**Association of Village Movements in Europe**

**Bert Broekhuis**

President

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March 2011

Letter of the Board of ERCA to the village movements and other rural movements

Dear friends of rural matters and village development,

During the XI. Rural Parliament of Sweden ERCA held a general meeting.

The Provisional Executive Board was formally confirmed. It consists of Bert Broekhuis (The Netherlands) chairman, Vanessa Halhead (Scotland) secretary, Staffan Bond (Sweden)

treasurer, and the members Sirje Vinni (Estonia), Kurt Krambach (Land Brandenburg,

Germany), Kim Smedlund (Finland), Valdis Kudins (Latvia), Donatas Saulenas (Lithuania)

There was also a discussion about the current and longer-term challenges and decided to inform all village and other rural movements (regardless of whether or not they are a member of ERCA or not yet).

Some current tasks to which we ask you for your support:

1. New Members of ERCA: ERCA is the pan-European network of national or regional village movements and other rural movements, whose main objective is the strengthening of the villages as local rural communities. This orientation to the lowest level of rural areas - to the villages as basic local forms of social existence and its self-organizing as a local community of the rural population – distinguish ERCA from other rural networks. (See attached statute of ERCA)

Therefore, **we turn to all village movements to become a member of ERCA**. ERCA as a whole takes part in European Rural Alliance (ERA), a platform which is to become the voice of civil society in rural Europe. ERCA is in this sense – as part of “Rural” voice - the civil societal “Voice of European Villages”. Members of the ERCA board will turn in soon to representatives of the village movements that are not yet a member of ERCA in order to discuss the question of membership.

2. Our website in construction will be an important working tool of ERCA for information and exchange of experiences of the members and other movements. We therefore appeal to all members of ERCA and all other village movements, to participate in a contribution of the site. Therefore we propose two initial steps:

a. We provide all village movements and other rural movements (whether a member of ERCA or not) to present themselves with a text and images on the ERCA website. This may

also be an existing flyer or poster.

b. Any movement can inform about current events and also to report on events and happenings.

3. International Village Conference 2011: ERCA lays great emphasis in 2010 and 2011 to organize an International Conference Village, supported by the Rosa Luxembourg Foundation, on 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> May 2011 to be held in Berlin. According to the objectives pursued by the ERCA constitution the conference will have two closely interrelated objectives:

- a) International exchange of experience on the village development and the role of the European village movements for the villages
- b) The idea and experience of the European village movements are to be made more aware of possible initiatives in support of similar movements in Germany.

For both objectives, it would be useful if all village movements would participate. The ERCA Board therefore requests representatives of all European village movements to participate in this conference. Attached you will find the program of the conference and information for booking accommodation. There will not to be paid for a conference fee, and food and drinks during the conference are free. But you have to book and pay your travel and accommodation by yourselves.

We hope to welcome you at our May-conference in Berlin!

Best wishes,

On behalf of the board,

Bert Broekhuis,

President

Vanessa Halhead,

Secretary