

BUDAPEST DECLARATION

Preamble

Considering the fact that rural development, and in particular the Leader program as the special European methodology used with, received insufficient attention in the Europe 2020 Strategy, the Hungarian Rural Association (HRA) supported by the Hungarian Ministry of Rural Development initiated a seminar in Budapest on the 24th of January 2011. with the participation of non-governmental national Leader networks, rural development organisations and LAGs to demonstrate how rural development and Leader can contribute to achieving the aims of the Europe 2020 Strategy and to approve the present declaration as a contribution to the public consultation on the impact assessment of the Commission's proposal. Regarding the opportunities provided by the Hungarian Presidency, HRA feel committed to follow-up and forward the messages of the declaration in the course of the EU 2020 strategic planning process. The Budapest Declaration was signed by 139 participants at the workshop for Leader LAGs in Brussels on the 19th -20th of January 2011. and another 77 participants in the Budapest seminar, representing organisations from 22 member states.

The role of Leader in the Europe 2020 Strategy

Rural development support applied through the Leader approach - a multi-sectoral local development methodology based on principles like ensuring subsidiarity in planning and project selection, enhancing innovation, cooperation and networking in a decentralized and "hands on" process - is a much more efficient way of using scarce public resources than applying them through conventional top-down schemes: the Leader method is a tool which can efficiently direct financial support closely to local needs, it fosters innovative solutions and it is also able to handle complex challenges.

Reviewing the experiences gained in the course of four generations of the Leader programmes, it becomes evident, that apart from strengthening social cohesion it can effectively help mitigating problems like poverty and territorial inequalities and it can also assist developing sustainable local economic, social and environmental systems. Leader, internationally recognized as a well adapted method to pick up the challenges facing rural societies and economies had significant results in the following fields of development:

- maintaining rural population thus mitigating urban problems;
- generating local income and employment;
- diversifying local economy;
- strengthening micro and small enterprises;
- keeping youth from migration to towns;
- mitigation of climate change and assist adaptation to its potential effects;
- alleviating social problems by helping disadvantaged people;
- strengthening cultural and social development in rural areas.

Provided that it operates within an appropriate regulatory framework, freed from bureaucracy, ensuring full coverage over rural areas and given an adequately strengthened financial base, Leader is a cost efficient way of supporting the Europe 2020 Strategy aims in terms of „smart”, „sustainable” and „inclusive” growth as well.

Therefore, the representatives of the European Leader society hereby request the Commission to ensure that an appropriate role is given to rural development, and in particular the Leader approach in the Europe 2020 Strategy.

Budapest, 24th January 2011.



MINISTRY
OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT

DR. SÁNDOR FAZEKAS
Minister

LETTER OF PROMOTION

On behalf of the Hungarian Ministry of Rural Development I welcome the initiative taken by the Hungarian Rural Association to organise the international seminar in Budapest titled „Rural Development and Leader in the Europe 2020 Strategy” on the 24th January 2011, in co-operation with our National Rural Network.

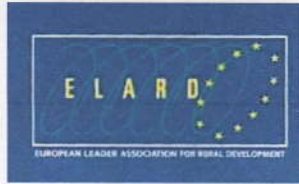
At the doorstep of the Hungarian presidency we are facing a hard working period, because it is an intensive planning phase of Europa 2020 Strategy and we should also find solutions to acute problems in the fields of finance and minorities. In these times dialogue and cooperation between stakeholders at European level can considerably improve the effectiveness of our work, and last but not least can strengthen cohesion.

I hope that the declaration approved as a result of the event will be a useful contribution to the public consultation on the impact assessment of the Commission’s proposal, and also to the relevant work of the Hungarian presidency.

Therefore, I wish to all participants a fruitful discussion and cooperation.

Budapest, 20. 12. 2010.





European LEADER Association for Rural Development – AISBL

Finnish Presidency January 2011 – December 2012

ELARD letter of support to the Budapest Declaration

The European LEADER Association for Rural Development - ELARD, wishes to provide its full support to the declaration announced by the participants of the seminar "Rural Development and LEADER in Europe 2020 Strategy" (Budapest 24.1.2011) initiated by the Hungarian Rural Association (HRA) supported by the Hungarian Ministry of Rural Development and the National Rural network.

ELARD represents voluntary LEADER networks from 16 countries and 620 Local Action Groups (LAGs) established under the LEADER method, committed to involving all stakeholders in local rural development.

ELARD shares the concern expressed by the declaration, that rural development, and LEADER Program as its special European method, has not received sufficient attention in the Europe 2020 Strategy in which the Community's objectives for the coming decade are set.

Based on the good experiences of its members on implementation of the LEADER method, ELARD is convinced that it can be a cost efficient way of supporting the Europe 2020 Strategy aims in terms of "smart", "sustainable" and "inclusive" growth as stated in the declaration.

The local actors working under the LEADER programmes have been successful in enhancing sustainable social and environmental development. ELARD supports the view expressed in the declaration, that the LEADER method is a tool that can efficiently direct financial support to local needs, and thus foster innovative solutions and handle the complex challenges faced by the citizens living in the rural areas in Europe.

Mr. Petri Rinne
The President of ELARD