

ECOVAST REPORT

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Editor: Pam Moore

EUROPEAN COUNCIL FOR THE VILLAGE AND SMALL TOWN

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EDITORIAL

Welcome to our second Newsletter of 2012, and the last one to be edited by me. I shall be standing down as Secretary General of ECOVAST at the Biennial Assembly, and also as Newsletter Editor. A new Secretary General will be elected in Witzenhausen, and Phil Turner, Past President of ECOVAST, has agreed to become Newsletter Editor. Please send copy for the December Newsletter to Phil, at p.turner@semantise.com by **FRIDAY 16th November**.

Pam Moore

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

The report on the last International Committee meeting in Achberg, Germany will be covered in the report of the Secretary General. The committee has been looking forward into next year to plan ahead. I now have high hopes about our meetings for 2013 – both the International Committee meeting which Rudiger Maul is trying to arrange in north-east France and the General Assembly which Ralf Bokermann is hoping to arrange with Gabor Rajnai and the Hungarian

Section in Hungary in the Autumn. If anyone has topics which they would like to be discussed at these two events then please let our Secretary General, Pam Moore know now. We are trying to give ourselves plenty of time to arrange meetings which will appeal to as many people as possible. I invite you to consider attending these meetings. I know it has been difficult for most of us but I hope it will be possible for many of us to attend at least one meeting a year so we can talk face-to-face.

Personally I have been continuing my research on small rural towns in South East England. The research that I have undertaken this year, 2012, has been on the level of services present in rural towns and an analysis of the heritage assets found in these towns, using national and local sources.

I made a presentation of my latest research at the 3rd Croatian Congress on Rural Tourism. My paper emphasised that small rural towns were ideal places to act as centres for heritage tourism. I was also lucky enough to be on Croatian national and regional television. Both the paper and the presentation will be accessible through the ECOVAST Croatia website.

The research on small rural towns in south east England, referred to above, for the ASSET Project has now been completed. It now consists of 3 separate studies on the same towns. The first concerned the economic assets (retail and other businesses) of these towns – giving them an economic ranking and published in 2010. The second and third studies were carried out in 2012 and covered the level of services and heritage assets. These 3 separate studies will be accessible through the ECOVAST website through Dorf Wiki.

[http://www.dorfwiki.org/wiki.cgi?action=browse&id=SmallTowns/The ASSET Project/Papers&oldid=SmallTowns/The ASSET Project/Draft#ASSETPAPERS](http://www.dorfwiki.org/wiki.cgi?action=browse&id=SmallTowns/The_ASSET_Project/Papers&oldid=SmallTowns/The_ASSET_Project/Draft#ASSETPAPERS)

I have also combined all the results, which in total covered 25 separate criteria included in these 3 separate studies, into one large table which will also be accessible through the ECOVAST website, as above.

I am also collaborating with Arthur Spiegler and the Austrian Section who are preparing a register of Austrian small towns and comparing the similarities between our two individual pieces of research.

As a member of the Board of Civilscape representing ECOVAST. It has been a revelation for me that we now hold our meetings through the Internet and Skype. We found that meetings were costing Board members too much as many have no help from their organisations. We can also hold more meetings and as long as we have a strict chair-person and stick to a precise timed agenda they have been very successful. It may be something that ECOVAST could consider in the future. Signing on to Skype costs nothing but it takes a bit of practice. Several country sections of ECOVAST have already joined Civilscape – it does not need a fee as ECOVAST International is a formal member.

On the PREPARE Network's International Organising Group, I represent ECOVAST and we meet several times a year. This year it has already been reported that we will not hold a formal large gathering in 2012 but will stage several workshops. I attended a meeting with the Turkish Government Departments and rural groups in June, and I will also attend a meeting in rural Bosnia and Herzogavina, this month. Our next Organising Group is in Sweden in September, linked to the Swedish Rural Parliament. The organisation is supported by a private funder – the American Mott Foundation - although it is uncertain how long this can continue, but PREPARE is extremely lively with new members from Serbia and Macedonia becoming active.

For many years I have been a member of the Board of APURE (Association for the European Rural Universities). It is an organisation which normally stages an event linked to a General Assembly every two years where academics and practitioners meet to debate rural issues of concern. The organisation, like many others, has been going through difficult times. Our last large event in 2010 was held in the Isle of Reunion in the Indian Ocean which was extremely difficult for people to get to and this year, 2012, we only managed to hold a small meeting in Portugal with many postal votes rather than personal attendances. From now on we have a new President – Istvan Bali from Hungary, and a new Board. I have resigned from the Board as I am no longer able to afford to travel to APURE as well as events for ECOVAST. However I am still a member so can keep in touch with what APURE might do in the future. Members of ECOVAST are usually invited to attend events.

Valerie Carter, President

REPORT OF THE SECRETARY GENERAL

Since the last Newsletter, the main item for me to report is an International Committee meeting in Achberg, close to Lake Constance (Bodensee) – in Germany, but close to the Austrian border. As well as all the regular items of discussion, the IC devoted time to planning the Biennial Assembly, and considering events for 2013. We also discussed the problems faced by members in these difficult economic times, which prevent them attending events.

Pam Moore

OBITUARIES

CRISPIN MOOR (1962 – 2012)

Members OF ECOVAST, especially in the UK, were deeply saddened to hear of Crispin's untimely death on 25th March 2012, after a long illness. As well as being a member of ECOVAST, he served on the Organising Group for ASSET, and was instrumental in gaining funds for that project from the Commission for Rural Communities, his employer. Just before he became ill late in 2010, he attended our Isle of Wight Biennial Assembly, for which he had also helped to obtain funding. Crispin Thomas Moor was born in 1962 in Kent, growing up in a farmhouse in a village close to Faversham, with his parents, two brothers and sister. He was educated at King's School, Canterbury, Oxford University and the London School of Economics. A friend from his schooldays recalled him as "Dogmatic in his beliefs, compassionate in their application, and acutely suspicious of the supercilious". He remained so all his all too short life.

By the time we met Crispin, he was working for the Commission for Rural Communities, and he had previously worked for the Local Government Association, the Countryside Agency and for DEFRA's Rural Policy Unit. During his periods of secondment to Government, he worked on the Rural White Paper of 2000, and its implementation. For a short time he was a Trustee for ACRE. During his service at the LGA, Crispin established the CiLCA (the core qualification for parish and town council Clerks) and devised and promoted the Quality Councils Scheme as the benchmark quality standard within the parish and town council sector. He was involved in lobbying on Local Government structural reforms in the 1990s and it helping to formulate the Local Government response to the Foot and Mouth Disease crisis. He was head hunted from the LGA by Rural Minister, Alun Michael, to take on the task of recruiting members for the new National Rural Affairs Forum.

As a Senior Manager in the Commission for Rural Communities, Crispin headed an enthusiastic team. In a tribute to him, they commented " You may be misled when hearing Crispin was a Civil

Servant, as he was definitely not a typical Civil Servant, or, for that matter, Manager. He was pragmatic and provided wise counsel, but always with a wider sense of life and its purpose. It may sound trite, but as well as our boss, he was our friend."

It was during this period of Crispin's career that he heard about ECOVAST and became involved with the ASSET Project. When I was compiling the two questionnaires which formed the basis of my research for ASSET, Crispin was one of those who gave their time to advise on their content. He also hosted meetings for the ASSET Organising Group and offered support and encouragement all the way.

Crispin Moor (left) listens attentively at the Isle of Wight conference in 2010. Others visible in the picture include: Angus Fowler, Rudiger Maul, Irmelin Küttner, Edmund Neville-Rolf and Ralf Bokermann.



At our Isle of Wight event, Crispin was as full of enthusiasm and life as ever, active in the Workshops and going for a run each morning. He fell in love with the Island, and told me he planned to bring his wife and daughters there as soon as he could for a holiday.

Sadly, it was never to be. A few days later, Crispin collapsed, and was rushed to hospital. Eventually, a brain tumour was diagnosed and he underwent surgery. Unfortunately, this only provided a temporary respite for him, and he died, at home, on Sunday 25th March. A little more than a week later, our President represented ECOVAST at Crispin's funeral in St Peter and St Paul's Church, Lingfield, where he regularly worshipped. The church was packed with family, friends and colleagues and many moving tributes were paid to him.

Crispin loved life.... and quizzes, and opera and gardens and real ales and pies and jaffa cakes !! However, the central focuses of Crispin's life were his faith and his family. He was a devoted husband to Liz, and very proud and adoring Dad to "his girls", Kerry and Lara. When he was with us at events, he was always keen to show me the latest photos of the girls, and to eagerly talk about their many activities.

It was his family and faith which sustained Crispin during his illness. His deep Christian belief was central to his being, and made him the caring man who will be remembered with such affection. In the brochure produced to celebrate Crispin's life, his Vicar, addressing Kerry and Lara said "Your Dad often asked me to pray for you and then for something unexpected like 'Pray for all the people who won't be prayed for today' – Crispin's caring was for everyone.

When Crispin died, his wife, Liz, tweeted "Crispin passed away Sunday. He brightened up our lives and changed our outlook on the world". It could be said he did the same for all who knew him. He will be sadly missed, and we offer our deepest condolences to Liz, Kerry, Lara and all Crispin's family and friends. A light has gone out.

Pam Moore

MARIA MEIER-GRESSHOFF (1924 -2012)

Maria Meier-Gresshoff, longstanding member of the German Section of ECOVAST and formerly much involved in activities of the international organization of ECOVAST and a member of its International Committee, came from an old farming family in the Roman-Catholic part of Westphalia. Maria was a very faithful churchgoer and supporter of the Roman-Catholic church in Germany. She married a farmer who specialized latterly in cattle rearing, in particular of Charolais. Maria who was a determined and independent woman wanted to develop her own rural activities and after some practical work in the UK in the 1950s set up a bed- and-breakfast which later became a Landhotel in the isolated old farmhouse and eventually also in the adjoining outbuildings on the Gresshoffweg near Oelde. Maria became very active in the Deutscher Landfrauenverband (German Association of Rural Women) becoming national Vice-President in the 1980s. With other partners she set up its sub-organization "Urlaub auf dem Bauernhof" (Holidays at the Farm) becoming Chairman of this association. Maria developed the certification of farms for rural tourism and set very high standards, this all before 1989.

I got to know Maria in 1989 in Hungary, when we both attended a meeting on rural tourism there, also in connection with Europa Nostra. I had developed the links to Hungary for both ECOVAST and Europa Nostra. I was very much impressed by the practical hands-on approach of Maria and was able to attract her into membership not only in the German Section but also to the international work of ECOVAST.

Maria did a great deal to help develop rural tourism in central and eastern Europe, beginning in Hungary where she already had good connections. In contrast to the approach of Gites de France which tended to be more theoretical and academic, Maria had a practical approach coming from an active farming background herself. Her interest was in to develop in particular the quality of the accommodation to attract tourists better. In 1991 I had to represent her at a major conference organized by Belgian and French humanitarian organizations in western Romania in Timisoara with a section on rural tourism. I noticed there that at that time immediately after the end of the Ceaucescu régime it was quite unrealistic to expect high standards from the start so I encouraged would-be Romanian hosts to make a start simply just like as had happened roughly sixty years ago with the development of bed-and breakfast and rural tourism in Highland Scotland, in which my mother's family lived. Today rural tourism is well developed in northern Scotland and also developing slowly now in Romania.

Maria did much to develop rural tourism in eastern Germany from 1990 onwards and worked closely with the German Section of ECOVAST, for instance at a first major meeting in Reimershagen in Mecklenburg out of which developed the association "Urlaub und Freizeit auf dem Lande in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern" (Holidays and Leisure in the Countryside in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern). I myself was closely involved with the official foundation and drafting of first statutes for this organization. Former ECOVAST member Dr. Hans Schwiderski emerged as a major partner for Maria in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern and under his leadership the organization in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern grew quickly and is today one of the most active in Germany. Maria, Hans Schwiderski and I myself were all together 1992 in Poland to help develop rural tourism there through the contacts of the recently formed Polish Section of ECOVAST. Hans Schwiderski remembers well how Maria exclaimed almost in disbelief "Poland looked so fine". Similarly through ECOVAST contacts in the Czech Republic Maria helped there, possibly also in Slovakia with Jozef Usak. Maria in particular gave an important lead in Brandenburg where her partner was Joachim Fiebelkorn.

Maria gave much help and service to the German Section and in particular the international organization of ECOVAST. Through her great kindness we were able to organize a considerable number of conferences and events at her very kindly and hospitable farmhouse and Landhotel

near Oelde. At times there would be tensions and differences. However Maria with her hands-on approach and always kindly and friendly attitude was able to do much to repair the breaches and calm the tensions. I remember that Maria was much loved by our Swedish members but left with all participants at the events with which she was associated a highly positive and lasting impression.

For her especial services towards the development of rural tourism in Germany and internationally Maria received the highest German honour, the Bundesverdienstkreuz (Federal Service Order).

In recent years things became quieter around Maria and due to old age and illness she withdrew from her many activities, although she continued in her activities up to about 2008. Our nearest German members, Ursula Stratenwerth, former Chairperson of the German Section, and Gerda Stachowitz, both in Bielefeld, had occasional contact with Maria and she was not forgotten.

ECOVAST will keep a good memory of Maria and all she did and we are very thankful for the important services she rendered. We grieve with her family, with her husband, her children and grandchildren.

Angus Fowler

NEWS FROM THE SECTIONS

AUSTRIA - We have two items to report. First, the Green Belt project in co-operation with the University of Agriculture, Vienna seems to be reaching realisation. It is based on involving local people and local administration in recognising and characterising their landscapes. These are the landscapes surrounding certain "hot spots" of the Green Belt extending from the north to the south of Europe along the former "iron curtain".

Secondly, as initiated at the IC-meeting in Achberg, ECOVAST Austria, in co-operation with the German Section aim at having a round table on "Small Historic European Towns" (SHETs) during the afternoon before the "Witzenhausen Meeting" in October. The main topic to be discussed will be the compatibility of criteria for SHETs, hopefully to achieve some harmonisation and common approach in this matter. The Austrian section is planning a small round table on the same issue as a national preparation before the Summer vacation.

Arthur Spiegler & Brigitte Macaria

CROATIA – The Croatian Section has been quite lively lately because its members were involved in a number of different activities. Firstly, the Section was co-organizer with the Croatian Farmer and The Village Club at the Third Rural Tourism Congress in Croatia, an important international event which brought more than 150 participants to Osijek, a town in the flatlands of North-East Croatia, for a 3 day conference with an excursion to Baranja region (May 23-26, 2012).

The President of ECOVAST International Valerie Carter was invited to give a presentation on tourism in small towns and rural areas of the South East England, while the Vice-President Tihana Štepinac Fabijanić made a presentation together with her colleague Damir Džemonja on the role of the Danube Civil Society Forum within the Danube Strategy with a special attention given to the actual situation in Croatia. There were also other members of Croatian ECOVAST actively involved in all five of the Congress Working Groups: Heritage and Tradition in Tourism, Water and River Tourism, Creating and Distributing Products in Rural Tourism, Regional Development, Financing and International Cooperation, Special Forms of Rural Tourism. The Congress has achieved its goal to bring together experts from various fields of interest for an exchange of ideas and experiences, as well as to bring about final conclusions which all participants have helped

preparing. More detailed information about the Congress can be found on: www.kongres-seoskog-turizma.org

On June 12, 2012 the Croatian Section of ECOVAST organized in Zagreb a presentation of the book 'Moscenice Works 6' which was published together with the 'Čakavski Sabor Moscenicka Draga', a local organization which is pursuing the theme of small historical towns in the Kvarner Region (on the hills around Rijeka bay). Although it was a very rainy Tuesday a number of ECOVAST members participated at the 'Round Table' organized for that occasion, most of them already involved in the 'small towns' project in Croatia with our 80 years old colleague Veseljko Velcic on the lead! Already he is trying to stimulate members to organize in the early autumn another conference in Moscenice which would bring about all neighbouring settlements of the area (small historical towns)

Next day, on June 13, 2012, Vice President Tihana Stepinac Fabijanic participated in the presentation of yet another book, of a colleague in ECOVAST and a Professor at the Geography Department of the University of Zagreb, Dr Aleksandar Lucic who wrote about the 'Mosaics of Rural Settlements in Croatia' (a scientific typology study). Also quite a lot of people participated, there, some of them ECOVAST members like the author himself.

We would also like to use this opportunity to congratulate our National Section's President Biserka Dumbović Bilušić on her graduating the PhD degree last month at the Architecture Faculty in Zagreb on the landscape evaluation and protection theme !

Tihana Stepinac Fabijanic

GERMANY

International Spring Conference in the Lake Constance (Bodensee) Region on Ecological Building in Rural Areas and Cultural Landscape in April joined by the Annual General Meeting of ECOVAST German Section and Members of the International Committee

The venue is named after the German philosopher and educational reformer of the early 19th century, Wilhelm von Humboldt. The Humboldt-House in the village of Achberg is situated on a hilltop of the Swabian Allgäu landscape, which is gently rising from Lake Constance. It is surrounded by meadows and forests and offers great views. In the South and East the Alps of Austria and Switzerland rise majestically beyond the lake. This landscape was formed in glacial times as Professor Manfred Thierer explained during the Conference and is characterised by numerous lakes. Lake Constance originates from the Rhine-Glacier.

Achberg is named after its castle which is an International Cultural Centre. It is said that the Humboldt-House was the origin of the extra parliamentary left-wing opposition movement in Germany (APO) in the late 1960s and origin of the Green Party (Bündnis 90 / Die Grünen) in Germany at the beginning of the 1980s. Located quite close to the Institute for Building biology and Ecology Neubeuern (IBN) the Humboldt-House was a perfect place to examine the topic of the Conference with some well known experts from the region.

In the debate about sustainability and sustainable lifestyles, people from Germany, Austria and Switzerland are becoming increasingly aware of ecological building with natural materials, renewable energies and energy saving. The Conference investigated issues such as,

- what are the criteria of ecological building,
- how long is the lifetime of the biological material,
- how much is construction and maintenance expected to cost and
- how do such buildings fit in the surrounding cultural landscape?

Ethnographer Irmelin Küttner, Chairwoman of the German Section introduced the subject of home landscape and cultural landscape to the audience. Historian Angus Fowler gave some interesting facts to provide the context of the territorial history and development of the region. Architect Rüdiger Maul, also a member of the German Section, an advocate of ecological building, with great experience in building with regional materials and in the local style showed some examples of good and poor architecture in places in the Palatinate area. Justus Bohl gave a very impressive practical report on the building of his house all from wood and clay in the typical local timber-framed style of the rural area near the city of Osnabrück, which was completed two years ago. Though already 80 years old he and his wife helped the various tradesmen to construct their house, for instance in producing the clay bricks.

In the afternoon ECOVAST members from Germany, Austria and England and local guests visited several buildings, constructed according to ecological building principles on the German and Austrian side of Lake Constance. Each one impressed the group in its own specific way. The most radical example probably was the Eco-House of the Lehmann couple made of clay in conjunction with recycled and reusable material such as windows and doors and also technical equipment. They had built the house together with 300 mostly young people who stayed for some weeks or months over a period of 10 years. The Mondsichelhaus in Hörbranz/Austria presented itself as well proportioned with a pleasant climate inside. At Sonnenhof Ried in Neuravensburg we were not only impressed by its ecological restructuring, but by the use of the whole ensemble with stables, several workshops, a big garden and playgrounds. It was the holistic approach of the owner, an architect, and his wife for a farm offering holidays for children and young people who are seriously ill.

Andrea Weigert

UNITED KINGDOM – The Section held an informal meeting in Finstock, Oxfordshire in May, at which a number of topics were discussed. It was decided to hold a bigger event in the Autumn, probably elsewhere in Oxfordshire.

Pam Moore

ECOVAST BIENNIAL ASSEMBLY 2012

This year's Assembly will be held in Witzenhausen, Germany on the morning of Sunday 7th October. As always, there will be meetings of the two Working Groups, and on the day before, a half conference and an excursion. As a Biennial Assembly, there will be elections of the Officers and Committee.

Ralf Bokermann, the principal organiser, tells us more...

THE SPHERE OF THE NEXT BIENNIAL ASSEMBLY

1. The region

The international committee has decided at its last meeting in Achberg that the next Biennial Assembly will take place from the 5th to the 7th of October in Witzenhausen in the Werra Region. The region lies in central Germany between the cities of Kassel (30 km) and Goettingen (25 km). Witzenhausen is well connected to highways and the railway.

The region lies in the Medium German Mountain Area and is subdivided in small geographic units. The area belongs to the planning region of Northern Hessen, upper centre is the city of Kassel. As a cultural space the area is characterised above all by historical small towns. Most city centres here show a continuity of historical timber-framed buildings. The preservation of this stock of historic buildings is a job for which there are up to now no standard concepts.

After the social and economic structure the area is typically rural with all the usual problems.

2. Main focus of the intended programme

The Werraland is a cultural space, a tourist area as well as a region of forced rural development. Therefore one could give the Biennial Assembly many main focuses. It has been decided to concentrate on rural development. The priority will be set on innovative projects. Architecture and scenery are considered with single projects illustrated. Anyone who would like to get to know the cultural space, should remain several days longer in the region. If wished, a programme can be offered for this.

3. Planned organisation of the conference

A seminar hotel is booked for the duration of the conference; it lies in approx. 0.7 km from the city centre. Accommodation and meals are planned here and in a nearby restaurant. Thus the time can all be used for the conference and events. The prices are moderate.

On account of the tourist demand in the region the registrations should be given for the conference by the 15th of September. The programme and other documents for the registration will be sent to the Secretary General at the beginning of August.

Ralf Bokermann

ASSET and the European Commission Common Strategic Framework

At the ECOVAST International Committee on 22 April 2012 I reported on the progress of the ASSET Project.

President Valerie Carter and I met Sabrina Lucatelli of REGIO C2 and other officials in Brussels on 28 February. For ECOVAST/ASSET, Valerie has been invited to attend meetings of the RURBAN Steering Group. We have an opportunity to consider an ECOVAST ASSET conference, with support of the EU Committee of the Regions, in 2012 or 2013 and we may have a part to play in RURBAN's major conference in METZ in November 2012.

There was discussion of the Common Strategic Framework that is proposed by the European Commission to cover several funding sources – Regional/Cohesion / Rural Development/ Maritime. It has the opportunity to make urban/rural linkages (and coastal) so that towns and rural areas may be considered together. For urban actions, DG REGIO proposes a bottom-up governance process, similar to LEADER, with integrated local strategies.

We learned of this last year at the DG AGRI Rural Development Committee. It would allow small towns to relate to their rural hinterland. That has been a focus of the ASSET Project of ECOVAST. An integrated approach to sub-regional strategy, civil society involvement, urban and rural - all seem to fit well with ECOVAST's Strategy:

http://www.ecovast.org/english/strategy_e.htm

Community Led Local Development in the Cohesion Policy has been announced:

http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/informat/2014/community_en.pdf

If you only use one link from this article, that one is the most important.

It is available in many languages from:

http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/information/brochures/index_en.cfm#1

I draw your attention to information available at:

http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/what/future/index_en.cfm

A detailed explanation is available in two 'staff working documents' :

[csf_part1_en.pdf](#) and [csf_part2_en.pdf](#) use these links to download the documents.

Unfortunately those documents may only be available in English language.

On behalf of ECOVAST international, on 2 June 2012, I sent comments on the Common Strategic Framework (CSF) to the European Commission DG Regio by e-mail.

To see a SUMMARY OF COMMENTS BY ECOVAST

Use this link

DorfWiki Rural Development and the urban/rural links.

Thank you to Dr Arthur Spiegler (Austria) and Prof Dr Ralf Bokermann (Germany) for assisting with the wording of these comments.

Related action in the UK

For England UK the Department of Business and Skills published a consultation paper on CSF and partnerships in March, and ECOVAST UK sent comments by 27 April (on which the above summary to the EC DG Regio is based).

<http://www.bis.gov.uk/Consultations/delivery-of-structural-funds-rural-development-funds-european-maritime-fisheries-fund?cat=open>

...and in Germany...

On behalf of ECOVAST's ASSET Project, I attended a conference on "Urban. Rural. Europe. Strengthening Partnerships" held at the Federal Ministry of Transport, Building and Urban Development in Berlin on 19 June 2012. Angus Fowler and Irmelin Küttner of ECOVAST German Section were also there.

The Programme addressed urban/rural partnerships and included:

An impetus for urban and rural areas – national spatial development in a European context

Dr Peter Ramsauer, Member of the German Bundestag, Federal Minister of Transport, Building and Urban Development

Urban and rural areas – positions of the Danish Council Presidency

Urban-rural partnerships – a topic for European regional policy?

Erich Unterwurzacher, Director, Directorate-General Regional Policy, European Commission

Director, Directorate-General Regional Policy, European Commission

"RURBAN cooperation" from the European Parliament's perspective

Regional development and urban-rural partnerships – an OECD perspective

Partnership cooperation in a region with rural character

Papers may be downloaded from:

<http://www.stadt-land-europa.de/programm/>

The panel discussion included Wladyslaw Piskorz of DG Regio and Jean-Michel Courades of DG Agri.

Integrated territorial Investment (ITT), using the several funds of the Common Strategic Framework (CSF) needs to be managed. By which ministry in which country?

Urban/Rural partnerships do not yet appear in the European Regulations. Some member states are not promoting Community Led Local Development (CLLD) or Urban/Rural.

The main conclusion was that it is important for organisations in each member state to influence their ministries - on the partnership agreements being drawn up for each country and the operational programmes.

Phil Turner

ESPON Project: Small and Medium Sized Towns (TOWN)

TOWN is an ESPON project that commenced in April 2012 and is due to conclude in March 2014. The objective of this research project is to investigate the role of Small and Medium-sized towns (SMSTs) in their functional context and their potentialities for promoting territorial cohesion in Europe. It recognizes SMSTs as crucial territorial factors in realising the EU2020 strategy, and more generally, as crucial elements of the European territory essential to strategies seeking to address the deep economic crisis currently affecting Europe.

The focus will be on towns with a population between 5,000 and 50,000. In policy terms these smaller towns sit astride the boundary of policy interests related to the European urban system and of policy interests related to the issue of rural development, as a result they are often overlooked when it comes to policy. Thus they offer many challenges to policy makers with an interest in integrated policy work but also in terms of building forms of territorial cohesion better able to join up mechanisms for facilitating spatial development in different types of region with the overall aim of a smarter, greener and more inclusive Europe. Given this our research is particularly important as these 'smaller places' are rarely the explicit focus of attention. In this sense, there is a 'major deficit' in our knowledge, in particular concerning the capacity to frame these crucial territorial elements in a EU-wide perspective in terms of both quantitative and qualitative analyses, and of the types of policies needed to support their development. Thus, the current project will fill in a major gap in both the scientific and policy literatures.

The research project starts from a questioning of the concept of SMST, and how it can be operationalised in a research proposal within the framework of ESPON. The varied and complex nature of SMSTs in their territorial locations requires a specific focus. In order to build a coherent methodological framework that will provide important inputs for a large variety of stakeholders and policymakers, the first research priority will be to use the existing literature on scale, place and uneven development to study the conceptual dimensions of SMSTs. It will provide the basis for an original combination of morphological, quantitative and qualitative methodologies that will provide new evidence, based on comparable information covering the entire European territory in terms of regional characterization of SMSTs, which will be tested and implemented in combination with in-depth analysis of case studies.

The TOWN project will be located within the territorial cohesion and placed-based approach developed in the EU over the last decade. Within this context policy is now increasingly recognising the varied roles and functions of SMSTs and the need to develop policies that take into account their particular context and support them within that context as drivers of regional

and local development. However, we need to bear in mind that much of this mainly exists in policy documents and is only gradually being translated into policies on the ground in some regions whilst elsewhere experience is very patchy. Thus, the project aims to deliver innovative results that can help understand the roles, potentialities and the threats facing SMSTs across Europe, and that can support policy development in the field of territorial development, competitiveness and cohesion, providing new evidence-based development opportunities for the European territory.

Further information on TOWN can be obtained from the project leader Loris Servillo: loris.servillo@asro.kuleuven.be.

Rob Atkinson

CAP toward 2020 - Shift of Rural Paradigm?

Goran Šoster, Coordinator of the PREPARE Network, commented on 13 July in a presentation in Brussels at the conference CAP toward 2020, organized by Commissioner Dacian Ciolos, DG Agri.

CAP Reform and Civil Society

PREPARE's mission is to build the bridge between civil society and governments. Special focus is given to the new MS, accession countries and EU neighbours. In recent years a lot of attention also to the old MS with broadening the idea of Rural Parliaments as important option of participative democracy.

CAP reform made good example how civil society should be involved in the planning process of the future policies. National governments and so called "young democracies" can learn from that case.

Civil society was not involved in the reform processes in such extent before and in the other sectors authorities should follow the example of DG Agri – but: does the involvement of civil society mean that its interests are included in the CAP 2020?

To see the full text of the presentation use this link:

[DorfWiki](#)**Expectations from CAP reform by PREPARE at the CAP conference 2010:**

EVENTS NOTIFIED TO THE SECRETARY GENERAL

October 5–7 ECOVAST Biennial Assembly and associated events, Witzenhausen, Germany – see article above.

October 5-9 4th European Congress on Rural Tourism, Piatra Neamt, Romania, "Innovative Tourism – New Life for Rural Areas" contact Klaus Ehrlich e mail : klaus.ehrlich@raar.es

November 22-24 2012 Denkmal - European Trade fair for Conservation, Restoration & Old Building Renovation Leipzig, Germany – [for more information, please see : http://www.leipzigmesse.de/LeMMon/denkmal_web_eng.nsf](http://www.leipzigmesse.de/LeMMon/denkmal_web_eng.nsf)

June 2013 - EUROPA NOSTRA Congress, Athens, further details will appear at www.europanostra.org

