



FORUM SYNERGIES & CELAVAR

CELAVAR

Linking Sustainable Practices throughout Europe

European Rural Sustainability Gathering 2010

14-17 October 2010

Vouneuil sur Vienne, Poitou-Charentes, FR



A glimpse to the future of rural Europe...
arc - The Agri-Rural Convention

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Background

Forum Synergies and Celavar invite you to participate in a challenging and exciting process. We wish to build a bridge between two worlds:

- the world of people working in local projects and regional networks where they have been trying to put sustainable rural development and farming into practice
- and people working in political bodies, in governments and European institutions who are responsible for political decision-making in the field of agriculture and rural development.

We have called this bridge-building the **ARC = Agriculture & Rural Convention** (www.arc2020.eu). We invite European civil society to gather ideas about better policies in farming and rural areas. We believe that the 'European project' needs more genuine involvement and influence of civil society and citizens in decision making, so that people are ready to take responsibility and carry necessary reforms. Decreasing turnout in European elections and growing skepticism against European Institutions clearly indicate that new connections need to be built.

In the coming three years the European institutions (Commission, Parliament and Council) will prepare a new framework for virtually reform all its policies and their financing, including the Common Agriculture and Rural Development Policies. This is a window of opportunity for us to say what currently goes wrong and what could be done better in the future in order to move towards more sustainable farming and rural development and to make more people enthusiastic about this.

Celavar and Forum Synergies have created networks and have organized exchanges of good practices in the past 15 years. We wish to bring these experiences to the political debate and to the good practices marketplace. We invite policy makers to learn from success stories and to discuss with us our new policy proposals.

The hosting organisations

Forum Synergies is a European non-profit organisation. Since 1994 our network of engaged citizens and associations has gathered rich and varied experiences in sustainable practices, mainly in rural areas. Trying out the best ways to save resources and energy in our local communities, combining the intelligent use of modern technologies with traditional know how, and sharing our successes and weaknesses throughout Europe, have given us faith in getting involved in political decision-making on our future. We also welcome new members to Forum Synergies. You can find more information about our ideas and projects on our website www.forum-synergies.eu.

CELAVAR is an associative coordination for sustainable development of rural areas. CELAVAR supports a more fair and solidar society even further from the city, and promotes balanced urban-rural links. This is done through exchanges, studies, reflections and experimentations of new practices. **CELAVAR Poitou-Charentes**, the local organiser, supports citizens' initiatives for business creation, support to employment and inclusion in rural areas. The meeting will take place in one of its members territory, **CPIE Seuil du Poitou**, an association in-

volved in environmental issues, acted on its territory through education and environmental awareness actions. www.celavar.org, www.ecologia-tourisme.com

Poitou-Charentes Region

Poitou-Charentes is a French region which attracts new residents and tourists. It remains predominantly a rural area, and has maintained a strong agricultural basis. The main trends of its agriculture evolution has been towards industrial model: production specialization, simplification of crop rotation, farm enlargement, with a drastic consequent reduction in farm employment, non-renewable use of scarce natural resources, disintegration of social cohesion. This is driven to the loss of cooperation habit and a wider gap between agriculture and society ignorant of the constraints of business and the needs of farmers.

However, many organizations are involved in the development of local initiatives to guide the production systems to sustainable development practices, to create innovative farming economically sustainable and with high social, cultural and environmental added-value. Beyond the agricultural issue, not less than 30 000 associations are operating in the region. They are essentially engaged in improving quality of life (leisure, culture, sports), social needs (social, family and educational actions, insertion) and on social issues (defense movements of opinion, environment, ecology, land use territory). Finally, one of every 10 regional jobs is coming from the association sector! This well structured social fabric has its own coordination, representative to the public authorities.

Programme Principles

The programme we are offering for the upcoming conference therefore includes three main parts:

- A marketplace of good practices and experiences from across Europe;
- Visits of local projects in the region where the conference takes place and workshops which draw proposals from these visits for policy reforms from projects and experiences.
- Thirdly specific training workshops will support participants to work out clear and powerful political messages which are to be geared to political decision-makers and the ongoing process of policy reforms. We are going to work with media experts and journalists who can help participants to get their message across to policy makers.

You are kindly invited to visit the websites of Forum Synergies (www.forum-synergies.eu), Celavar (www.celavar.org/) and the ARC process (www.arc2020.eu/) for further information and preparation and to contribute to the already existing working groups and policy discussions if you wish. The meeting at Vouneuil sur Vienne will be held bilingually in English and French, some events with simultaneous translation, some events in one language. Once you have registered you will receive further detailed information about the conference.

We are looking forward to meeting you at Vouneuil sur Vienne!

PROGRAMME

Thursday 14 Oct. 2010 – arrival and market place

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| 12:00 – 14:30 | Lunch |
| Afternoon | <p><u>Market place I: presentation of participants projects</u></p> <p>Participants will have the opportunity to present their projects and initiatives: through printed documents but also oral presentations.</p> |
| | <p><u>Market place II: presentation of the organisers and their projects</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <u>Forum Synergies thematic exchange activities :</u> Farmers Ecology, Lake Project, Community connected Farming/ Access to land, Sustainable health, CURE, PREPARE ▪ <u>Celavar projects:</u> Social cohesion in rural areas (fight against exclusion, services to the inhabitants, youth, culture), Democracy and local development, Agriculture and territory, Business creation in rural areas. |
| | <p><u>Welcome from the hosts</u></p> <p>Introduction to the programme, scope of the gathering</p> |
| 20:00 | Supper : European Buffet (specialities from participants regions) |

Friday 15 October 2010 – the field trip day

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| Morning | <p><u>3-4 thematic field trips to rural projects:</u> <i>how do EU policies support/ undermine the local initiative?</i></p> <p>Field trip subjects (to be confirmed):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ consumer-producer relations and community development ▪ renewable energy and ecological construction ▪ local heritage, demographic change and rural-urban relations ▪ local marketing, health products and hygiene regulations ▪ Biodiversity, Natura 2000 and Water Framework Directive |
| | Depending on group |
| Afternoon | Following field trips |
| | Preparation for group presentations |
| | Presentations of field trip groups (<i>reporters</i>) exchange on impressions and lessons learned |
| 20:00 | Supper and Art session |

Saturday 16 October 2010 – shaping the political message

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| Morning | <p>Introduction to the process and challenges of CAP reform:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The ARC process ■ FS' message from Haute Provence ■ CELAVAR process ■ Commission / EU atmosphere |
| | <p>Group work (thematic groups): completing the message and making it more precise</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>does it meet the experiences from the field trips?</i> - <i>does it reflect our experience at home?</i> - <i>missing points</i> |
| 12:30 – 14:00 | Lunch |
| Afternoon | <p>Plenary: working groups present their morning message ; Journalists suggest changes to improve the communication of the messages to the public</p> |
| | <p>Role play: dialog between decision makers and civil society based on the morning messages: "politician is also a practical job"</p> |
| 20:00 | Supper and Local music and dances |

Sunday 17 October 2010 – preparing next steps

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| Morning | <p>Working groups on ARC, thematic workshops or new projects Time for interviews, informal exchanges</p> |
| | <p>Plenary : following steps for ARC, FS, Celavar</p> |
| 12:30 | Lunch |
| 14:00 | Good-bye and departures to Poitiers |