

“Linking sustainable practices throughout Europe”

■ What is Forum Synergies?

Forum Synergies is a network of European citizens and organisations. We work together for a living countryside. Since 1994, we support people and organisations who are engaging for a more sustainable, more democratic and creative rural life throughout Europe.

■ Activities in progress in 2017

Our topics reflect Forum Synergies partners and members concerns and interest.

- **"Rural Youth"**: Our work programme aims at creating more space for ideas and initiatives of young people. It offers support for youth gatherings with the opportunity to exchange and develop their very own initiatives and also scholarships to discover other European rural realities.
- **"Sustainable forestry"** aims at identifying successful experiences in order to support them, to raise awareness on possible alternatives, and to propose a different paradigm for forests through thematic workshops and other activities. Sustainable forestry includes forest management as well as forest protection.
- **"Civic Dialogue"** is a concept mixing civic engagement and territorial dialogue. Our programme focuses on principles, practitioners, methods and experiences related to dialogue between rural stakeholders, when it aims at influencing policies which have a positive impact on territories or contributing to the solution of local/regional issues through sustainable rural development. Our purpose is to support networking activities with other interested actors on the European level and to give a European dimension to Civic Dialogue.
- **"European Rural Parliament - ERP2017"** is a long-term campaign that culminates with a bi-annual gathering of rural stakeholders, in order to express the voice of rural people in Europe. Forum Synergies will support the activities related to Youth in rural areas in the ERP 2017 campaign.
- **"Travel book towards rural sustainability"** is a process of reflection on our activities, on the way we work and also on sustainable development practices we have discovered, described throughout the experiences of individuals, organizations and networks. Our intention is to explain, to inspire and to learn how to take benefit from successes and failures, ambitions and good stories for the future.
- **"Map of rural sustainability"** FS publishes an on-line database of success stories and innovative initiatives of practical sustainability identified during its activities, in order to provide stimulus to those who are facing similar opportunities and challenges in Europe.
- **"European Rural Sustainable Gathering – ERSG"**: our biennial sustainable rural development gathering strengthens networking between European citizens from the local to the European level. Based on the discovery of a rural territory reality and discussion with local actors, it also offers members and partner networks an opportunity to exchange experiences of their projects and activities and strategize actions and cooperation. The last gatherings each had 60-80 participants from 15-18 European countries.

■ Activities in the planning stage

- **"Rural actors for health"** tries to find best practices about rural contributions to human health, like medicinal herb production, organic food, social health services, etc. The project aims at establishing a network of actors for sustainable health. Based on the existing knowledge and resources of rural actors this network shall safeguard and promote local knowledge related to health care and set up links to other stakeholders like medicines or scientists to develop concrete offers for the general public.
- **"Farmers Ecology"** programme works on the collection, transmission and promotion of rural people local knowledge related to agro-ecosystem management. We will identify and share examples of Farmers Ecological Knowledge to promote the agro-ecological approach and inspire answers to current problems (adaptation to climate change, maintenance of biodiversity, collective management of natural resources).
- **"Lifeshop"**: this gathering offers local players the opportunity to discover sustainable lifestyles in local places. Sharing some days upon invitation of host in its village, with different thematic offers, this "lifeshops" therefore shall be a way to discover a local community lifestyle, get inspired by the creativity of others and celebrate an already existing sustainable present with a small group of people.
- **"Local Food Systems"**: we plan a follow-up of the workshop "Local food matters" - (which was related to EU hygiene regulations), in order to organise an exchange on recent developments in the European Union, member states and accession countries, on innovative local initiatives and on best practice for legislative and administrative framework conditions promoting sustainable local food chains
- **"Rural Reality Check - Policy workshop"**: we envisage cooperating with other European networks on checking implementation of rural development measures in selected member states and regions, bringing together local stakeholders and politicians and drawing recommendations from these exchanges.

■ Organisational structure

Board:

Philippe Barret (FR), President.
 Hannes Lorenzen (BE), Vice-president.
 Oliver Emmes (BE), Treasurer.
 Liljana Tanevska (MK), board member.
 Jane Paunkovic, (SRB), board member.

Co-ordination team:

Simone Matouch, (AT),
 Marina Guédon, (ES),

■ Financing

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