



*Under the auspices of
the Secretary General of
the Council of Europe,
Mr Thorbjørn Jagland*



**European Rural Community Alliance PREPARE Partnership for Rural Europe
European LEADER Association for Rural Development**

Press Release
For immediate use

7 November 2015

All Europe shall live! The rural people of Europe assert their rights

A gathering of 240 people representing rural communities from 40 European countries, meeting at the second European Rural Parliament yesterday, approved an ambitious European Rural Manifesto. It called for full recognition of the right of rural communities to a quality of life and standard of living equal to that of urban populations, and to full participation in political processes.

The Manifesto, which is advocating action on 30 key issues, resulted from national campaigns in the 40 countries, involving many thousands of rural people.

They called for a refreshed and equitable partnership between people and governments. They recognized that rural people have a responsibility to act towards their own well-being, but demanded that governments at all levels, including the European institutions, work to make this crucial partnership effective.

The European Rural Parliament called on the European Union to mount a major review of the condition of rural areas within the EU. The conclusions from this review should be reflected in enhanced focus upon rural areas within all relevant EU programmes and funds. The European Rural Parliament campaign will continue over the next two years with a view to influencing the preparation of policies for the period beyond 2020.

The participants in the European Rural Parliament were acutely conscious that the town of Schärding, in which the gathering was held, is receiving 2000 refugees a day on their way across the border between Austria and Germany. For many rural areas this offers an opportunity to integrate refugees and other newcomers, given the necessary job creation, investment in housing, services and infrastructure. The European Rural Parliament called for a warm-hearted response, based on solidarity between peoples.

The European Rural Parliament organisers will continue to enable the actions called for within the manifesto, in co-operation with national and European partners, governments and institutions.

Notes for Editors

1. A copy of the Rural Manifesto, debated and agreed by all participants at the European Rural Parliament, is attached. This was the result of national campaigns in 40 countries identifying the issues for rural people of Europe.
2. The European Rural Parliament is jointly initiated by three pan-European rural networks - European Rural Community Alliance (ERCA); PREPARE Partnership for Rural Europe; and European LEADER Association for Rural Development (ELARD). Members of these networks are found throughout the EU and in the Western Balkan and Black Sea countries.
3. The ERP Campaign is under the auspices of the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, Mr Thorbjørn Jagland; and is co-funded by the European Commission through the Europe for Citizens programme.
4. The ERP 2015 Gathering was held in the beautiful small town of Schärding in Upper Austria. It is hosted by Sauwald-Pramtal Local Action Group and Schärding Town Council, organised by the Projects4 company, and grant-aided by the governments of Austria and Upper Austria.
5. The Gathering was attended by people from rural communities in almost all the EU countries, plus Albania, Armenia, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Kosovo, Iceland, Norway, Serbia, Turkey and Ukraine.
6. More information can be found at [**www.europeanruralparliament.com**](http://www.europeanruralparliament.com)

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