



# The Future of the European Rural Parliament

Proposals based on consultation with the ERP National  
and European Partners





## **A.**

The purpose of the European Rural Parliament - to express the voice of rural people in Europe; and to promote self-help and action by the rural people, in partnership with civil society and governments - should continue.

## **B.**

The Parliament should continue to meet every second year, as a periodic climax in the collective activity. We should aim to increase the number of participants, within manageable limits.





## C.

Working together, the European and national partners should agree a programme of activities and events which will sustain the visibility and impetus of the ERP during the two-year period between Parliaments.

These activities and events should fit naturally into the activities of the national partners, serving to promote their own visibility and impact as well as that of the ERP.

They should include national rural parliaments or similar national events, 'branded' as part of the ERP campaign and contributing to the dissemination and the gathering of ERP-related ideas.





## D.

We should set a collective aim to widen progressively the circle of rural people and organisations contributing to the ERP campaign and benefiting from our activity. We wish to bring into the campaign those countries or rural regions which are not now involved.

We might set a goal that there should be national or regional village movements or rural networks in every European country within 4 years from the Venhorst event.

Another goal might be to have national or regional Rural Parliaments in all countries/regions within this period. We may also welcome new European partners who share our aims.





## E.

In order to retain clarity in the ERP campaign, we should continue the practice of having in each country only one ERP national partner, which takes responsibility for the flow of information and ideas among the rural people in the country and between them and the international network.

But national partners should be free, and where appropriate assisted by the European team, to work with other organisations on ERP projects and to give people and organisations a sense that they are part of the ERP network.





**F.**

We should progressively enrich and update our understanding of the condition of rural areas, the needs and hopes of rural people, and the ways in which their lives can be improved by their own action and that of civil society and all levels of government.

**G.**

We should sharpen our collective ability to express the voice of rural people and to influence the action of those organisations – civil, private and public – which can and should contribute to the well-being of rural people.





**H.**

ERP should remain a formal partnership between European and national civil society organizations, working together for an agreed common purpose. It should not become a legal entity, because this could bring it into competition with its own partners.

Legal status is not needed in order to deal with governments and others, nor for fundraising since this can be done through partner organisations.





I.

Oversight of the programme should be done by a small Steering Group, which should be expected to play an active and visible role in shaping the programme and representing ERP at events around Europe and in dealings with the European institutions and governments.

The Steering Group should include at least one representative from each of the three co-initiating network bodies – ERCA, PREPARE and ELARD – in order to ensure effective meshing with the activities and interests of those networks.

We should consider how to strengthen the Steering Group by (for example) co-opting or election by other ERP partner organisations.





J.

An early responsibility of the Steering Group, following the 3rd European Rural Parliament, should be to prepare (in consultation with partners) an Action Programme which reflects our collective ambition, and then to put in hand a search for commensurate funds.

The scale of funding to be sought should enable the appointment of a full-time paid coordinator; generous base funding for the 4<sup>th</sup> European Rural Parliament; seeding funds for activities by ER partners in the two-year period between Parliaments; and support for the ERP systems for dissemination of ideas and for networking.





## K.

In the interim period before such funds are secured, the day-to-day activity should be undertaken by a coordinating team appointed by the Steering Group.

This coordinating team should work closely with European and national partners, with whom many of the activities within the Action Programme will lie.





L.

The Action Programme – see 'J' above – will clearly need to reflect discussions at Venhorst, so we cannot prepare it in detail before the event.

But it is likely to include:

- Sustaining and strengthening the structure of the ERP partnership
- Advocacy at European level (of a much more determined kind than we achieved in 2016)
- Effective ERP contribution to debates at European level
- At least one significant event at European level in 2018





- Structured support for a programme of international exchanges, which may be thematic or territorial in focus
- Structured support, including some base funding, for a Europe-wide programme of advocacy and projects at national level
- Sustaining a really good website, newsletter and information system, linked to the ENRD and other databases
- Timely and efficient preparation for the 4th European Rural Parliament, including the aim to raise sufficient funds to ensure the presence of true rural representatives from all parts | of Europe.





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