



ERP campaign 2015

National report from Slovakia

prepared by

Rural parliament in Slovakia - VIPA SK



VIDIECKY PARLAMENT
NA SLOVENSKU

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1. Results of discussions of 8th Forum of Rural Parliament in Slovakia, which took place on 17-18 October 2014 in Krupina

The current unfavorable situation in our society is not conducive to the healthy life of citizens and our aim is to name some problems and proposes measures to mitigate or to resolve them. Bearing in mind the Programme Declaration of the Government for the years 2012-2016, we firmly believe that our suggested actions will not go unnoticed and that the solutions we offer will contribute to increasing employment in rural Slovakia.

Problems in rural areas. People in rural areas in Slovakia are faced daily by many problems, including :

- Lack of ethical and moral education of youth in society
- Lack of law enforcement
- The constant outflow of our graduates of Universities and Secondary schools abroad
- High unemployment, and also the refusal to work in rural areas and agriculture
- Low support of a healthy diet, for example school milk and fruit support
- Lack of modern perspective : the concept of agriculture and rural development have not changed, for at least 20 years
- The continued loss of arable land for use in construction of industrial buildings
- Unused and overgrown grassland and pastures
- Fragmentation and unavailability of agricultural land
- Excessive bureaucracy in the state administration
- A persistent deterioration in business conditions.

For many years, the aim of the Rural Parliament in Slovakia has been to raise the quality of rural life. Cooperation, morals, ethics are values that do not allow us to go back. We support the efforts of active citizens who want protect the heritage of future generations.

Conclusions from working groups during the 8th Forum of Rural Parliament in Slovakia

The outputs of the working group – Rural women .

1. **Problem:** Women often do unpaid work, such as caring for disabled children, disabled people, the elderly ...

Solution: To set up valuation mechanism for women's unpaid work, to count this kind of work towards seniority for purposes of social security - for women as well as men in similar life situations. Similarly with the period of maternity and parental leave, to count it when calculating the pension - the average wage point of the national economy.

2. **Problem:** Weak awareness of reconciling work and family life.

Solution: Support for projects to increase the level of awareness of reconciling family and working life. Cooperation of rural NGOs for networking and partnerships in this field with municipalities, businesses and other interest groups and organizations.

3. **Problem:** Women are little involved in public life

Solution: Creating conditions for the participation of women in public life.

4. **Problem:** Nobody addresses the needs of women and men on maternity and parental leave.

Solution: The pilot project "Family and Work" proposed by the Labour Ministry and the Department for gender equality and equal opportunities to implement in practice. A discussion on the needs of parents on maternity or parental allowance. Engage a wider audience, which is not limited to the involvement of socially excluded groups of citizens (less educated women, youth, the unemployed ...) or only educated women in the age group above 29 years... Project gives impulse to municipalities to provide space to create new jobs, taking care of all children.

The outputs of the working group - The situation of young people in society

Youth policy and youth work at local and regional level.

Young people from rural areas are active, engaging in a variety of voluntary and free-time activities (blood donation, helping others, organizing various events for their peers, they do sport and artistic activities as well.)

Young people are aware of their own needs for active and efficient use of their free time in their place of residence.

1. **Problem:** They are not satisfied with the fact that the only option is to visit pubs. They would welcome more sports, cultural events and space for an informal meeting place.

2. **Problem:** Young people know the pupils' school councils and youth parliaments. In most cases, these are formally established and are involved only in organizing events for their peers. Young people do not perceive youth parliaments as their representative bodies (of school / town / region) that have to collect requests and suggestions from other young people, and to proceed them to their authority (director / teacher / municipal representatives).

3. **Problem:** Young people see themselves as individuals, what results in a sense that an individual can not change anything, and their voice is not important and not binding when deciding on areas that are relevant to their lives.

Competences of young people in preparation for their social life

4. **Problem:** the highest unemployment rate (45.10%) was among the graduates of agro-forestry and veterinary fields.

5. **Problem:** For young people in Slovakia, students in high school, it is important to link school education, as a basic practical framework, to the gaining of practical skills through from compulsory placement with employers. Such placements should be arranged through partnerships between schools and businesses or entrepreneurs in a particular region. They help to give young people that the skill and the incentive to move into employment, and can thus increase increase the number of young people who have jobs in rural areas.

6. **Problem** : Young people identified the need to continuously raise awareness and possibilities of career guidance training (how to write a CV, prepare for a job interview and others). Information for young people must be from all areas of life and presented in comprehensible form and by methods which are familiar to young people (social networks, online portals, personal meetings, consultations etc.).

7. **Problem**: In order to apply effectively for jobs in their chosen field, young people need support in gaining practical skills in area of the key competences for lifelong learning.

Solutions. The solutions suggested in this area were :

1: Promote the creation of opportunities for young people so that they can meaningfully use their free time (sports, cultural events).

2: Promote pupils' school councils and youth parliaments in their work as representative bodies representing young people from the region.

3: Support the linking of formal and informal education to ensure compulsory practice in preparation for future employment and social life. Compulsory work experience can be guaranteed by school partnerships and companies / entrepreneurs from the region. Doing of compulsory practice can help improve the relationship of young people to the region from which they come.

4. Promote awareness of young people in areas that are important for their healthy development (eg. the relationship to their native region, soil, nutrition and others) in an appropriate form and language of young people.

5: Using state funds, enable graduates to work a minimum of five years in Slovakia after graduation.

6: Encourage the learning of disadvantaged young people in remote towns / regions through scholarships.

The outputs of the working group – Environment

1. **Problem**: Weak Involvement of the population in separate waste collection

Solution: Education through schools, promotion of separate collection of household through various actions - edition of the collection calendar with marked collection methods to each household.

2. **Problem**: Throwing functional things that are just normally worn out or unnecessary at home, and this increases the volume of municipal waste.

Solution: Providing these things to socially disadvantaged families through the collection yards (at the cost of storage costs)

3. **Problem**: Formation and removal of illegal dumps.

Solution: Increase the criminal liability of the originator of illegal dumps, clearly defined responsibilities for the disposal of illegal landfills (landowner, municipality)

4. **Problem**: Harmful roofing (asbestos). People must pay for the removal and disposal of asbestos roofs, the cost of new roofing are the same (dismantling and removal)

Solution: To set benefits for the owners of such coverings for the exchange of materials.

The outputs of working group - The International Year of family farms in the world

1. **Problem**: The current legislation is very complicated, and often mutually contradictory and does not reflect the conditions of small and beginning farmers.

Solution: Simplify and differentiate on the current legislation for different levels of farmers and food businesses, including starters.

2. **Problem**: Few products in the Slovak market.

Solution: In order to support our producers and processors, promote the sale of Slovak food products in our market, at least 50% of the products in all retail chains.

3. **Problem**: Inefficient sale of farm products.

Solution: In order to more effective selling of farm products, their promotion and also ensure their freshness and the quality assurance of the product from a particular manufacturer, support the implementation of farmers' markets and sale of products from the region in every district town, or even in parishes. Create conditions to ensure all health-safety and hygiene requirements.

4. Problem: There is no comprehensive information available how in the individual states of EU, the state helps the agricultural sector and family farms.

Solution: Develop a study of forms of direct and indirect state aid to farms and farmers in the European Union and propose accessible and possible forms of direct and indirect assistance to our terms as well as methods of implementation.

5. Problem: Lack of interest and concern to begin work in agriculture for the social security reasons too.

Solution: In order to increase motivation for work in agriculture and on farms, use legislation to ensure significant individual hierarchization of social security system based on merits (to differentiate contributors from beneficiaries of claimable benefits).

6. Problem: Liquidation fee for disposal of animal waste (Knacker industry). Prices for disposal of animal waste are too high for farmers and prevent the development of livestock production.

Solution: Ministry of Environment legislation should provide disposal of animal waste for free to eliminate the risks to the environment.

7. Problem: Courses for farmers - their quality, availability, status/credit.

Solution: Map the current accredited courses for farmers and their providers. Adjust the system of quality in the training of farmers and the establishment of basic standards for education of farmers.

8. Problem: Lack of self-sufficiency for rural services and culture.

Solution: Create conditions - continually and systematically - for rural self-sufficiency in the field of social and cultural services to improve quality of living in the countryside and for young people. Promote traditional crafts and cultural traditions.

9. Problem: Unhealthy nutrition of inhabitants.

Solution: Provide national and permanent support for the promotion of healthy eating and healthy diet with a focus on healthy and safe homemade fresh food. Meanwhile it is necessary to promote support for local and regional specialties. Search and project support and testing of a pilot project on at least one school within the formal and informal education.

10. Problem: The property of the citizens, farmers, entrepreneurs are exposed to different risks.

Solution: To ensure protection of property, including farms, fruit and agricultural equipment from strangers, as well as the forest animals, provide more effective legislative, law and order services that now exist.

2. Activities of VIPA SK in the ERP campaign 2015

We sent out the conclusions of the working groups of the 8th Forum of Rural parliament to Ministries, the media, and all our members and partners; and published them in our magazine „Náš Vidiek“

The ERP campaign included the following activities :

1. Preparing, dissemination and evaluation of a questionnaire for common people and for municipalities
2. Meeting with young people
3. Meeting with seniors
4. Meeting with the Director of the National Network of Rural Development Ing. Vladimír Vnuk
5. Meeting with doc. Ing. Mary Fáziková, PhD. Chief official - Department of Regional and Rural Development (FEŠRR)
6. Meeting with doc. Mgr. Ing. Danka Moravčíková, PhD. She is :associate professor CSc. / PhD. - Department of Social Science (FEM), Chief official - Lifelong Learning Office (RR) and Chief official - Department of Social Science (FEM)
7. Participation in Conference of National Network of Rural Development, "Leader and CLLD" designated for representatives of public-private partnerships, LAGs in Slovakia.
8. Meeting with The Chairman of the Committee on Agriculture and Environment Ing. Martin Fecko
9. Information for members and partners of VIPA SK
10. Meeting with the President of SPOD Association for Village Renewal Ing. Arch. Anna Kršáková
11. Meeting with Mrs. Kodriková, regional division, VUC Banská Bystrica
12. Meeting with Director Ing. Lakanda Martin, director of strategy and projects, SEA Slovak Environmental Agency

We offer below the outputs from items 2 and 3 on the list above, namely the meetings for young people and with seniors.

Meeting with young people

This meeting took place on 26 February 2015 at the Grammar school -Gymnázium Andreja Sládkoviča, Krupina. There were 41 participants. The aim was to collect opinions from students on topics in Slovakia relevant to the European Rural Parliament.

The meeting was led by Maria Behanovská and Katarina Hradská. They presented the European rural Parliament campaign and the expected results. Students were then divided into groups according to whether they lived in the village or in the town (Only six participants have parents working in the village). The groups were asked to answer the following questions :

1. What are your opinions about the place where you live in?
2. What are the possible improvements to the current situation?
3. What are the basic differences between rural and urban areas?

Answers:

1. The young people have a sufficient overview of the public facilities in Krupina, they identified all parts of the public facilities in the town (cultural, educational, health centers, private facilities, and companies).

2. To improve the current situation in various areas (employment, public facilities, leisure activities) they identified the necessary actions:

- More jobs, not only for young people (problem of moving for work to cities)
- Expand the possibilities for study in the region,
- Repair the roads, many of which are in poor quality, especially in remote areas,
- Widen the variety of activities for young people,
- Renovate the sports centres and playgrounds,
- improve health care, and make good the lack of ambulances
- Repair the fountain in the town park.

3. Young people defined a number of fundamental differences between the village (rural) and cities as:

- Healthier Environment in rural areas.
- Better interpersonal relationships in rural areas.
- The possibility of farming and producing of own products .
- Little to no offers of jobs in rural areas.
- Poor public facilities in rural areas (cultural sphere, transport etc.).
- More maintained customs and traditions in rural areas.

These discussions point towards the following conclusions. Young people are the basis for future sustainability of rural communities. Their high labor migration to urban areas and rural depopulation is one of the current problems. They like living in the village, but they see the need to commute to work in the future. They are ready to leave the village when they find a partner from a town. They miss cultural and other events, discos. They see as a problem few bus/train connections to town at a time when they need it. On the other hand, they are satisfied with the clean environment, relax in a quiet environment, healthy food.

Meeting with seniors :

This meeting was also held on 26 February 2015, but at Hotel Slovan, Krupina. Participating the 25 senior people, mostly older women. The meeting was led by Mária Behanovská and Katarina Hradská. The aim was to present the activities of the Rural Parliament in Slovakia on the themes of the European Parliament, and to collect opinions from the participants.

The theme of the meeting was „Women and the countryside“. The partiesThe participants were invited to comment on how rural women see the Slovak rural areas and their development? The most mentioned topic was women's experience with everyday problems. Participants felt that, after the regime change in Slovakia, the life for women is more complicated and several of them were unable to come to terms with this situation. Their poor economic situation does not allow them to live a full life. They do not know the way forward.

Mária Behanovská presented a National project of the Institute for Work and Family, with the project title, "Support for the elimination and prevention of violence against women".

3. Quotations from rural people

The questionnaire, which was addressed to rural people and to municipalities, included a number of questions. The following answers appear to be interesting for the purposes of the the European Rural Parliament.

What instruments of national / regional or local policies should be developed to create new jobs for young people? E.g. local farmers support, employment offer, industrial park to create jobs.

- The education system should focus on linking theoretical knowledge with practice,
- Restore the former local facilities, fruit production, small dairies.
- Secondary technical schools and vocational schools should open up qualifications/ courses, which are required in practice.
- Encourage young farmers and entrepreneurs.
- Associations of young people - something like the successful help to less successful.
- Not only tools to create jobs for young people but for all people who can work : whether you're young or waiting to retire, you still need a job.
- In particular, improve the level of formal education, thus enhancing the competitiveness of young people in the labor market. Promote work experience in companies during their studies. To change the system of labor market support towards active policy - counseling, retraining, NOT financial support in unemployment. At the local level in rural areas it is difficult to promote employment in rural communities. Jobs in less developed regions should be encouraged in the central city.

How can schools prepare students for future careers to make them more applicable to the labor market?

- More practice at secondary schools and universities, to develop dual forms of training at secondary vocational schools, less memorisation and rote learning.
- Dual education, less grammar school students and "useless" university students.
- To cooperate with companies in profiling study programs. Placing young people on work placements - practice in factories.

How can local government / schools and educational institutions / NGOs / young people to contribute to offering activities for young people in rural areas?

- Replace working pensioner by clever young people, youth participation in volunteering, to offer them some kind of reward for their work – it does not have to be money.
- It is not about just any activity, but good activities that would know by educational ways to educate and train people, but not only young but also the old ...

Do women have sufficient space for participation in rural life?

- Yes. Many municipalities are managed by women, whether as Mayor or Deputy, or as chairwoman of associations. This question is very discriminatory. It's not about gender, whether you're a woman, a man, a child or another kind of intelligent organism, but whether you have potential. Everyone has the same opportunities. But only those who want to are trying to be active not only in the rural life but in the life generally.
- There is enough space. It is a problem of attitude of women, their submissiveness, lack of interest in public affairs.

What are the obstacles to the participation of women and girls in rural life?

- They have to take care of a family. Low wages, therefore they have two jobs.
- Lack of motivation.
- None. They make obstacles to themselves mostly. They do not have any more obstacles than men.
- Space, finance, indifference, misunderstanding

In the case of obstacles to the participation of women and girls in rural life, how can it be broken down?

- Education, training, financing incentives, tax relief.
- Building of new kindergarten- adequate amount of places there for every child,
- To create clubs.

Mária Behanovská, president of VIPA SK
Monika Slaninová, national champion of ERP campaign