



## On the move : 90 FLAGs meet in Gijon



**More than 150 people, representing 90 Fisheries Local Action Groups (FLAGs) as well as Axis 4 managing authorities and other stakeholders from across the EU, met in Gijon (Spain) on the 24-26 March 2010.**

The “FLAGs on the move” seminar provided participants in Axis 4 with a first opportunity to network and exchange views on topics of common interest. In particular, four thematic workshops focused on issues relating to strategies, partnerships, links with LEADER, and attracting private investment.

A further 18 parallel sessions provided an opportunity for small groups of participants to discuss more specific issues, such as direct sales and short circuits, pescaturism, mentoring, national networks, social capital, communications, cooperation between farmers and fishers, and women in fisheries.

Based on these discussions, participants identified the following priorities for fisheries areas and FLAGs: 1. diversification; 2. adding value to fisheries products; 3. active project development tools; 4. building networks; and 5. projects for priority target groups – particularly women. Given the diversity of FLAGs, the building of formal or informal networks at European, national, regional and local level was considered by many to be the main added value of FARNET. These priorities will now be taken on board in the second annual work programme of the FARNET Support Unit. Contact: [info@farnet.eu](mailto:info@farnet.eu)

## Selecting effective strategies



**The second meeting of Axis 4 managing authorities took place on 19 February 2010 and focused on the selection of effective strategies for fisheries areas.**

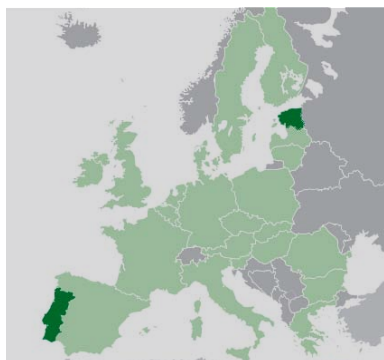
Opening the meeting, Mr Stephanos Samaras, Head of Unit at DG Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, underlined the importance of fostering and selecting good quality local strategies, which he described as “one of the three founding blocks of territorial development”. He also stressed the need for managing

authorities to ensure a proper qualitative assessment of strategies, rather than relying purely on quantitative or administrative assessments.

Member State participants exchanged views on what they expected from a good FLAG strategy, and what tools they had developed to ensure such results. A case study presented by the *Agence de Services et de Paiement* described the main characteristics of the French selection process.

Among the conclusions of the meeting, Mr Jean-Pierre Vercruysse (DG Maritime Affairs and Fisheries) drew attention to the implications of the financial crisis, particularly as regards attracting co-financing and private match-funding, and underlined the importance of allowing groups the flexibility to adapt their strategies on an annual basis. A full report on the meeting is available at: [www.farnet.eu](http://www.farnet.eu)

## Focus Groups in Portugal and Estonia



**In February, FARNET focus groups took place in Estonia and Portugal. Targeting FLAG members and other Axis 4 stakeholders, the meetings aimed to assess the ambitions and support needs of FLAGs in these countries.**

These latest focus groups, co-organised by FARNET geographical experts, included the participation of the relevant managing authorities, the National Network in Estonia and the “Minha terra” rural network in Portugal. This gave FLAGs the opportunity to discuss their ideas and concerns directly with the European and national support structures.

In Portugal, identified FLAG needs included: information on other FLAGs around Europe; methodologies on local capacity building, mobilising stakeholders and partnership-building; and examples of successful diversification activities. The Portuguese FLAGs welcomed the opportunity provided by the focus group to discuss the creation of their own national network and they highlighted the potential of FARNET to act as a bridge between the national and European level by facilitating trans-border and transnational cooperation.

The report on the Estonian focus group is currently being compiled and both reports will soon be available on the FARNET website: [www.farnet.eu](http://www.farnet.eu)

## Romania expecting up to 10 FLAG proposals

**Proposals for up to 10 FLAGs are now expected in Romania, following initial awareness raising and capacity building initiatives in the programme’s three target regions.**



The Romanian authorities have allocated around €100 million to Axis 4, which will target three priority regions: Tulcea on the Danube Delta; Constansa on the Black Sea coast; and Craiova on the banks of the Danube. These are all areas of high environmental importance, characterised by the existence of small communities strongly linked to small-scale fishing and traditional aquaculture.

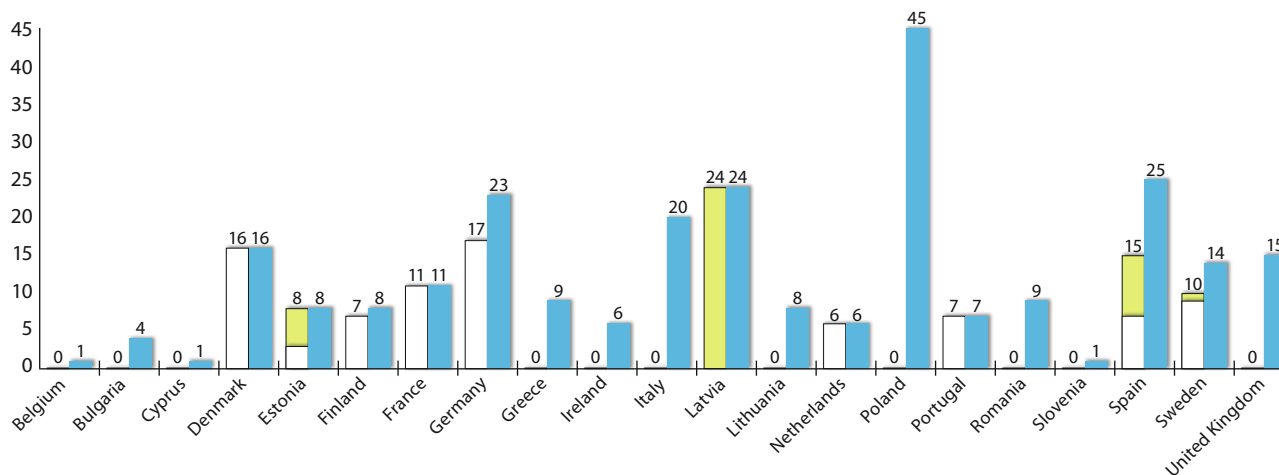
During January and February 2010, the Romanian authorities, assisted by the FARNET Support Unit and the European Commission, organised seminars in each area. The aim of the seminars was to introduce the Axis 4 programme and

to identify local development needs and areas where further support might be required from the managing authority and FARNET. Over 150 people participated in these events, including regional and national government officials, local mayors, and representatives of fisheries, environmental and community organisations.

In follow-up to the seminars, a one day conference and training session took place in Bucharest in early March involving 50 people, representing 10 potential FLAGs. These prospective groups returned to their communities with draft action plans and are now busily preparing their formal expressions of interest. A more in depth training session for the groups is planned for May, once expressions of interest have been approved.

## State of play: 121 FLAGS with approved strategies

At the end of March 2010, there were 121 FLAGS with approved strategies. Newcomers since the last update (December 2009) come from Latvia, where all 24 FLAGS were selected in February, Estonia, where eight FLAGS are now up and running, and Spain and Sweden, where the number of FLAGS increased by seven and one respectively.



□ Number of groups with approved strategies end 2009    ■ Approved January–March 2010    ■ Number of groups planned

## Forthcoming events and activities

April 2010	Training seminar	Italy (Calabria)
	Training seminar	Poland
14 April 2010	Meeting for Managing Authorities	Brussels
May 2010	Information session	Germany (Mecklenburg-Vorpommern)
May 2010	Training seminar	Romania
21 May 2010	FARNET Workshop at European Maritime Day	Spain (Gijon)

## Other news

### MEPs call for a decentralised fisheries policy



At the end of February, the European Parliament adopted a non-binding report calling for a “radical” reform of the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP), to ensure the protection of fish stocks and the EU’s fishing industry.

The report, which is a contribution to the wider public consultation on the reform of the CFP, stresses that fisheries management must abandon the traditional “top-down approach”, instead emphasising regionalisation, subsidiarity

and stakeholder involvement, to reflect the local particularities of Europe’s seas and fleets.

Furthermore, the Parliament considers that fishing activity should be better integrated with other maritime activities such as aquaculture, maritime transport, marine tourism, and offshore wind farms.

The report also urges the Commission to draw up specific approaches for small-scale coastal and non-industrial fisheries and shellfish gathering. MEPs believe that local fishing communities should be given primary access to fish stocks, although access rights should be based on updated criteria.

Further details are available at: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/FindByProcnum.do?lang=en&procnum=INI/2009/2106>

## FARNET at the European Seafood Exposition



The FARNET Support Unit will be present at this year's European Seafood Exposition, which takes place in Brussels from 27-29 April 2010. The exposition is the world's largest seafood fair, attracting buyers and sellers from over 140 countries around the world and featuring over 1600 exhibitors. The FARNET Support Unit will be there to present Axis 4 and to explain how it can promote the sustainable development of fisheries areas in Europe. Further details at: <http://www.euroseafood.com/10/public/enter.aspx>

## European Awards for Territorial Innovation



Applications are now being invited for the European Awards for Territorial Innovation 2010. Launched in 2007, the awards aim to promote the use of innovative ICT solutions in local and regional authorities in Europe. 19 of this year's applicants will receive awards covering eight different thematic categories. There will also be a special jury prize and two new awards: "the special award for European innovation"; and "the special award for territorial governance". The deadline for applications is 30 June 2010. Further details at: [http://www.ruralitic.org/index.php/applications\\_tic\\_innovantes\\_2010/](http://www.ruralitic.org/index.php/applications_tic_innovantes_2010/)

## Send us your news

The FARNET newsletter is a resource for all those engaged in building a more sustainable future for Europe's fisheries areas. Please send us news and information on your activities which might be of interest to other groups or actors working in this field.

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