

Invitation to the international conference

Rural and Agricultural Advisory Systems (RAAS): Best Practices and Experience in the Eastern Partnership

15 – 16 April, 2015
Riga, Latvia

Venue: *Bellevue Park Hotel Riga*, Slokas iela 1, Riga, Latvia

The Latvian Presidency of the Council of the European Union and the European Commission in the framework of the Eastern Partnership Panel on Agriculture and Rural Development organize the international conference.

The Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Latvia organizes this conference together with:

- Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Latvia;
- European Commission;
- Latvian Rural Advisory and Training Centre which serves Latvian Rural Network

The conference is meant to share experience and best practices on advisory and extension systems in rural areas, discusses their different organisation structures, ways of setting-up, sources of financing and best practices in improving the quality and efficiency of their intervention.

The event will aim at:

1. agreement on common declaration by Ministers for forwarding it to the organisers of the Eastern Partnership Summit in May 2015;
2. strengthening the cooperation between the decision makers and stakeholders involved in rural and agricultural advisory in EU Member States and Eastern European partner countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine).

Therefore, after the plenary part the conference will be organised in two parallel sessions – one for Ministers and the other – for high-level representatives.

Ministers and high level representatives from the Ministries of Agriculture, state organizations, advisory and extension bodies, farmers representatives and other civil society groups active in rural areas in the EU Member States and Eastern European partner countries are invited to exchange views on the following main topics:

- Preconditions for successful development of rural and agricultural advisory systems (RAAS);
- Success factors in development of sustainable and efficient RAAS;
- Benefits and opportunities for cooperation between RAAS within the Eastern Partnership.





Final Draft Program for Ministers and One Accompanying Person

Rural and Agricultural Advisory Systems (RAAS): Best Practices and Experience in the Eastern Partnership

15 – 16 April, 2015, Riga

Tuesday, 14 April

Arrival of the ministers and their delegations in Riga, transfer to the Hotel

Check-in at *Bellevue Park Hotel* (Slokas iela 1, Riga)

Dinner at the Hotel restaurant *Bellevue* on the 11th floor

Wednesday, 15 April

- 9.00 – 9.10 Opening of the conference
Mr Jānis Dūklavs, Minister for Agriculture, Republic of Latvia
Mr Mārtiņš Cimermanis, Chairman of the Board, Latvian Rural Advisory and Training Centre
- 9.10 – 9.30 The role of rural and agricultural advisory services in rural development and promotion of agriculture
Mr Mario Milouchev, Director for Rural Development Programmes in DG Agriculture and Rural Development, European Commission
- 9.30 – 9.50 The role of higher education and science in the development of agriculture and rural development
Ms Irina Pilvere, Professor, Dr.oec. Rector of Latvian University of Agriculture
- 9.50 – 11.00 Ministers' Panel discussion
Moderator: Mr Aivars Lapiņš, Deputy state secretary, Head of Latvian Presidency team for Agriculture, Food, Veterinary, Forestry and Fisheries
- 11.00 – 11.15 Tea and Coffee break



- 11.15 – 12.00 Transfer to lunch
- 12.00 – 13.30 Lunch at restaurant *Aitiņlauvas*
Valgundes parish, Jelgavas county, <http://aitinlauvas.lv/eng/>
- 13.30 – 14.15 Transfer to the enterprise
- 14.15 – 16.00 Farm visit – LTD *Lestene*

Ltd. *Lestene* (Mr Egils Seņkāns - Chairman of the Board) was established in 1992. The farm manages 1872 hectares of land out of which 800 hectares are used for grain growing, 300 hectares for rapeseed and 100 hectares for beans feed as well as for Lucerne and corn growing. The farm has herd of 412 milk cows. The average milk production in 2013 was 8506 kg of milk per cow, but in 2014 – around 9400 kg. There are 60 people working at the farm. A contemporary milk farm *Pienenes* was additionally opened in 2012 with 500 places for milk cows meeting all comfort requirements.

Farm visit will provide an insight on the advisors work of Latvian Rural Advisory and Training Centre. The Centre provides advisory and training on agricultural production, forestry and fisheries, providing services in bookkeeping, business planning, research, education etc. that are adapted to the needs of clients. The guests will have an opportunity to discuss farming related issues with the farmer and advisors.

- 16.00 – 17.15 Transfer to Riga
- 17.15 – 18.30 Free time
- 18.30 – 19.00 Transfer to Dinner place
- 19.00 – 22.00 Dinner at restaurant *Lido*
Krasta iela 76, Riga, http://lido.lv/eng/about_us/
- 22.00 – 22.30 Transfer to the Hotel

Thursday, 16 April

- 8.45 – 9.00 Transfer to the Ministry of Agriculture of Latvia
Republikas laukums 2, Riga
- 9.00 – 9.30 Signing of the Joint Statement by the ministers or vice ministers (tbc) and press briefing
at the Ministry of Agriculture of Latvia
23rd floor
- 9.30 After the press briefing – time for bilateral contacts and free time before departure



Rural and Agricultural Advisory Systems (RAAS): Best Practices and Experience in the Eastern Partnership

15 – 16 April, 2015, Riga

Venue: Bellevue Park Hotel Riga, Slokas Street 1. Conference Hall Paris

Wednesday, 15 April

8.30 – 9.00 Registration

9.00 – 9.10 Opening of the conference

Mr Jānis Dūklavs, Minister for Agriculture, Republic of Latvia

Mr Mārtiņš Cimermanis, Chairman of the Board, Latvian Rural Advisory and Training Centre

Session 1: The role of rural and agricultural advisory systems

9.10 – 9.30 The role of rural and agricultural advisory services in rural development and promotion of agriculture

Mr Mario Milouchev, Director for Rural Development Programmes in DG Agriculture and Rural Development, European Commission

9.30 – 9.50 The role of higher education and science in the development of agriculture and rural development

Ms Irina Pilvere, Professor, Dr.oec. Rector of Latvian University of Agriculture

9.50 – 11.00 Ministers' Panel discussion: *Implementation and possible adjustment of available EU instruments to improve rural and agricultural advisory services in the East European partner states to promote agricultural economic development*

Mr Armen Harutyunyan, Deputy Minister for Agriculture, Republic of Armenia

Mr Leanid Marynich, Deputy Minister for Agriculture and Food, Republic of Belarus

Mr Otar Danelia, Minister for Agriculture, Georgia

Mr Ion Sula, Minister for Agriculture and Food Industry, Republic of Moldova

Mr Volodymyr Lapa, Deputy Minister for Agrarian Policy and Food, Ukraine

Mr Jānis Dūklavs, Minister for Agriculture, Republic of Latvia

Moderator: Mr Aivars Lapiņš, Deputy state secretary, Head of Latvian Presidency team for Agriculture, Food, Veterinary, Forestry and Fisheries



11.00 – 11.20 Tea and Coffee break.
11.00 – 11.07 Family photo, Hall Event Plaza, 1st floor.

From this point ministers follow separate program

Session 2: Preconditions for successful development of rural and agricultural advisory systems

- 11.20 – 11.40 Theories and models of advisory services – advisory and extension
Mr Erich Waldmeier, Delegate of International Academy of Rural Advisors (IALB)
- 11.40 – 12.00 The sustainability of advisory services - experiences, instruments and approaches
Mr Henry Jørgensen, Senior Adviser, Business Development. SEGES, Denmark
- 12.00 – 12.20 Development of rural advisory system in Latvia: challenges and changes
Mr Kaspars Žūriņš, Member of the Board, Latvian Rural Advisory and Training Centre
- 12.20 – 12.35 Panel discussion
Moderator: Mr Edgars Linde, Member of the Board, Latvian Rural Advisory and Training Centre
- 12.35 – 13.40 Lunch

Session 3: Success factors in development of sustainable and efficient rural and agricultural advisory systems

- 13.40 – 14.00 The role of state and municipalities in development of advisory services
Ms Barbara Odrobińska, The Chief Specialist in the Agricultural Advisory, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development of Poland
- 14.00 – 14.20 Agricultural and rural advisory services -challenges for Eastern European partner countries.
Mr Michael Kuegler, EUFRAS (European Forum for Agricultural and Rural Advisory Services)
- 14.20 – 14.35 Panel discussion

Session 4: Benefits and opportunities for cooperation between rural and agricultural advisory systems within the Eastern Partnership

- 14.35–14.55 Rural advisory services in Armenia and outlook into the future
Mr Gagik Sardaryan, Director of the Centre for Agribusiness and Rural Development foundation, Armenia



- 14.55 – 15.15 Rural advisory services in Azerbaijan and outlook into the future
Mr Eldar Guliyev, Head of the Department, Ministry of Agriculture, Institute of Economics and Organization of Agriculture of Azerbaijan
- 15.15 – 15.35 Rural advisory services in Belarus and outlook into the future
Mr Aleksei Smirnov, Counsellor, Embassy of Belarus in Latvia
- 15.35 – 15.55 Tea and Coffee break.
15.40–15.47 Poster presentation “Farm Advisory System in Lithuania”,
Mr Jan Žukovskis, Assoc. prof., Aleksandras Stulginskis University, Lithuania
- 15.55 – 16.15 Rural advisory services in Georgia and outlook into the future
Mr Zviad Bobokashvili, National Scientific Research Center, Georgia
- 16.15 – 16.35 Rural advisory services in Moldova and outlook into the future
Mr Gheorghe Cainarean, Deputy director, National Agency of Rural Development (ASCA), Moldova
- 16.35 – 16.55 Rural advisory services in Ukraine and outlook into the future
Mr Roman Korinets, President of Association, National Association of Agricultural Advisory Services of Ukraine
- 16.55 – 17.15 Panel discussion
- 17.15 – 17.25 Identification of future project needs, ideas and topics for development of rural and agricultural advisory services
- 17.25 – 17.30 Conclusions of the first day
- 18.30 – 19.00 Transfer to dinner
- 19.00 – 22.00 Dinner at Restaurant Lido
Krasta iela 76, Riga
- 22.00 - 22.30 Transfer to Hotel



Thursday, 16 April (Participants' program)

- 8.00 – 9.00 Drive to Zemgale region Zaļenieki Parish
- 9.00 – 10.00 Best Practices and Experience. Farm *Mežacīruļi* visit

It is a multidisciplinary farm: dairy farming, biogas plant, vegetable gardening, and wetlands. Farm "Mežacīruļi" is winner of an international competition "Farmer of the Year in the Baltic Sea Region 2014". Family farm is managed by Mr Juris Cīrulis, Ms Vija Cīrūle, Mr Oskars Cīrulis and Mr Pēteris Cīrulis

- 10.00 – 10.45 Drive to Ozolnieki
- 10.45 – 11.00 Tea and Coffee break at *Latvian Rural Advisory and Training Centre*
- 11.00 – 12.00 Visit Ltd *Latvian Rural Advisory and Training Centre*. Informative groups
Mr Kaspars Žūriņš, Member of the Board, Latvian Rural Advisory and Training Centre
- 12.00 – 13.00 Return to the *Bellevue Park Hotel*
- 13.15 – 14.15 Buffett lunch. Closing of the conference. Transfer to Airport

Practical information

Working languages of the conference will be Latvian, English and Russian.

Conference attendance is free of charge; however, participants are responsible for arranging accommodation and travel.

Travel costs for Eastern Partnership Countries: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine (up to 2 high level representatives and 2 experts from each country) will be covered by the European Commission.

Accommodation costs for Eastern Partnership Countries: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Republic of Moldova and Ukraine (up to 2 high level representatives and 2 experts from each country) will be covered by the European Commission.

Catering during the conference will be provided free of charge only for the registered participants.

Accommodation for a special price is available (nights from 14 April to 15 April and from 15 April to 16 April) from *Bellevue Park Hotel Latvia*.

For booking please contact Bellevue Park Hotel Latvia, e-mail reservations@bellevue.lv, or call +371 67069053. When booking the room please use the **code RAAS**. Participants are welcomed to stay at *Bellevue Park Hotel Riga* for a special room rate (code RAAS) – Standard single room: 40 EUR /per room/ 1 night; Standard double room: 50 EUR/ per room/ 1 night. Business class: Superior single room: 60 EUR/ per room/ 1 night; Superior double room: 70 EUR/ per room/ 1 night.

Conference participants who need accommodation after the end of conference (16 April at 14:30) are welcomed to contact *Hotel Primo* (Special rates: single room 35 EUR; double room 40 EUR, for booking use **code RAAS**). Address of *Hotel Primo*: 62 Nometņu iela, Riga, LV-1002, Latvia; phone: +371 25888777, +371 67454571; fax: +371 67454572; info@primohotel.lv, www.primohotel.lv



Latvian Presidency
of the Council of the
European Union

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MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE
REPUBLIC OF LATVIA



MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
REPUBLIC OF LATVIA

Airport transfer. For your convenience, *Bellevue Park Hotel Riga* is pleased to offer following transfers Airport – Hotel and Hotel – Airport. Transfer cost: 10 EUR/per transfer (1-3 persons in a car), 20 EUR/per transfer (4 – 7 persons in a minibus).

You are welcome to contact *Bellevue Park Hotel* to order transfer service reservations@bellevue.lv, payment for the transfer at the Hotel.

The *Bellevue Park Hotel Riga* is one of the few hotels close to the Old Town that offers **free parking** for all clients, with ample space.

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