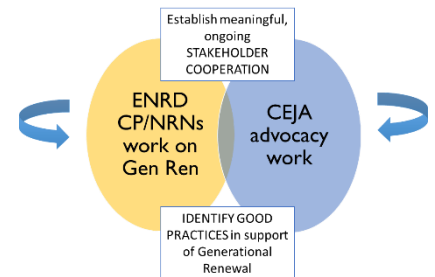


# JOINT ENRD CEJA Workshop

25th January 2017

## Generational Renewal through Rural Development

The [JOINT ENRD CEJA Workshop on Generational Renewal](#) looked to deepen cooperation between National Rural Networks and stakeholders at both European level and within Member States and regions. This workshop was held in Brussels on 25<sup>th</sup> January 2017, with a total of 85 participants, including rural networks, EU organisations, young farmers, new entrants and the European Commission.



**Michael Gregory (ENRD CP)** opened the workshop and highlighted that this was the first joint workshop between CEJA and the ENRD Contact Point. The objectives of the workshops were:

- To examine how RDP measures are being used and can be implemented to effectively support Generational Renewal;
- To identify and present relevant Good Practices by new entrants and young farmers;
- To progress activities with young farmers and reinforce stakeholder involvement by facilitating cooperation and exchange between NRNs, young farmers and new entrants.

**Commissioner Phil Hogan** participated in the event, and in his opening [speech](#) acknowledged that 2017 is a very important year in terms of policy developments. As he stated, Generational Renewal is one of the key issues in thinking about the future, and in that respect CEJA and the ENRD play a very important role in voicing the issues relevant for the discussions at hand.



*Commissioner Hogan highlighted that there will be no "better life for rural areas" as called for in the Cork 2.0 Declaration without a new generation of farmers and rural communities taking up the reins.*

Commissioner Hogan reiterated that rural stakeholders had been instrumental in formulating the Cork Declaration, and now must engage with turning this Declaration into actions. He repeated his call to young farmers to **"bring radical and creative ideas to the table, as a generation of disruptive innovators."**

For **Alan Jagoe (CEJA President)**, who presented [CEJA's vision](#) on rural development, rural development policy is central to Generational Renewal. This joint event was an opportunity to learn from each other and to demonstrate that farming activity is a public good in which young farmers play a relevant role. Europe is faced with an ageing farming population, with more than half of farmers aged 55 or older, a strong reason to make farming an attractive and viable career choice for the younger people in the EU. In his view, the role of young farmers will be crucial as **"we are more productive, efficient, environmentally conscious and sustainable"**.

## RDP measures in support of Generational Renewal

### *From Theory...*

The first interactive session consisted of a set of presentations focussing on the RDP measures and on the inter-Generational Renewal aspect. The presentations focussed on the role of new entrants, including a testimony from a new entrant and projects supporting and researching their role.

**Mara Lai, ENRD CP** provided an overview of her analysis on [how RDP measures support Generational Renewal](#) and on what happened during the previous programming period. She explained the basic implementation rules (as per the Regulation) and the

results of a survey launched by the ENRD CP through its network. The results of the analysis and the survey results covering a selection of RDPs are included in Annex 1.

**Willemine Brinkman (EIP SP)** presented the outcomes of the [EIP-AGRI Focus Group on New Entrants](#). This Focus Group consisted of members from all over Europe – 19 participants, bridging research and practice and support for the exchange of practical knowledge. The main challenges to new entrants and key drivers were identified. More information can be found on the [EIP AGRI FG webpage](#).

[A successful new entrant example](#) was presented by **Agnès Papone, Ferme Lavancia, France**. Agnès and her husband are atypical farmers, but their story is typical of many new entrants from outside agriculture. Their model started with 1.2 hectares of vegetable gardens, organic certification and was highly based on mentor support and crowdfunding rather than on a formal business plan. Agnès gave some personal recommendations for possible future actions and considerations:



- Incentives to farmers for training potential new entrants on the job;
- Innovative financing for local authorities making land available to new entrants;
- Remove elements from the CAP which might discourage new entrants, such as time limits on how long you can access young farmers top up under 1<sup>st</sup> pillar;
- Smaller, more flexible grants can help startups try out their new ideas without overcommitting themselves.

**Zoe Gallez (Terre-en-Vue)** presented the results of the [“Farm Succession” project](#). Terre-en-vue is a Belgian NGO that uses crowdfunding to buy land and rent it out to farmers, mainly new entrants. The Farm succession study (financed by ERASMUS+), helped to raise awareness on succession planning, tools and using consultants to guide farmers and new entrants and to encourage improved legal frameworks to structure farm succession.

### *...To Practice: Roundtable Discussions*

Participants were invited to address one of three questions in a series of three roundtables:

- Farming entrants: are their needs addressed?
- Existing young farmers: How is the RDP supporting them to remain in the sector or diversify?
- What is working, what is not and where is the room for improvement.

The key points of the discussion are summarised in the tables in Annex 2.

The discussions led to some **common points**:

- New entrants and young farmers are still facing issues in terms of access to land, knowledge and finance.
- They ask for better support mechanisms and for the improved implementation of RDP measures.

When it comes to **access to land** it is suggested that access to public land could be one possible solution, together with a better targeted support under Pillar 1 payments, and that taxation benefits should not be granted to inactive farmers. **Land access is a particular issue for new entrants**, especially those without farming links.

Regarding **financial support**, improvement of tools for new entrants, especially in relation to guarantees, is a clearly expressed need. There were calls for support in the form of start-up aid to be ongoing, rather than based on the ‘five-year rule’.

To ensure that new entrants are successful and sustainable it is crucial to offer business planning support and **information** on funding schemes and financial instruments.

Regarding the **implementation of the RDP** measures, there are significant differences among the Member States. Flexibility of the rules should be allowed at MS level while maintaining the young farmers’ scheme at EU management level.

## Sharing successful grassroots examples

The afternoon sessions focused on Good Practices. Two projects were presented focussing on young farmers and two case studies were presented by the young farmers themselves, together with a summary of Good Practices collected by the ENRD CP:

**Rok Damijan** (Slovenian Rural Youth) and Rok Roblek (Slovenian Ministry of Agriculture), presented the [ad hoc multi-actors Action Plan targeting young farmers](#), launched by the Slovenian Ministry of Agriculture. This plan is innovative because it involves different types of stakeholders at governmental and grassroots level, while providing advice and support to young farmers.

**Veronika Korcekova** (ENRD CP) presented the [factsheets](#) based on the Good Practices, that represent young farmers from mainly family farms, plus one example of farming outside the family framework. Different farming sectors were also represented. Common features of the different practices included innovation, new technology, cooperation, higher production and enthusiasm!

The first Good Practice, [increasing farm productivity](#), was presented by **Richard Bower**, a CEJA young farmer from England, and the chairman of the National Farmers Union's next generation forum. His farm, Lower Drayton, has 300 hectares, 300 beef cattle and 200 hectares of crops, and is highly diversified. Through the LEADER scheme he invested to increase farm productivity, by focusing on strip tillage, which helps to reduce GHGs and save fuel consumption. He pointed out the **need for consistency between LAGs and Managing Authorities in the delivery of grant funding**.



[Innovation cultivating tradition was](#) the example presented by **Fabio Curto**, a CEJA young farmer, from Italy. "Innovation cultivating tradition" is the motto of Curto's family, based on investing in innovation while preserving the traditional ways of production and promoting the old and traditional products of their region. Mr Curto is the owner of his dairy farm in Italy, which comprises 350 hectares, 300 dairy cows and 20 people employed. They produce and directly sell cheese, meats, salami and wine. He set up after a fire destroyed a large part of the farm. They are the first Italian farm to use a fully robotic application with single software for the management of the different stages of the work in a dairy farm from a smartphone or computer. **They are now finding greater value is returned to their farm, and therefore to their rural area.**

The last Good Practice, [New entrants outside the family framework](#), was presented by **Yann Nedelec**, Jeunes Agriculteurs, France, highlighting a project focussed on new entrants and young farmers. The presentation described a project aimed at improving knowledge of new entrants that do not have a family farming framework, which in France accounts for 30% of all new entrants. This share has doubled since the '90s. The project looked to find specific needs, identify young farmers who are new entrants, discover Good Practices and appropriate measures to respond to their needs. In many ways, their profile is quite similar to other farmers, they follow the same path and have the same difficulties as other young farmers. **New entrants do not necessarily choose innovative production. They still need support to facilitate access to land and credit and knowledge.**

## Cooperation and exchange between NRNs, Young Farmers and new entrants

During this afternoon session, three roundtable discussion focused on the question:

- **How should NRNs, young farmers and new entrants cooperate to support Generational Renewal?**

The key points of the discussion are summarised in the tables in Annex 3. The key feedback notes are as follows:

- There is convergence in defining the role of National Rural Networks as spaces for dialogue, by providing a potential platform such as a website to undertake “matchmaking” between landowners and new entrants or by sharing relevant research outcomes.
- NRNs could operate a sort of ‘hotline’ for young farmers to support the promotion and dissemination of Good Practices. Their role should be also to provide tutoring and mentoring support.
- NRNs can contribute to ‘increasing’ Generational Renewal by addressing the fields of technology, social support and dissemination to the wider general public.
- An annual conference on Generational Renewal organised by NRNs together with the ENRD could also be envisaged.

## Conclusion: From “ideas” to “cooperation”

When asked *What key words do you take from today*, the participants provided insight into the main concepts/words representative of the event.

‘**Ideas**’ was the most quoted word at the beginning, while the winning word, that summed up the work of the day, was indeed ‘**cooperation**’, together with ‘partnership’, ‘inspiration’ and ‘networking’.

This reinforces the need to continue a productive discussion and cooperation among the ENRD and the NRN cluster on Generational Renewal with relevant stakeholders, such as CEJA.

**Paul Soto (ENRD CP)** summarised the discussion of the day into the following key aspects:

1. Generational Renewal is one of the key priorities for rural development, highlighted further by the Commissioner’s opening statement in the event;
2. There is a clear need to move from discussion to action;
3. The main key issues are clearly identified (e.g. access to land, finance, knowledge), but there is a huge diversity about how these issues affect young farmers in different EU Member States;
4. A valuable partnership: farming organisations understand the issues at stake, and networks such as the ENRD can support networking activities among farmers and networks in rural development. This is something that needs to happen at an EU level and at the national and local levels to be effective, and something we can work together to strengthen and promote.

A **key conclusion** is that young farmers do not necessarily need more grants – most ideas presented and discussed in the event highlighted the need for clarification of targeting, better organised support, business planning, education, advice and cooperation.