



EU Commissioner for Agriculture meets rural stakeholders in Malta

The Ministry for Resources and Rural Affairs had the exclusive opportunity to host a one-day visit of the European Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development, Dacian Cioloș on 28th October 2011. Such a visit came at a turning point in one of the most important and widely debated policies of the European Union: the Common Agricultural Policy. On-going efforts exist to make the CAP more aware of the new rural realities, the diversity of farming, different climates and overall rural development needs across Europe. It is within this specific scope that a need was identified to discuss the potential impacts of the CAP reform proposals on the Maltese farming community.

Through the newly proposed CAP reform, the European Commission aims to instil a new partnership between Europe and farmers, including Maltese ones. Whereas productivity and product quality need to improve, these objectives must be achieved with fewer resources and in a more environmentally-friendly manner to adapt and mitigate the impacts of climate change. This will secure the long-term sustainability of the agricultural sector. Moreover, the CAP 2014-2020 aims to further support the development of shorter supply chains between producers and consumers.

Background and Objectives

Who was involved in delivering the activity?:

The National Rural Network Malta organised a conference attended by high-level officials from the Ministry for Resources and Rural Affairs and stakeholders from the various sectors of agriculture actively. The activity was chaired by the Senior Programme Manager of the Managing Authority.

A presentation was also delivered by Professor Janet Dwyer from the University of Gloucestershire, on the potential effects of the CAP Post 2013 and the New Regulation on Malta. National Rural Network Malta officials together with the University of Gloucestershire rural consultancy team are doing a wide consultation exercise and a study on CAP related developments.

Local Action Group representatives, Non-Governmental Organisations and representatives involved in agricultural education also participated in the conference discussion.

Who were the beneficiaries of the activity?:

The main beneficiaries of this activity were the agricultural and other rural stakeholders which, through field-visits, made Commissioner Cioloș more aware of the new rural realities in Malta. The conference was also vital for the Managing Authority and Paying Agency officials who in some way or another are involved in the implementation of the current and future RDP 2007-2013.





The Maltese NRN strongly believed in the importance of the Commissioner meeting NRN stakeholders from all sectors rather than just high level officials from the Ministry for Resources and Rural Affairs. Consequently the network added value to the activity through practicing the bottom up approach and a consultative style of management to involve a wider number of stakeholders. Apart from delivering presentations on the state of play of the NRN, feedback was also requested from rural stakeholders on what they wish to see in the new programming period.

The meeting was organised in Excelsior Hotel, Floriana. In preparation for the meetings photos were taken to illustrate a number of EAFRD funded projects which were used for display during an exhibition held in the conference room. The exhibition also included a wonderful showcase of rural produce and craft work produced in rural regions within one of the Local Action Groups in Malta.

Commissioner Ciolos also visited a number of agricultural holdings which had benefited through the measures within the Rural Development Programme 2007-2013. These included a visit to a pig farm in Żebbuġ Malta which makes use of a wind turbine to generate electricity, a visit to a cattle farm in San Gwann which invested in tents to improve animal welfare, and a milking robot to increase productivity and improve working conditions for the farmer. Another range of important visits took place in the sister island of Gozo which including a crop agricultural holding in Kercem and a leading tomato processing company.

Although the activities were not open to the general public there was still a high participation rate. Rural stakeholders learnt about the European Commission plans to deal with the current CAP related challenges and understood that with the necessary commitment these changes could be converted to opportunities.

What are the long term impacts of the activity?:

This was a unique opportunity for rural stakeholders to meet the EU Commissioner for Agriculture in Malta at such a critical time, and the activities undertaken could help determine the future success or failure of the agricultural sector in Malta.

What were the benefits of using a network approach?:

The NRN helped to ensure the use of the bottom up approach delivering this activity. The NRN comprises members from all sectors of agriculture and aspects of Malta's rural development and their inclusion enhanced inclusivity.

What worked well and what would you do differently?:

From the feedback acquired from the Commissioner himself and other rural stakeholders, the one-day visit was successful in its entirety. The NRN Malta could however have invited members of the general public as CAP reforms affect everyone either directly or indirectly.

Main results

