



Highlights of the Randstad conference on peri urban areas – May 26, 2010

On May 26, Randstad Region, a member of the **PURPLE** network, organised the Conference 'Fostering biodiversity and sustainable water management in peri-urban regions, a new CAP to face new challenges'.

The new challenges in the reform of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) were the core topic of the first part of the conference and important issues covered included climate change, water, biodiversity and energy, besides food safety and food security. Key note speakers focused on the specific challenges that peri urban areas are facing in the future and how we best can deal with them. A more integrated approach across different policy areas is one of the solutions.

In the second part of the conference experts then debated in more detail about biodiversity and sustainable water management in peri-urban areas.

The overall outcome of the conference was the request that the new CAP should target the particular circumstances of Europe's peri urban areas and facilitate tailor-made solutions, because these areas are so different from rural areas. More coherent use of the different European funds is needed.

Biodiversity

Peri-urban areas may not have a strong biodiversity card in terms of exciting and rare species, but it is a vital component of our regions and supporting our biodiversity is a way of making our farming more sustainable. Cross-sectoral policy making is an essential element of good biodiversity management, with spatial planning at its core, so that all actors can be involved and there is one overall goal for more sustainable farming. This should be the case at all levels from local to EU level. The drivers for sustainable agriculture (including biodiversity) are about innovation and this can often be bottom up. We also need to ensure that policy fosters rather than restricts innovation, as well as experimentation and entrepreneurship.

Sustainable water management

The conclusion on water policy is that this issue needs networks and cooperation even more than money – because water does not recognise borders so cooperation (often international) is essential. Integrated planning and innovation also are key words to water management issues, e.g. feasibility studies, and climate-proofing of new developments.

Randstad



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