

**Check against delivery!**

State Minister Josef Miller  
at the Opening of the UNECE WPLA Workshop  
Effective and Sustainable Land Management  
on 24th May 2007 in Munich

*“Land development – an active structural policy  
for the rural regions”*

**Ladies and Gentlemen!**

I should like to extend a very cordial welcome to all of you  
at the spring workshop of the Working Party on Land Ad-  
ministration (WPLA) of the United Nations Economic  
Commission for Europe (UNECE)!

**German Federal Task Force on Land Development**

We are very pleased and also somewhat proud that you  
are holding your Spring Conference here in Munich and are  
guests of the Federal German Task Force on Land Devel-  
opment currently being chaired by the State of Bavaria.  
The Task Force coordinates the technical activities of the  
Administrations for Rural Development of the 16 Federal  
German States. This Task Force bundles all of Germany's

expertise in the fields of land development and land management. It shows that Germany, and Bavaria, is the right place for your Workshop and for the theme of this conference. After all, in Germany land development and land management have a long tradition in the development of rural regions and continue to be of great relevance.

In Germany there are at any point of time approximately 7.000 land regulation schemes comprising a total surface area of approximately 3.2 million hectares, and there is work in progress on proceedings for the development of rural regions with a wide variety of objectives. Altogether, these proceedings for the reorganisation of landholdings are equivalent to approximately 10 % of the surface area of Germany or almost half of the surface area of Bavaria. Here the focus is always on land property as well as the use of land.

#### UN Working Party on Land Administration (UNECE WPLA)

In what is almost fifteen years, the Working Party on Land Administration has performed a commendable service in the introduction and improvement of land registry and cadastre systems in Central and Eastern Europe. The guidelines and statements developed by the Working Party created an awareness in society and politics about the need

for a reliable record of property and a legally regulated procedure for dealing with property owners' rights.

Your reports on the regulations concerning land management in various countries of Central and Eastern Europe were and are an excellent means of methodically further developing the cadastral and land survey system in these countries.

The fact that you have chosen the topic of land management for your conference beginning today is thus only logical. This is because, beyond reliable and transparent land registry and cadastral systems, a modern state requires even more powerful and effective instruments for developing and shaping the use of land on its territory in a sustainable manner.

This has been our experience for more than 100 years in Germany and our experience for more than 120 years in Bavaria. As early as 1886, King Ludwig II of Bavaria, who is certainly familiar to you as the builder of famous castles, especially Neuschwanstein, signed the "Law relating to Land Consolidation". Thus, for the first time in Germany, the term Land Consolidation was used as a collective term to cover all hitherto customary forms of joining properties and plots of land.

This instrument has meanwhile undergone many changes and so have its designations. But the scheme for the land regulation based on the land consolidation act has remained a crucial and unique characteristic of the work of the land development administrations in Germany just as they have remained a continuous task, and a permanent task.

This is why I should like to compliment you on the motto of your conference *“Effective and Sustainable Land Management – a permanent challenge for each society”*.

This is not only a topic for Central and Eastern Europe. The countries and societies in Northern, Western and Southern Europe, just as much as those of other continents, are undergoing a constant process of change that makes intelligent land management indispensable. In this context it is necessary to bring the interests of state and society, as well as the owners' interests, into line with the right to land ownership, which is generally guaranteed by the Constitution.

In Germany, we have been doing this for many decades using the instruments of the regulations concerning agricultural land and land consolidation flanked by further instruments of land management such as the voluntary exchange of land or land provisioning. The appropriate,

needs-oriented use of these instruments is what goes into the making of effective and sustainable land management.

In Bavaria, the Administration for Rural Development offers, in the form of integrated rural development, land consolidation as well as village renewal, an interactive system of planning, funding, authorisation, implementation, zoning and legal security, all from one source. This makes it the competent partner No 1 for an integrated structural policy in the rural regions.

#### The rural region – challenges and opportunities

The greater the effects of globalisation on life, the more important it becomes for people to be rooted in their native region, in their home country. People need a convenient place to live, with which they can identify, which is in keeping with their values and their philosophy of life.

Considering the speed at which our world is changing and in view of globalisation people are feeling an ever greater need for roots, for something they can quite specifically call home. I am sure that all of you can see this in your home countries as well. We must satisfy this basic human need with sustainable, future-oriented, but always responsible, policies.

As a member of the Bavarian State Government I bear special responsibility for the rural regions. It is one of my most important tasks to strengthen the rural area as a living space in its own right.

We will not leave the rural regions to their own devices! Because by neglecting the rural regions we shall do damage to the future of the whole country, including that of the towns and cities. And these will never be able on their own to fulfil their tasks with regard to the protection of the climate and the provision of life's basic necessities: clean drinking water, clean air to breathe, healthy food, attractive recreational landscapes. All this will have to be provided by the rural regions in future just as they have done in the past. In short: If the country can no longer breathe, the cities will suffocate as well.

The "Bavaria 2020" report by the so-called "Henzler Commission" also devotes a whole chapter to the subject of a "harmony of pulsating cities and attractive rural regions". This harmony needs to be preserved and strengthened. It forms the basis for social stability in Bavaria. In many regions of the world the disruption of this harmony is a major reason for the destabilisation of society.

This is why, fully in the sense of a preemptive policy, we in Bavaria are making great efforts to preserve the attractive-

ness of the rural region and to guarantee its future at the same time.

Even so, the rural regions have not been left untouched by the developments in society as a whole, for example, the continuing structural change in agriculture and demographic development.

Throughout the world, many regions have witnessed a migration from the rural areas, accompanied by an often explosive increase in the urban population. In Europe there are also regions with villages left empty. Even in our neighbouring country France, as its Minister of Agriculture has informed me, this has long been a serious problem in some regions. Many of the villages now only have old people living there, the houses are derelict and the younger people have long since migrated to the towns.

#### A balance between town and country

Here in Bavaria the villages are still largely intact and the farms are in a good state. Even here, however, we should be aware that some of the farmsteads only have elderly people living in them, the farmyards have been stripped of livestock, and the machine sheds are empty.

In Bavaria we have been able so far to successfully counteract the worldwide trend of migration to the cities with a proactive policy for the rural areas. This is reflected in the population trend: whereas the average increase in the Bavarian population in the last 20 years amounted to some 13 percent, in the rural areas it was 15 percent and thus higher than the 11 percent increase in the conurbations.

We are observing a change, however, in this development as people begin to move to the towns and cities again. This demographic trend means that the problems will become more apparent in the next few decades. Only stable rural areas that are fit for the future have any prospects in view of these trends. This is something that we must ensure, and indeed want to ensure, to prevent the relationship between town and country becoming imbalanced because of re-urbanisation.

It is precisely the complexity of present and expected future developments that poses a great challenge for the rural regions. It is thus important to develop creative solutions and vitality strategies.

On the one hand, we must ensure state-wide land management by means of competitive agriculture and forestry. On the other hand, we must preserve existing future-oriented jobs and also create new ones in the rural areas.



### An integrated structural policy for rural areas

It is the aim of Bavarian structural policy to strengthen the rural area, its municipalities and regions as independent and diverse living environments. We are adhering to our maxim of creating, not equal, but equally good, living conditions in all parts of Bavaria.

The internationalisation of life brought about by globalisation even in the rural areas also requires that we take to heart the motto “think globally, plan regionally, act locally”. The overlap with demographic developments will require even more deliberate and effective cross-sectoral thinking and acting in future. This will call for integrated projects and programmes as well as a wide variety of networks.

### The mainstay: land use

Our agriculture, forestry and food industries continue to be the mainstays of the economy in the rural areas. Networks between the agricultural industry, trades and crafts and small and medium-sized enterprises thus offer a wide variety of possibilities for regional markets and for an increase in added value.

It is a matter of great importance to me that that we spare no effort in enhancing existing regional value-added potentials and also in developing and promoting new value-

added chains. The rural area has excellent possibilities in this respect. As an example I should like to mention the fields of wood-working and wood-processing, energy production through the use of renewable resources as well as local supply by means of regional and direct marketing.

Within the scope of its responsibilities for the development of the rural area, agricultural production, the market and the food industry, forestry, renewable resources and agricultural services, the Bavarian State Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry has far-reaching competencies tailored to the needs of the rural regions.

The Offices within my department are active not only in enforcing sovereign and supporting powers, but also in providing ideas, as promoters of ideas and network architects. With our wide-ranging know-how we can help farmers, citizens, municipalities and the business community to help themselves – entirely in the spirit of proactive administration.

#### Intercommunal cooperation replaces parochial thinking

Many of the challenges of the rural area can be mastered most effectively by means of cross-municipal approaches and communal alliances. In this way we can replace still existent parochial thinking. Two concrete examples in this

context are intercommunal industrial zones and cross-municipal equipment pools.

Fact is that cooperation in the rural area creates perspectives for those who live there! Also, for me, cooperation in this respect always means involving people in these new developmental approaches, so that they themselves can shape the future path they want to take. This is precisely what we have been practising, with great success, for example, in Bavaria's village renewal programme for some 25 years! We have transferred these positive experiences to land consolidation. Mr. Wiediger, from my staff, will be telling you about that in Session One.

We in Bavaria are consistently implementing this approach. In Bavaria 65 projects for integrated rural development and inter-communal alliances are currently being looked after by the Administration for Rural Development. These are joined by 45 local action groups for the practical implementation of the EU LEADER action programme.

In the spirit of the political mandate of an integrated rural development we are concentrating especially on four fields of action. It is our intention

1. to support agriculture and forestry in a future-oriented way,
2. to lastingly strengthen the municipalities and thus ensure vital rural areas,

3. to implement public projects whilst ensuring that the interests of land owners are respected and
4. to protect natural resources whilst preserving and shaping the cultivated landscape.

### Village renewal

Of great importance in this context is the Bavarian village renewal programme. For around 25 years, it has been an extremely important and successful instrument in our structural policies for farming, the rural municipalities and the rural area as a whole.

The Bavarian village development programme is in very great demand. At present, village renewal measures in Bavaria are being implemented in more than 2,200 villages in over 600 communities with a total population in excess of 500,000.

The developments and challenges mentioned at the beginning are having an immediate effect on the villages, especially the centres of the villages and are leading more and more to a gradual loss of the functional diversity that is typical of the village. So, in future, one particular focus of village renewal will be the internal social and structural development of the villages. It is important to find new ways of using and re-using existing buildings that are standing empty and hence, in many places to revitalise the

village centres. This is the only way to preserve the traditional fabric of the village and with it an essential component of village identity.

This is why we are offering the communities the “Dorf *v i t a l*” (“vital village”) action programme as the main instrument of village renewal. The aim behind this is to provide incentives for communities and the people who live there enabling them to recognise the potentials of internal development and to develop vitality strategies.

#### Land consolidation

Land consolidation with its possibilities for the reallocation of land-holdings and improvement of the infrastructure is, and will continue to be, one core component of integrated rural development. In this field we still have great tasks ahead of us, if our agriculture is to remain competitive and to have a chance for the future.

Many areas of Bavaria are at a serious competitive disadvantage owing to the way in which most farmland is divided up and fragmented into small plots of land. Currently our Bavarian farmers are tending almost 2 million small fields. In other words, the area cultivated by an average Bavarian farm amounting to 26.1 hectares of land is distributed over 14 parcels of land, each around 1.7 hectares in size.

For Bavarian farms the many small and often widely dispersed plots of land involve unnecessary set-up and approach times, higher labour input and higher management costs and also make it difficult to use state-of-the-art agricultural machinery.

So, while preserving the attractiveness of the cultivated landscape, our goal must be to create larger farming units, to reduce the number of plots and to improve the way they are distributed over the surface area.

#### Efficiency of land consolidation

The advantages are obvious: In 2006 the München-Weihenstephan Technical University examined in detail the effects of the consolidation of acreage for 80 farms and came to the conclusion that by lowering the variable costs of plant and machinery and saving on production equipment and facilities, annual savings of around 100 to 150 Euros per hectare can be achieved. Diesel fuel consumption alone was reduced by about one third! In view of rising energy costs and the current debate on climate protection, this aspect calls for greater attention.

In addition to the effects mentioned above there is a considerable reduction of working hours for fieldwork, which

the scientific study estimated at approximately 40 per cent. This is an additional significant economic and social factor for our family-run farms, which are having increasing difficulties in coping with the workload!

In the case of land consolidation measures a new broad-meshed road network is an important pre-condition for a successful consolidation. The needs-oriented improvement and adaptation of the infrastructure in field and forest, especially through the construction of farm roads, is thus an indispensable component of land consolidation. Usually this also makes a major contribution to the improvement of rural tourism.

All this makes land consolidation the most effective instrument for improving the agrarian structure. It is an indispensable contribution to the competitiveness and future of our agriculture as a significant sector of the economy.

#### Land management and the cultivated landscape

Our magnificent cultivated landscape counts among Bavaria's most important location factors. Preserving this and reconciling the manifold demands made on the use of land is a particular challenge to the way we treat our land and landscape resources. On the one hand, it is a question of using these resources in a way that saves land and, on the

other hand, it is a question of fully exhausting the performance potentials such as, for example, the productive, regulative and regenerative capacities of the landscape household so that demands on the landscape can be satisfied in the best possible way.

In order to preserve and develop these valuable and effective functions of the landscape for society as a whole, we are adopting the approach of a differentiated use of land. For, in accordance with the central idea that “diversity of land use creates landscape and helps to conserve nature” this form of land use can integrate a wide range of demands. The aim is to preserve biodiversity on a state-wide scale despite the currently strong expansion into the agricultural production of renewable resources and energy. At the same time, it is important elsewhere to strengthen the capacity of the landscape eco-systems by land use adapted to the purpose of buffering, storing and balancing.

#### Zoning: the key to sustainable development

One of the most effective strategies for the careful use of existing land and landscape resources is a bundling and optimisation of land use. For this we have the crucial core competence in the form of rural development measures, supported by the possibilities provided by the Land Consolidation Act together with the Regulations Concerning Agri-



cultural Land, land management and the solution of conflicts relating to land use in a manner that respects the interests of the land owners. More than ever, the following holds true: anyone wishing to shape the future must plan the use of land with care. Zoning and land management thus hold the key to any kind of sustainable development.

The instruments of integrated rural development are arranged in stages: from the planning through moderation right down to the implementation of measures and land management. This is why they are especially well suited for minimising the use of land and thus for contributing to the preservation of land and landscape resources.

In creating integrated rural development concepts our Administrations for Rural Development work together at a very early stage with other planning authorities on measures requiring the use of land (e.g. water management, road construction or nature conservation), in order to draw up a coordinated plan. The aim is to enable measures requiring the use of land to be bundled as regards time and space.

By means of land reorganisation, the results achieved can be implemented particularly effectively when it comes to the use of land.

The possibilities offered by land reorganisation go even further than that, however: it is especially those big development measures and infrastructure facilities which are important for the structural development of a country that make demands on the use of land. Just think of the construction of motorways, railroads or waterways. Many of these measures can be implemented in a timely and compatible manner only through the use of land reorganisation, because there is no other instrument capable of resolving conflicts arising over the use of land in a way that respects land ownership, is socially acceptable, is effective and saves land resources.

### Conclusion

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The theme of “land management” is a highly topical one – all over Europe. Land development is structural policy in action! I am pleased that there are also many experts from Africa, America and Asia participating in this conference here in Munich, because it shows me that the responsible use of land as a resource is on the political agenda not only in Europe, but throughout the world.

Today and tomorrow you will be dealing with questions of zoning, land allocation, land management and rural development – from different angles; the 22 specialist lectures

from 18 different countries are sure to form an excellent basis for sophisticated discussions and talks. You will be able to gather experience about the way the countries of Europe are responding to the current challenges of sustainable land use. Make use of the expertise gathered here in Munich for yourselves and for your future work at home. After all, effective and sustainable land management is a permanent challenge for every state and every society.

I look forward to the results and recommendations of your workshop with lively anticipation and I wish you every success for your conference, which I now declare open!