

WPLA-Workshop Munich 2007
Session I: New Approaches to Rural Development
Summary

- First Session = first proof for the motto of the congress
Effective and sustainable land management – a permanent challenge for each society
- Four presentations about very different starting positions of the rural regions in those 4 countries

I may bring them to your memory:

1. Contemporary approaches in Hungary

Mr Cartwright presented us the new Hungarian National rural development programme for the next 6 years,

- Based on former programmes such as SAPARD
- Based on a very broad variety of agricultural structures from very small , often subsistent farm plots up to great “industrial” structures of farming
- What I understood was some need of “re-inventing” or “re-establishing” of local inheritance of rural self-confidence, self-responsibility and entrepreneurship (come back to this point when talking about the Bavarian approach of participation
- A need for more inter-ministerial and, as I would say perhaps even more inter-administrative cooperation
- Last but not least I want to bring to your mind the very interesting purchase of land for lifetime annuity programme by the Hungarian state – which might be an efficient approach at least for countries, where such a programme would not have to compete with EU-grants

2. Metropolitan Areas and the Interdependencies with rural development

Mr. Müller gave us information about a very different approach, characterized by the needs of

- A very densely populated area with high intensity of land use
- Based on a very competitive agricultural sector which contributes about 10% of the national product
- In the same time there is a deep change in the rural society of the Netherlands with farmers developing from a vast majority to a small minority
- Dr. Müller enforced what Minister Miller stated in his opening speech: It's only the rural regions, who can support the vital needs of the big cities, such as clean air and water or recreation areas
- Connected with this: We learned about a strong need for measures of flood retention and flood prevention, which obviously is also a great challenge for land consolidation
- We also learned about the chances based on that intensity of land use and the need to find solutions for conflicts in land use

3. Citizens participation

- My Bavarian colleague Mr. Wiediger quoted one of the basic goals of any rural development: "Help us to help ourselves"
- Starting point in Bavaria – very common in many countries: a lack of confidence and acceptance for top-down-solutions and
- - remember the presentation about Hungary: lack of rural self-confidence and self-responsibility
- The way to success he presented to us leads from information and education over the working out of objectives and strategies on to definite concepts which are to be put into action
- As a basic there are three crucial questions for any rural development to be answered: where do we come from – where do we stand – where do we want to go
- Bavarian experience over a long time and a lot of projects: participation causes higher identification with the results, and it causes action "for" and not "against" something
- Also: participation depends on whether you find a certain number of person who are the "motors", the dynamic parts of a village society

4. Land Rearrangement in Implementation of Nature Reserves

- Jouko Sillanpää gave us some information about the approach of our colleagues in Finland

- We should remember the principle of relativity, not connected to Albert Einstein, but based on the decision for taking the moderate measure for any individual task
- Which means: less expropriation – more rearrangement of land
- This is a great contribution to the confidence in the security of land rights
- Amazing to me as a Bavarian land consolidator: exchange of land over a distance of up to 50 km – we only very rarely succeed to do so!

If I try to sum up what we could have learned from those presentations:

- Problems and challenges are far different
- The variety of problems causes a variety of approaches
- But over all: any of the problems and challenges mentioned can occur in any of our countries: restructuring of the agricultural sector – dynamic development of agglomerations and in consequence a pressure on land use in the surrounding regions – Land use conflicts under the conditions of increasing as well as declining intensity of land use – the need of participation in order to create identification, acceptance, local self-confidence and self-responsibility

This last point seems to be crucial to me as a result of session I: the success of rural development depends not only on the efficient use of money and the legal framework. It depends on creating a common responsibility of citizens, local, regional and state authorities and experts. This, as an essential extract of all four presentations, might be the really new approach to rural development.