

## European Commission approves Lithuania's Rural Development Programme for 2014-2020

The Lithuanian Rural Development Programme (RDP) has been formally adopted by the European Commission on 13 February 2015. It outlines Lithuania's priorities for using € 1.9 billion of public money that is available for the period 2014-2020 (€ 1.6 billion from the EU budget and € 0.3 billion of national funding).

The main objectives are the modernisation and improvement of the economic performance of small and medium-sized farms (nearly 8 000 farms will be supported), the preservation of biodiversity (11% of farmland), better management of soil (8% of farmland), the promotion of organic farming, the creation of new jobs (nearly 2 000) and the development of rural areas and businesses. More than 130 000 people will be trained. They include farmers, land managers, food industry actors, forest holders and the staff of rural SMEs. Their professional skills will be upgraded. They will also be encouraged to diversify their activities.

Quote from EU Agriculture Commissioner Phil Hogan: *"One of the great strengths of our Rural Development concept is that we have core priorities, but it is up to each Member State or region to design programmes which suit their own situation. For example, Lithuania has chosen to prioritise different measures to improve the competitiveness of the farming sector and provide investment for a wide range of activities in rural areas."*

Support under [Rural Development](#) (RD) is the 2nd Pillar of the [Common Agricultural Policy](#). It provides Member States with an envelope of EU funding to manage, at either national or regional level, multi-annual, co-funded programmes. In total, 118 programmes are foreseen in all 28 Member States. The new [RD Regulation](#) for the 2014-2020 period addresses six economic, environmental and social priorities. Programmes contain clear targets setting out what is to be achieved. To better coordinate actions and maximise synergies with the other European Structural & Investment Funds ([ESIF](#)), a [Partnership Agreement](#) has been agreed with each Member State, highlighting its broad strategy for EU-funded structural investment.

For [more details, also in Lithuanian](#)