

Czech Rural Development Programme for 2014-2020 approved by European Commission

The Rural Development Programme (RDP) for the Czech Republic was formally adopted by the European Commission on 26 May 2015, outlining the Czech priorities for using the € 3.1 billion of public money that is available for the 7-year period 2014-2020 (€ 2.3 billion from the EU budget, including € 135 million transferred from the envelope for CAP direct payments, and € 769 million of national co-funding).

The RDP for the Czech Republic focuses mainly on ensuring the sustainable management of natural resources and encouraging climate friendly farming practices, with around 25% of agricultural land under contract to protect biodiversity, 11% to improve water management and 12% to protect soil. The second focus is to increase the competitiveness of agriculture and forestry as well as that of the food industry aiming to provide investment support to 3 500 farms, almost 1 450 investment projects in forestry technologies and 830 projects in the food industry. The RDP will also help boost the rural economy by creating almost 1 900 new jobs. The priorities will be completed by knowledge transfer and advisory services, where almost 19 000 participants will be trained and 3 000 will receive specific advisory services.

Welcoming today's approval, EU Agriculture and Rural Development Commissioner Phil Hogan stated: *"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 situation. We see a good example of this today with the Czech RDP, and the way in which it seeks to address environmental concerns and farm modernisation issues and ways of boosting the wider rural economy. "*

Support for [Rural Development](#) is the 2nd Pillar of the [Common Agricultural Policy](#), providing Member States with an envelope of EU funding to manage nationally or regionally under multiannual, 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, and programmes contain clear targets setting out what is to be achieved. It put also emphasis on networking activities at EU and national level. Moreover, in order to coordinate actions better 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.