

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

The Slovak Rural Development Programme (RDP) was formally adopted by the European Commission on 13 February 2015. It outlines Slovakia's priorities for using EUR 2.1 billion of public money that is available for the 7-year period 2014-2020 (EUR 1 545 million from the EU budget and EUR 534 million of national funding).

The programme will increase the competitiveness of agriculture and forestry (by supporting investments on 1 250 farms and 400 food enterprises). It will ensure appropriate management of natural resources and encourage farming practices which are climate-friendly. Around 20% of farmland will be farmed in a manner that protects biodiversity, soil and/or water resources. The RDP aims to boost the whole rural economy by creating 2000 jobs. These new jobs will be created through investment in enterprises (including innovative cooperation projects), infrastructure, human resources via training, advisory services and local services (including integration of marginalized communities).

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 situation. In Slovakia, I am pleased to see a particular priority being given to enhancing farm viability and competitiveness, with the prospect of investment-driven growth and jobs in rural areas, while also encouraging environmentally and climate-friendly farming practices and sustainable forest management."*

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.

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