European Commission approves Estonian Rural Development Programme 2014-2020

The Estonian Rural Development Programme (RDP) was formally adopted by the European Commission 13 February 2015. It outlines Estonia's priorities for using € 993 million of public funding (€ 823 million from the EU budget and € 169 million of national funding).
The main priority is environmental protection regarding water, soil, and biodiversity. Around 70% of farmland will be under agri-environmental commitments. Improving the competitiveness of agriculture remains important: 4% of farms will receive investment support and 3% of farmers will be helped to set up or take over a farm. Knowledge transfer and advice is given high priority, with more than 4 000 farmers receiving training. The RDP will help to diversify the rural economy. This should, in turn, create 225 jobs in rural areas.

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. Estonia has chosen to prioritise the expansion and better-targeting of agri-environmental schemes and improved investment in the competitiveness of the sector."

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 details in Estonian