

## LANDNET Declaration

Participants from 27 countries of the LANDNET workshop, held from 13-16 February 2012 have discussed ongoing developments related to rural land structures in Europe and have reached the following conclusions.

### **The present situation is that:**

- Rural areas in Europe are challenged by globalization, increased competitive pressure on agriculture, land use conflicts, rural-urban migration, leading to undesired impact in rural areas;
- Rural land structures in large parts of Europe are characterised by small scale, fragmented agricultural holdings;
- Rural land market functioning in many countries is strongly hampered by various reasons such as lack of information, unsolved legal disputes, high transaction costs, underdeveloped spatial planning frameworks, unclear and unsecured property rights etc;
- Existing legal frameworks and policy instruments are not well developed;
- Land tenure issues are not getting sufficient attention by both European and National policies;
- Competitiveness of Europe's rural areas is seriously affected by the slow pace of restructuring of rural land ownership and use, difficulties to get mortgages on rural land etc.;
- Addressing other land use claims resulting from public policies - such as for example Natura 2000, development of public infrastructure, water management etc. - can only be effectuated when balanced properly with and tuned to a healthy agricultural sector in a well functioning land market;
- The combined output of the referred negative factors seriously hampers rural development.

### **Considering that:**

- An informal network has been functioning since 2002, organised by FAO and supported incidentally by Czech Republic, Denmark, Germany, The Netherlands, and Spain by organising a number of workshops;
- Based on the interactions in the informal network, a number of technical assistance projects dealing with land consolidation have been initiated, funded by different donors (G2G / Agency NL, FAO, SIDA, WB);
- Several countries and regions have made progress by setting up the policies and legal frameworks for particular instruments but most actions are still either in preparation or in the phase of pilot actions or introduction;
- Financial frameworks do not adequately support policy intentions, among others by absence of sufficient national budget of individual countries to implement programmes to improve land structures;

- Policies in general need a better coherence between the various instruments and still need significant improvement;
- Institutional capacity to organise appropriate response to the situation is insufficient;

**Concluding that:**

- The exchange of knowledge and experience, the study of common issues, capacity building and the innovation of approaches, benefit greatly from a strong international network;
- Existing networks are not dealing sufficiently with improving of rural land structures and functioning of the rural land market;
- Such a network, although gaining intensity and profile, needs a stable institutional set up with proper legitimacy and organisation to carry out a more intense and complete programme of awareness raising, exchange, study, development and coaching, addressing important common issues.

**LANDNET therefore calls for the recognition, participation and support by national and regional governments, as well as the FAO Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia and other international organisations, to transform the current LANDNET into a stable permanent and institutionalised network on rural land structure issues, for which the Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia could serve as Secretariat.**

**LANDNET  
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