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Agricultural Policy Forum 2018
Agricultural Policy: Determinant of the Regional Rural Development and EU Perspectives of SEE

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Three main orientations of the debate:

• The future EU pre-accession policy in the light of the new strategy ‘A Credible Enlargement Perspective for and Enhanced Engagement with the Western Balkans’

• The CAP reform, trends in EU agri-food trade policies and their implications for the EU integration process.

• Review of the results of analytical work done on specific topics by the SWG regional advisory groups.
The future strategy for EU pre-accession policy.

- **Main concern:** Depopulation of rural areas due to lack of income opportunities, weak social services, etc.

- **High potential in** rural areas for increasing economic activities and job creation to improve livelihood.

- Yet, more than **90% of farms and rural businesses** out of reach for traditional support measures, incl. IPARD.
The future strategy for EU pre-accession policy.

The Forum concluded:

• Diversifying economic activities and cooperation will increase economic performance of small businesses.
• Key sectors: Agri-food production and rural tourism.
• Introduce mix of policy measures, incl. support to investments, innovation and managing partnerships.
• IPARD III could introduce a comprehensive measure with focus on small farms and rural businesses.
The future strategy for EU pre-accession policy.

6 flagships for strategic support in the future.

The Forum concluded:

• Essential to enhance competitiveness and economic performance of small farmers and rural businesses.

• Two important flagships:
  • Supporting socio-economic development
  • Supporting reconciliation and good neighbourly relations
EU policy reforms – impact on integration.

Major challenge to align nat. policies to EU agricultural and trade policies and standards.

The Forum concluded:

• The **competitive pressure** from the EU will be fierce.
• **SEE could align policies and standards** already during the pre-accession period.
• **Joint actions to harmonize** marketing standard, remove trade barriers to enhance their competitiveness.
EU policy reforms – impact on integration.

The SWG expert advisory working groups consists of experts from public institutions, private sector and research.

- Analyse and discuss selected topics throughout the year
- Meet at the APF to discuss their findings in a broader forum.

These groups play an important role in the accession process by:

- Exchanging experience among stakeholders at regional level
- Coordinating approximation issues at regional level
- Provide recommendations to the SWG member countries
Review of the analytical work on specific topics:

**Topic:** Agricultural policy developments in the SEE

National policies still short term – not in line with strategies

The Forum concluded:

- More **transparent** policymaking and **long term** orientation
- Policies to be **evidence based** in line with EU principles
- Focus on improving **competitiveness** of the large group of small farms and rural businesses
Review of the analytical work on specific topics:

**Topic:** Land market and small farms’ access to land

Agricultural land is still very fragmented and a clear policy for land management and ownership is generally missing.

**The Forum concluded:**
- Legislation to **prevent** further land **fragmentation** needed
- State **support** to land consolidation
- Measures to **stimulate** the **land market** to reduce abandoned and unutilized land
Review of the analytical work on specific topics:

**Topic:** Agri-environment policy, conservation and sustainable use of genetic resources in agriculture

Implementation of agri-environment policies is diverging in the SEE. although in national strategies it has low priority.

The Forum concluded:

- **Higher priority** to agri-env- policy and sustainable use of natural resources and biodiversity
- **Integrated info system** to ensure evidence based policy design
- Apply **IPARD** to introduce EU compliant policy measures
Review of the analytical work on specific topics:

**Topic:** Good practice in the meat processing sector in the WB

The WB meat industry is characterized by small farmers/processors, low productivity and high production costs.

Lack of a strategic value chain approach, coordination, access to info.

**The Forum concluded:**

- **Effective strategy implementation** to improve competitiveness, reducing production costs and increase productivity.
- More focus on **small producers and processors** through training, knowledge transfer and organization in strategic value chains
- **IPARD** measures should be well designed to address these issues
Those were the words from the APF