



CIVIC DIALOGUE

“When citizens, stakeholders and decision makers work together.”

Ten examples of processes and practices in Europe.

Democracy at the heart of sustainable rural development

In many places of the world, participation and civic engagement have already become reality. They have partially succeeded in influencing the political system or have at least reached a broader public, materialized in collective action. More organisations are focusing on governance processes, studying, accompanying and training on participative democracy, territorial dialogue, community-led development, self-management.

Forum Synergies has tackled the topic of participation and civic engagement from its beginning as we consider that democracy is one of the four pillars of sustainable development.

Our “Civic Dialogue” thematic programme deals with the topic of dialogue between different stakeholders when it aims at:

- influencing policies which have a strong impact on territories with regard to agriculture, food, environment and social cohesion
- contributing to the solution of local or regional issues of sustainable rural development

Forum Synergies promotes exchange and capacity-building through workshops organized with local partners, maintain a list of organisations working on civic dialogue and selected the following 10 experiences to give examples of processes and practices of dialogue, initiated by citizens or public authorities, from local to European level, mainly in rural areas.

- *Mountain forest forums; dialogue between stakeholders and institutions for the conservation of mountain forests. The example of Bavaria (Germany).*
- *A participative approach to preserving agricultural activities in the Saclay plateau: the Terre et Cité initiative in the Paris region. (France)*
- *Master project: a research-action platform on mobility, welcoming new inhabitants and sustainable rural development in France. (The Ville Campagne collective - France)*
- *The participatory budget of Odemira: an example of inhabitants managing part of the public budget (Portugal).*
- *Open Space on food and local development: a multi-stakeholder meeting initiated by the Ceinture Aliment-Terre Liègeoise (Belgium).*
- *Local rural development committees in Wallonia: a local space for consultation and forming proposals, integrating inhabitants and elected officials. (Belgium)*
- *The Sacca di Goro lagoon in Italy: involving a citizens' panel in a consultation on sustainable water management (the Aware project - Europe).*
- *Mediation to manage a local dispute around the landfill site at Góra Kalwaria near Warsaw (Poland).*
- *The Agricultural and Rural Convention: a platform of European organisations working together to develop the Common Agricultural Policy. (ARC 2020 - Europe)*
- *Macroregional Alpine strategy: an example of an institutional initiative involving States, Regions and organisations (CIPRA International- Europe).*

Information gathered by Pierre-Yves Guihéneuf, January 2015

These examples are also available on our website www.forum-synergies.eu. If you wish to suggest a new experience, please contact us.

Mountain forest forums; dialogue between stakeholders and institutions for the conservation of mountain forests. The example of Bavaria in Germany.

Summary

These local forums bring together stakeholders in the forestry sector: professionals, organisations, inhabitants, local institutions, politicians, etc. They are invited to take part by the public authorities and receive EU support to ensure, in particular, that the organisers are trained.

Key words

Public authority initiative, **dialogue between forest users**, Bavarian Minister for Food, Agriculture and Forestry

Context

As part of the Bavarian climate programme 2020, Germany is leading an 'offensive' campaign for the better adaptation of mountain forests to climate change (Bergenwald Offensive). In this context, various measures have been implemented with all relevant interest groups in specially defined regions.

Partners

In Bavaria, the project is led by the Bavarian Minister for Food, Agriculture and Forestry, with the Bavarian Land Institute for Forestry and Sylviculture (LWF).

Mountain forest forums have been created in several regions. They bring together relevant public authorities, land owners, farmers, hunters, communes, citizens, representatives of local tourism and the economy, and environmental protection organisations.

Activities

Local forums work to promote the conservation of the mountain forests and to seek solutions to conflicts where necessary.



At Oberammergau, for example, in 2009 the Weilheim Food, Agriculture and Forestry department sent out an invitation to local stakeholders: land owners, pasture companies, local politicians, hunters, public sector institutions, tourist offices, the League for the Protection of Nature, etc. Participants were invited to present the issues on which they would like to work.

Three working groups were created: hunting, pastures, tourism and environmental protection. Each group works independently, but forums are organised regularly to enable them to share their views with one another. In 2010, a new regulation on pastures was established in the Laber-Aufacker region: this was the result of this process of dialogue having an impact upon public policy on the local level. Other projects are underway in this region.

Results and prospects

These projects are supported by the Interreg IV-A project 'Protection Forests Platforms and Forums in Tyrol and Bavaria'. As part of this programme, training was offered to organisers of these local forums and to stakeholder representatives.



Comments

Through the creation of the 'forest dialogue', Austria has established a similar initiative in the Tyrol. It plans to organise a debate on economic, ecological and social issues with a view to launching a forest action programme.

There are many such initiatives, which aim to bring groups of local stakeholders and authorities together around a common issue (a forest, water, pastures, etc.) in order to jointly define local management rules, and they concern several European countries. They sometimes develop from a desire by public authorities (a Minister, a public agency, a local authority, etc.), sometimes from an initiative by local stakeholders (farmers, ecologists, inhabitants, etc.), and often from a combination of these two types of stakeholders. The scope of their work is often limited to the local area, except in the case of water resource management, which sometimes involves cooperation over fairly vast regions. In this case, the project is made possible by the involvement of public authorities through defined programmes.

A participative approach to preserving agricultural activities in the Saclay plateau: the Terre et Cité initiative in the Paris region.

Summary

Terre et Cité is a local organisation which works in a semi-urban region which is under significant land pressure to encourage citizens to actively participate in the defence of agricultural activities.

Key words

Citizen participation, **local initiative**, agriculture in semi-urban areas, urban-rural connections

Context

The Saclay Plateau is an area close to Paris where several research and teaching establishments have been based for several years. This rural area, which is dominated by major farming activities (particularly the cultivation of cereals), is rapidly urbanising and being populated by people who know little about the local activities.

Partners

The Terre et Cité organisation was created in 2001 by local farmers to defend the agricultural values of the Saclay Plateau. It brings together inhabitants, associations, researchers and locally elected officials. Its objective is to enable all regional stakeholders who feel involved to construct the future of the Saclay Plateau.

Activities

One of the main activities was to conduct an environmental audit, which demonstrated that agriculture was seen by the inhabitants as a fundamental characteristic of the identity and future of the region. In 2003, this awareness led some regional stakeholders to get together and create one of the first AMAPs in the Île de France: the AMAP



des Jardins de Cérès.

In 2005, the members of the AMAP created a Société Civile Immobilière, called Terres Fertiles, to buy back 20 hectares of agricultural land threatened by urbanisation. Since then, several farms have assessed the value of closely related sectors and qualitative approaches such as organic farming.

The Terre et Cité organisation believes it is crucial to explain how farms work and the importance of farmland, because it is something of which inhabitants are rarely aware. It also seeks to put local inhabitants in a position to create ideas and plans for the future of the region, ensuring that a dialogue with local politicians and researchers is encouraged. It seeks to reach a wide variety of audiences (inhabitants, pupils, students, non-resident workers, etc.) through awareness raising activities: exhibitions, walks, conferences, etc.

In 2012 and 2013, it also undertook a consultation exercise:

- A second environmental audit was conducted, based in particular upon several individual interviews with regional stakeholders.
- Two one-day open forums each brought together around a hundred stakeholders to jointly develop the priorities for the region. The first open forum focused on closely-related sectors and the second on discovering and promoting the region.
- 10 follow-up workshops were organised on subjects that the participants had identified as priorities during the open forums. The outcome of these workshops was a summary report which now structures the work of Terre et Cité.
- Working groups will continue this consultation to ensure the measures are implemented in practice.

Results and prospects

The Terre et Cité organisation has managed to launch a wide debate on the future of the region across several municipalities, ensuring that politicians, public institutions and inhabitants participate in the debate on an equal footing. This is notably due to the fact that the organisation consists of local politicians, inhabitants and farmers. This gives it a certain legitimacy which raises its profile, and proposes a method enabling everyone to be heard.

Because of this heterogeneity, however, discussions within the organisation are lively. As a result, there is no single agreed message on the direction to take. It is primarily defined as a place for discussion. This ongoing internal debate within the organisation does not



compromise its ability to put actions into practice: the development of short circuits, discovery activities, an interactive and cooperative map of the region, the Regional House project, application for the Leader programme.

Comments

Many local initiatives try to involve inhabitants and promote debate to define the direction of development and 'regional projects' etc. These dynamics are sometimes driven by local authorities and sometimes by local inhabitants who are opposed to changes with which they disagree: plans for tourism, town planning, abandonment and disappearance of services etc. The origins of the Terre et Cité organisation were that the region has undergone rapid and sudden urbanisation, which has led to a strong local dynamic.

Master project: a research-action platform on mobility, welcoming new inhabitants and sustainable rural development in France.

Summary

The Master project (from the French, Mobilité, Accueil et Stratégies Territoriales Durables des Espaces Ruraux: for the joint construction of a research-action platform) is a cooperative initiative between civil society stakeholders and researchers to establish research into moving to the countryside and welcoming new inhabitants.

Key words

Citizen's participation in research, Ville Campagne collective, **participatory action research**

Context

The Master project is part of the Repère programme established in 2010 by the French Minister for Ecology, Sustainable Development and Energy. This programme encourages cooperation between stakeholders in civil society and researchers around sustainable development issues.

Partners

The Collectif Ville Campagne is a collection of 22 organisations (non-governmental organisations, regional authorities, teaching centres, media, networks, etc.) and some citizens and researchers in their individual capacity. It makes it easier for city-dwellers, particularly those with business plans, to move to the countryside. It also supports rural areas which wish to adopt policies to welcome new inhabitants, acting as an experimental laboratory for public policies, and is a national resource centre on these issues. In addition, it works on the European level as a partner to the MED Philoxenia Plus project.

The Ecole Normale Supérieure in Lyon is a training centre for higher education administrators and is an important social science research centre.



Activities

The Collectif Ville Campagne and the Ecole Normale Supérieure de Lyon have come together to study mobility in the rural environment, particularly how policies to attract new inhabitants can be integrated into a sustainable development strategy.

Initially, local actors met in 2011 to discuss their practices and the difficulties of moving to a rural environment and attracting new inhabitants. Researchers who actively listened during this initial phase, collated the elements which they published in the form of 'discovery reports'.

An international conference was then jointly organised by ENS and the Collectif Ville Campagne on this subject (December 2011). Participative workshops were organised, as well as various activities giving the floor to regional stakeholders.

Finally, an open discussion platform between researchers and stakeholders was created. Its aim is to structure a dialogue around issues defined during the preceding phases: permanent discussion workshops between researchers-stakeholders, planning research work, networking with regions conducting research work on these issues.

Throughout the project, two 'watchpersons' (a researcher and a member of staff from a national local development organisation) contributed to the quality of discussions between stakeholders and researchers.

Results and prospects

The project has worked well on a methodological level. The conference helped turn the issue of rural mobility into a research question of interest to young researchers and teachers. New research questions have been identified by the ENS and the Collectif Ville Campagne has changed its plans to more significantly integrate issues such as sustainable development, ecological transition and regional ecosystems.

The Caisse des Dépôts et Consignations - Marie Conseils organisation, which jointly funded the early stage of the Master project, has also decided to fund the research-stakeholders platform in 2014 in order to promote the participation of civil society in research activities on this subject, to test methods for jointly designing research programmes and to translate research on stakeholders questions about these issues into practical action.

Comments

Initiatives to promote the participation of citizens in research activities exist in a number of countries. See, for example, the European Union project Consider: www.consider-project.eu.

Other participative research projects aim to encourage inhabitants to collect data which is then made available to the researchers, without necessarily meeting them, in contrast to the Master project. These initiatives have developed in several environmental areas: natural inventories, studies of climate change, etc. They are initiated by researchers or local organisations. They do not aim to directly impact upon policy but to raise citizens' awareness, to improve scientific knowledge and to encourage public decision-making to take account of environmental issues.

The participatory budget of Odemira in Portugal: an example of inhabitants managing part of the public budget.

Summary

Participatory budgeting consists of giving inhabitants control of part of the public budget, for example, a municipal budget. In Odemira, the experiment has been renewed by the Municipal Council since 2011.

Key words

Participatory budget, **local initiative**, citizen participation, Odemira Municipality

Context

Odemira is a town in the Beja district in the south of Portugal, which covers 1,720.6m² and has a population of 25,738 inhabitants. It is a rural region which includes 17 villages and a central town of 3,000 inhabitants. Since 2011, part of the municipal budget (in 2015, 500,000 euros) is set aside for projects proposed by the inhabitants and submitted to their vote.



Partners

Odemira local council initiated the project.

Activities

The project takes place in five phases:

1. Summary of the previous year and allocation of the budget for the year underway.
2. Receipt of proposals. Inhabitants are invited to submit proposals either online or and during participative assemblies. All inhabitants over the age of 16 can take part.
3. Analysis of the proposals. A committee consisting of an elected official, municipal technicians and one citizen elected during a citizen assembly, conduct a technical analysis of the proposals and select those



which are feasible. The maximum cost of each proposal is €125,000. Inhabitants can contest the decisions and request a new examination of the proposals if necessary. Finally, a list of proposals is presented (25 proposals in 2014).

4. Vote. Over a two-month period, citizens vote on the proposals, either by internet or in specific locations.

5. Public presentation. The results are presented and the proposals which receive the greatest number of votes are incorporated into the local authority budget. The final decision must be approved by the local Council, but this stage currently appears to be a simple formality.

Results and prospects

A very diverse range of projects are presented. In 2014, they related to public services (sports facilities, youth facilities, parks and public spaces, etc.), the development of tourism, social centres, a traditional seed bank, etc.

In 2014, more than 5,000 inhabitants participated in the vote. This was a significant percentage of the local population (20% of inhabitants of all ages). Of the 18 projects proposed for the vote, four were selected: the development of sporting activities on the Mira river, construction of a community hall, creation of a leisure area, and development of a public square.



Comments

Several experiments with participatory budgets have taken place in Europe (see the book below), most of them in urban areas. Participatory budgeting has also been experimented with by teaching establishments (participatory budget for colleges, in the Poitou-Charentes region of France). In Germany, a 'citizens' budget' has been in place in Cologne since 2007. In France, Paris launched a participatory budget experiment in 2014. For examples of rural areas, with smaller sums than in Odemira, see the experiment conducted by Rural Action Yorkshire in the UK (<http://www.ruralyorkshire.org.uk/projects/participating-budgets>).

Open Space on food and local development: a multi-stakeholder meeting initiated by the Ceinture Aliment-Terre Liégeoise in Belgium.

Summary

In 2013 and 2014, the Ceinture Aliment-Terre Liégeoise (CATL) organisation organised a collective consultation on food, involving nearly 150 people. The Open Space method helped reveal and structure participants' ideas.

Key words

Open Space, citizen participation, local initiative

Context

This project follows informal discussions between local stakeholders in and around Liège who were involved in sustainable development or transition.

Partners

The Ceinture Aliment-Terre Liégeoise (CATL) resulted from stakeholders who were involved in projects to transform the local food production system coming together: organisations (Barricade, Liège en Transition), researchers and consultants specialising in sustainable development (Tr@me, Propage, Agès, Exposit D), a cooperative selling farm products (Point Ferme), a body incorporating regional authorities (Groupement Régional Économique des vallées de l'Ourthe et de l'Amblève) and the local action group (GAL) 'Pays des Condruses'.

Activities

At its launch (November 2013), the CATL organised an open space which brought together around 150 citizens.

An Open Space is a meeting during which participants themselves establish the agenda by defining the themes they wish to work on, then



splitting into sub-groups to share their analyses and develop proposals.

The forum starts with a plenary assembly during which participants sit in a circle. After having explained the rules and introduced the issue, the organiser asks participants to suggest themes to be discussed around the issue of the day.

The agenda thus emerges spontaneously. Workshop leaders pin their proposal on the 'deal wall', which the rest of the group will sign up for at a later stage. The workshops take place simultaneously and the results of the discussions are reported back to the other groups during a plenary session. This developmental stage may be followed by a meeting where the whole group ranks the ideas by priority in order to draft a strategic plan.

During this first Open Space, 42 workshops were organised on questions relating to food: production methods, short circuits, access to funds, access to seeds, transmission of knowledge, (de)pollution of soils, role of local institutions and economic actors ... An action plan was developed and 14 thematic groups were created.

In June 2014, a new working day once again brought together 150 participants. The two-fold objective of this day was partly to take stock of the dynamic underway, and partly to jointly construct practical projects, by connecting with existing initiatives. Speakers therefore presented initiatives which are currently underway and others positioned this initiative in an international context.

During this second day, nine thematic workshops were created on issues relating to models of production and commercialisation

Results and prospects

This experiment is very recent and it is still too early to evaluate it and draw conclusions.

Comments

This experiment appears to be promising due to its method: an Open Space which allows several working areas to be identified, following by a project development phase. For the time being, participation seems to be consistent.



Local rural development committees in Wallonia (Belgium): a local space for consultation and forming proposals, integrating inhabitants and elected officials.

Summary

Local rural development committees (CLDR) are committees of inhabitants and locally elected officials who have come together to define action plans on the communal level, on the initiative of the Walloon Region.

Key words

Public sector initiative, **workshops**, citizen participation

Context

The Walloon Region has encouraged the creation of local rural development committees (CLDR) since the start of the 2000s. Currently (2015), around a hundred communes have a committee.

Partners

The CLDR (Commission Local de Développement Rural) is a group consisting of 25% locally elected officials and 75% citizens representing different parts of the commune, age groups, sexes and socio-professional categories.

Activities

The CLDR consists of elected officials and citizens. Citizens are selected after a call for candidates, and a diverse range of profiles is sought. These committees fall within the framework of a Decree by the Walloon Region and their composition must be approved by the Minister.

The CLDR is a place for discussing and drafting proposals which are submitted to the Communal Council, which takes the decisions. It meets a minimum of four times a year in plenary session. It organises and coordinates working groups (open to all inhabitants wishing to take part) to look into a



subject in more depth, to suggest a project, to carry out a specific action, etc. It also organises public meetings in the villages to clarify projects which are about to start, to react to development plans, etc...

Communes can organise CLDRs through the local authority. A commune may also ask the Minister for Rural Affairs for support from the Fondation Rurale de Wallonie, which then organises the committee and the initial training of its members. Finally, it may call upon consultants who will be responsible for organisation. In any case, it launches a public call to elect a research group to draft the communal rural development programme, in close relationship with the CLDR.

The rural committee is consulted on the various analyses carried out by external service providers on the commune, which allows inhabitants' views to be compared to those of the experts.

Results and prospects

Currently, around one hundred communes have an operating CLDR. By means of example, that of the commune of Sombreffe (9,000 inhabitants) suggested a ten year development strategy to the communal council, called the Programme Communal de Développement Rural (PCDR). This programme was drafted around three priority areas:

- a social priority aiming to meet the essential needs of the population;
- a priority relating to rural development and the natural environment;
- a priority relating to village cohesion and socio-cultural life.

The commune then established a whole series of projects as the result of the Programme Communal de Développement Rural: development of a public square; creating a greenway between Sombreffe and Ligny; the ecological management of the surrounding area. Other projects are underway: developing a multi-service centre; construction of affordable rented housing; construction of a village hall.

The commune manages the projects, and at least 20% of funding must be provided by the commune. They may also benefit from other public aid.

For Jocelyne Van Lierde from the Fondation Rurale de Wallonie which manages the CLDR in Sombreffe, there are many advantages of having inhabitants participate: combining their views with those of experts to achieve a shared vision, better integration of projects and better ownership among inhabitants.



Comments

The originality of this experiment is that it has chosen:

- 1) a local committee consisting of local volunteers who are not necessarily involved in organisations or professional bodies;
- 2) to complete this committee, which is a permanent focus for citizen participation and which represents of the communal council, with regular meetings which are open to all citizens (committee working groups, public meetings);
- 3) to call upon organisers, either a local official or an external person (employee of the Fondation Rural de Wallonie or a consultant).

The Sacca di Goro lagoon in Italy: involving a citizens' panel in a consultation on sustainable water management (the Aware project).

Summary

In Sacca di Goro, in the Po delta in Italy, as well as in two other pilot areas in Europe, the Aware project has selected citizens' panels in order to encourage them to take part in a participative process around the question: how can sustainable management systems for aquatic ecosystems be established, taking into account local conditions? These panels have produced a citizens' declaration.

Key words

Institutional initiative,
citizens' panel.

Context

The Sacca di Goro lagoon is a shallow bay situated in the southern part of the Po delta, with a surface area of around 26 km². A 860km² watershed devoted to farming activities feeds directly into the lagoon. Sacca di Goro is one of the main European breeding sites for clams, an activity managed by fishing cooperatives. The development and stabilisation of farming as well as the development of other land-based activities are the main challenges in terms of the sustainable development of the region.



In the context of the European Aware approach (Connecting People for Sustainable Water Management), this project aims to involve citizens in a consultation on the management of human and water activities.

Partners

Participants were divided into three groups:

- Experts and scientists whose role it was to train the other participants on current scientific knowledge of the local ecosystem and European and local regulations.
- Citizens representing the public.
- Stakeholders representing various interests to be taken into account when reflecting on the future of the region. s.

Activities

At the end of 2009 and the start of 2010, 10 citizens from the Goro region were randomly chosen to form a local citizens' panel and to participate in the Aware project. .

In April 2010, the citizens' panel participated in a European citizens' workshop with citizens from the two other pilot regions. The experts contributed basic scientific knowledge and citizens were able to share their experiences and their interest in the coastal areas.

After this, citizens returned to their regions of origin and recreated their ten-person panels. They met with scientists, stakeholders and decision makers once more at a local two-day workshop.

Several days after the end of the Sacca di Goro workshop, the citizens produced a declaration which they submitted to European and local public authorities and the stakeholders. The response from the stakeholders was communicated to decision makers during a local seminar and was discussed with them and with citizens.

Finally, the three panels got together again on the European level to prepare a final conference and give their opinion on the EU framework policy in terms of connections to be improved between those involved in sustainable management of coastal areas.

Results and prospects

The results took the form of a Citizens' Declaration on the European and local level. This declaration presents their analysis and recommendations on the best way to combine research, policy making and public participation for better management of Europe's coastal environments.

Comments

This experiment formed part of the European Aware project. The three panels were organised in Italy (Sacca di Goro), France and Belgium (the banks of the Seine, the Somme and the Scheldt), Latvia and Estonia (Gulf of Riga).

The citizens' panel method is often used to involve 'ordinary citizens' in complex public decision making, on the European, national and local level. These people are involved because they provide a citizen's perspective which is different to that of other actors in civil society (organisations or professional bodies), who are more militant or have greater knowledge of the subject. Citizens' participation is very limited in time (in general 3-4 months) and this type of process is consultative: it leads to an opinion which is communicated to decision-makers and stakeholders without any guarantee that this will be taken into account. In some cases, the decision makers agree to inform the general public and the panel in particular about the follow-up they will take, but this is not always the case.

Mediation to manage a local dispute around the landfill site at Góra Kalwaria near Warsaw in Poland.

Summary

Following public opposition to a planned landfill site in Góra Kalwaria, a mediator enabled dialogue to be restored between the parties, although the conflict was not definitively resolved.

Key words

conflict, mediation, participation by inhabitants

Context

Góra Kalwaria is a small town (12,000 inhabitants) in Mazowie, Poland. The former landfill site, 'Lubna 1', was created in 1978 to receive household waste from Warsaw. It was poorly managed, however, and modernisation work began in 1997. But the project gave rise to violent opposition from local people who had health and environmental concerns, and who considered that the commune had not redistributed the economic benefits of the former landfill site among the surrounding villages.

Partners

The Lubna 2 consortium (Solucom, the towns of Góra Kalwaria and Warsaw) is leading the landfill site project.

- The commune of Góra Kalwaria.
- Two inhabitants' organisations are opposed to the project and dispute the involvement of local representatives.
- The mediators: Andrzej Kraszewski, professor at the Technical University of Warsaw and Paweł Moczydlowski, Institute of Applied Social Sciences at the University of Warsaw.



Activities

Alongside negotiations between regional authorities, companies and public authorities to establish the project through the 'Lubna 2' consortium, attempts were made to communicate with the population: visits to other sites, information, etc.

Despite this, public opposition gained ground and the conflict became worse due to blunders from those involved: lack of consideration towards the public, conflicts of values, conflicts between local organisations to represent the population ... The public organised a blockade of the landfill site, which resulted in seeking mediation. A volunteer mediator from the Technical University of Warsaw therefore intervened between 1998 and 2000.

The first mediation process focussed on the malfunctions of the original landfill site and was organised in the form of meetings between the stakeholders. It enabled an end to the blockage to be reached and the new project was suspended. This led to partial agreements and expert assessments aiming to clarify certain uncertainties about the impact of the project. Warsaw also agreed to look into possible new landfill sites.

The conflict however began again a few months later, when villagers considered that the project managers' commitments had not been respected. A second mediation phase began. The mediator first of all carried out individual interviews, then meetings with stakeholders. He also advised organisations so that they could better communicate their demands.

Results and prospects

When the case study was published (2004), the conflict was still underway and the project had been suspended, as Gora Kalwaria decided to remove its support for the project.

Comments

This is an example of environmental mediation in a fairly significant rural area:

- it involved a large number of inhabitants of Gora Kalwaria, one company and organisations;
- the challenge was to create a relationship between the nearby town (Warsaw) and the rural environment in terms of urban waste:
- the conflict focussed on several dimensions: health, environment, governance of public decision making, behaviour of the stakeholders, redistribution of financial compensation.

The Agricultural and Rural Convention (ARC 2020): a platform of European organisations working together to develop the Common Agricultural Policy.

Summary

The ARC (Agricultural and Rural Convention) is a platform of European organisations working together to develop the European Union's Common Agricultural Policy (CAP).

Key words

International involvement, advocacy.

Context

The ARC was established in 2009 with a view to reforming the CAP 2014-2020. Individuals involved in these discussions - notably within the Forum Synergies - then suggested establishing a new platform to discuss food and rural development issues.

Partners

The ARC involved more than 150 organisations in 22 EU countries between 2010 and 2014.

Activities

When the ARC was created, several European networks were already working to influence the EU agricultural policy in order to take better account of social, environmental, rural development and health issues. Many of these networks resembled farmers', environmentalists' and ruralists' organisations ... the ARC wanted to federate these stakeholders who were from different sectors but shared common beliefs. The aim was to create discussion and to coordinate these organisations in order to avoid sending the EU separate messages.

When the ARC was created, thematic workshops were established, as well as email exchanges and an



internet forum (which was active on certain questions and less active on others). In November 2010, two days of plenary discussion in Brussels resulted in a letter to civil society being drafted which was sent to Dacian Cioloș, the European Commissioner for Agriculture as well as to the president of the Agricultural Committee of the European Parliament.

Publication of the text has raised awareness of ARC 2020 and has led new organisations to join.

ARC's activities currently consist of:

- Lobbying work with the European Commission and the European Parliament;
- Mobilising civil society through campaigns such as 'Good food, good farming' in 2012 (organising markets, publishing and putting messages and photos online of European citizens) or 'Go Meet A Deputy' in 2013;
- The provision of information, through the website, on European and national news. A network of correspondents in several countries provide information.

Between 2010 and 2014, ARC was funded by several European and US foundations.



Results and prospects

The ARC has contributed towards debate on the CAP and towards making it more accessible to European citizens by highlighting the practical issues of reform. Rather than highlighting the technical issues raised in specialised environments, ARC preferred to communicate about the issues, in particularly food-related issues, which affect citizens. The ARC team is responsible for 'translating' the aspirations of the organisations into proposals.

From 2009-2014, the presence of a European Commissioner for Agriculture opened a dialogue with civil society which facilitated ARC's work. Despite this, results are considered to have fallen below expectations, due to the weight of lobbying and action from Member States. Even although the vocabulary around the CAP has changed, reforms remain insufficient.

Getting organisations to discuss different thematic approaches has encountered some difficulties. For example, the 'rural' networks partly left ARC in 2010, claiming that insufficient progress had been made from the European Commission. In contrast, the international dimension is not the source of major disagreements between the participants, who share common ground around a community of perspectives.

Comments

There are other European platforms whose aim is to influence the CAP. One of the particularities of the ARC is that it is cross-cutting on several themes: agriculture, food, the environment ...

In contrast, like all the other platforms, the ARC agenda has been defined by the European Union's decision making agenda: this is necessary for the consultation process and decision making processes to be synchronised. But it is also a difficulty, because the time that it takes to build a platform such as this on the European level is significant. Getting together, raising awareness, creating trust between the participants prior to any major European decisions: this takes around 5-7 years according to Samuel Féret, organiser of ARC.

Macroregional Alpine strategy: an example of an institutional initiative involving States, Regions and organisations (CIPRA International).

Summary

CIPRA (Commission internationale pour la Protection des Alpes) is an organisation founded in 1952 which brings together around a hundred organisations, mainly in the environmental sector, in the seven countries along the arc of the Alps. It contributes towards the definition of the Alpine Macroregional Strategy (EUSALP), an initiative from the European Council to better coordinate cohesion policies.

Key words

International involvement, advocacy.

Context

A macroregional strategy is an integrating framework approved by the European Council to better coordinate public policy and particularly to strengthen the connection between European structural funds and national and regional funding across a region. The first macroregional strategies were established following the Lisbon Treaty for the Baltic and the Danube.

Several Alpine regions were introduced to the idea of a macroregional strategy for the Alps, and joined Alpine states to submit an official request to the European Council for such a strategy to be launched. The European Council gave its approval in December 2013. Since then, the drafting process for this strategy has been underway. It will end in 2015..

Partners

CIPRA International uses its own network of 7 national CIPRAs as well as closely related organisations: networks of towns, researchers, UICN, WWF, etc.



Activities

CIPRA did not initiate the Alpin macroregional strategy. The European Council was requested to establish it by several regions (Bavaria, Southern Tyrol, etc.) along with Alpine states. France was chosen as the leader to submit the official request. The contents were prepared by a self-nominated committee combining representatives of the regions, States, the Alpine Convention and the Espace Alpin programme. After the European Council gave its approval, the Steering Committee continued its work to coordinate the process of drafting this strategy. Initially, civil society was poorly involved. Several organisations, coordinated by the CIPRA, therefore asked to be represented. Since 2014, CIPRA has not been able to join the Steering Committee, but 'civil society' (represented by CIPRA and other partner organisations) has a seat in each of the three working groups which were established.

The work is organised around three major areas of action:

1. strengthening competitiveness, prosperity and cohesion in the Alpine region;
2. guaranteeing accessibility and connectivity for all inhabitants;
3. making the Alpine region sustainable and attractive from an environmental perspective.

CIPRA's activities are principally as follows:

- on the international level, active participation in meetings of the working groups and preliminary bilateral discussions with other members of these working groups: exchange of documents and requesting opinions;
- participation in the online consultation to refine the main areas of the strategy;
- on several national levels, discussions with stakeholders involved in this consultation on the macroregional strategy; State, Regions, organisations All national CIPRAs do not participate in the same way on this subject, some are more active than others.

To develop its proposals in a collective way, CIPRA addresses this theme twice a year during meetings with national CIPRAs. It also organises two internal international seminars specifically on this subject and coordinates discussions of points of view in writing.



Results and prospects

It is difficult to anticipate the results as the process is still underway (start 2015). Provisional information is as follows:

- the general orientation of the macroregional Alpine strategy is marked by a certain economic liberalism. Questions around sustainable development and the preservation of resources remain secondary. The specific objective of CIPRA, the Alpine Convention and other organisations is to steer proposals from the working groups in this direction, but this position remains in the minority and progress is often 'marginal'.
- CIPRA considers that it is listened to by members of the working groups and is even often consulted in a bilateral way. This contributes towards its legitimacy: the age of its network, its international dimension, its concrete knowledge of the ground thanks to its members, its ability to obtain documentation and prepare well for meetings.
- CIPRA does not have the impression that there is one real method of consultation. The ways in which it participates are poorly defined, and deadlines are not well known in advance. Because the non-governmental world is often not highly reactive, it is sometimes difficult to prepare discussions in the participative way which CIPRA would like. This is the main difficulty encountered..

Comments

In contrast to the ARC, CIPRA is an old organisation which was already operational when the opportunity to work on the Alpine macroregional strategy arose, which meant that the tight agenda was not considered to be restrictive. In contrast, the lack of transparency and method within the consultation organisation is seen as a problem.