

European Rural Alliance

Banská Bystrica, 31.5.2010

Rural Organisation for Community Activities – VOKA o.z. is the non-governmental organisation active in the area of rural community development, entrepreneurship and employment generation in rural areas and *integrated/territorial rural development* in Slovakia and abroad. Recently VOKA has assisted many local action groups in their effort to obtain the official statute of EU Leader local action group and several of them successfully passed the selection procedure.

Since VOKA believes strongly in territorial/place based approach in rural development. It was proven via VOKA micro-loan instrument and micro-grant program, that public and private finances if decided and spent via local partnerships can be very effective and efficient tool of local development in favor of rural population and encourage use of endogenous potential of rural areas.

Also this is the reason why we strongly support the ERA's effort to promote territorial and place based rural development via putting more enfances on this approach in the future rural policies of the European Union.

We support the idea of the *third pillar* as separate instrument or any other EU policy instrument, which will bring bigger and more substantial support to the broader rural society, strengthen social contract among the whole spectrum of rural stakeholders and enhance the social capital in rural areas – the most important vehicle of their development.

We believe that farmers are important, we want to have our – local, regional, national or European food and healthy countryside. But we also believe that other social groups in rural areas are equally important, in order to keep this living space vital, securing the high quality of life for all, preventing depopulation and overall societal decline.

Therefore we fully support the European Rural Alliance in its effort to introduce proposals for new major instruments supporting the territorial approach to rural development to much bigger extent covering all rural stakeholders.

With best personal regards,

Managing director of VOKA: Jela Tvrdonova



The Board of directors:

The chairman: Prof. Ing. Peter Patuš, PhD

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