Rural Development programme for Spanish principality of Asturias approved by the European Commission

The Rural Development Programme (RDP) for Principado de Asturias was formally adopted by the European Commission on 3 August 2015, outlining Principado de Asturias's priorities for using the € 561 million of public money that is available for the 7-year period 2014-2020 (€ 325 million from the EU budget, and € 174 million of national co-funding plus € 62 million of additional national funding top-ups).

The RDP for Principado de Asturias focuses on restoring, preserving and enhancing ecosystems related to agriculture and forestry, and it plans to have 37% of farmland under management contract to improve biodiversity. In order to improve the competitiveness of the farm sector, 2 100 farmers will get support to restructure and modernise their farms and 450 young farmers will get support to launch their businesses. In addition, the region will support training for more than 7 500 participants. Nearly 27% of the rural population will benefit from improved services and infrastructures and will be covered by LEADER local development strategies, which are expected to create around 150 new jobs.

Welcoming the decision, EU Agriculture and Rural Development Commissioner Phil Hogan said: "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 a programme which suits its situation and challenges. For example, as well as farm modernisation projects, Asturias is looking to address environmental concerns in the region."

Background

Support for Rural Development is the so-called 2nd Pillar of the Common Agricultural Policy, providing Member States with an envelope of EU funding to manage nationally or regionally under multi-annual, co-funded programmes. In total, 118 programmes are foreseen in all 28 Member States, backed by € 99.6 billion of EU funding over the period 2014-2020 through the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD), with these measures co-funded by additional national, regional and private finance. The new Rural Development Regulation for the 2014-2020 period addresses six economic, environmental and social priorities, and programmes contain clear targets setting out what is to be achieved. Moreover, in order to coordinate actions better 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.