

Farmsuccess – Project Description

The economic crisis that EU is facing in the last years had negative effects on the employment rate in the member countries. More specifically the unemployment rate in the euro area passed from 6,4% in 2007 to 11,5% in November 2014, with even worse figures in some countries as Spain that passed from an unemployment rate of 8,3% to the 23,9%. The youth unemployment rate has reached at the end of 2014 the 23,7% in the euro area with countries like Spain almost reaching the 55% (Eurostat, 7 January 2015).

In 2010, 97% of all the farms in the EU-27 were family farms (farms held by a single natural person who is also the manager) being only the 16% of total agricultural labour performed by non-family workers. At the same time Agriculture in Europe faces a demographic challenge. In 2007 in EU-27, 55,5% of farmers were over 55 years old. Only 6,3% were younger than 35 years old, being the ratio of farmers < 35 y.o. / Farmers > 55 y.o. of only 0.11. This data didn't improve a lot in the last years considering that the above-mentioned ratio only improved from 0.11 in 2007 to 0.14 in 2010 (EC, Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural development, 12/2013)

Family farms thus represent an important resource that may help:

- Reducing the unemployment rate in rural areas;
- Tackling the demographic challenge of European farming;
- Maintaining and improving the social, economic and cultural sustainability of rural areas.

To keep alive the economic and social potential of family farms a key factor is to provide young farmers with the tools and knowledge needed to face the succession process.

The project focuses on the presentation of and the exchange about successful experiences of skilled and motivated young farmers in continuing the family business of their parents.

This exchange about experiences from entrepreneur to entrepreneur will lead to:

- development of further innovative concepts and patterns for succession.
- facilitate in decision making during succession in family run farms in Europe.
- improvement in the economic and personal situation in this phase and for the future.
- improvement for the demographic situation in agriculture and rural areas.
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These objectives will be reached by providing young farmers training materials based on case studies and complementary OER that will make them able to face in a sustainable way the succession process in their family farms.

The training materials (in English, German, Spanish, Italian, Slovenian, Czech and French) will be fully available free of charges on the project webpage and will be also uploaded on the Open Education Europa (www.openeducationeuropa.eu) portal and to other OER repositories (such as www.oercommons.org) making them available to an even wider audience.