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Commission



DOBRUDJA AGRARIAN AND BUSINESS SCHOOL (DABS)

INFORMATION CAMPAIGN:

CAP for Sustainable Growth: Mission Possible

Optimizing the Environmental Sustainability and Economic Viability of Agriculture through CAP in the Bulgarian – Romanian Cross-Border Region

Agreement No. AGRI 2016-0198

DEAR LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

Association Dobrudja Agrarian and Business School (DABS) initiates the information campaign „**CAP for Sustainable Growth: Mission Possible**“ in order to improve the public understanding of the new role of **Common agricultural policy (CAP)** regarding sustainable development and its contribution for a more balanced development of the rural areas at the Bulgarian-Romanian cross-border region (municipalities on both sides of the Danube river) which due to its traditional agricultural specialisation and region-specific problem is to exemplify some of the main challenges before CAP's success in new programming period (2014 - 2020).

Duration of the action: **12 months**
June 2016 – May 2017

The information campaign is under Project: "CAP for Sustainable Growth: Mission Possible", Grant agreement No. AGRI 2016-0198, co-funded by the European Commission in the frame of Call for proposals Support for information measures relating to the common agricultural policy (CAP) 2015/C 351/9.

TO WHICH AUDIENCES CAMPAIGN TARGETS:

The campaign **CAP for Sustainable Growth: Mission Possible** aims to achieve a set of objectives defined according to needs to the three main **stakeholder groups** in the Bulgarian-Romania cross-border region regarding the CAP:

- 1) General public and especially youth in the urban areas;
- 2) Farmers and agricultural entrepreneurs/ managers;
- 3) Policy-makers at the local and regional level, including in regulating institutions, that are involved in the implementation of the national agriculture plans pertaining to CAP issues.

The variety of activities within the information campaign will also engage representatives of: the science and research institutions in agriculture, branch and industry organizations in agriculture, education and training institutions, media and other stakeholders in the cross border area in Bulgaria and Romania.

WHAT ARE THE CAMPAIGN OBJECTIVES:

The **overall aim** of the information campaign is to promote and raise awareness of all stakeholders in Bulgaria and Romania on the reformed Common Agricultural Policy of the European Union, and in particular - to promote its new long-term objectives in the 2014-2020 programming period focused on sustainability and social function of agriculture.

The **specific objectives** of the information measure are linked to **the target groups** as defined above:

- (i) to redefine the public debate in Bulgaria by drawing attention to the important social functions that the CAP confers on farmers;
- (ii) to raise awareness and to communicate of the key messages of CAP regarding sustainability of agriculture;
- (iii) to facilitate a rapid and sustainable shift towards a sectoral policy that links agriculture to sustainable development and the provision of public goods such as environmental conservation and food security.

WHAT IS THE CAMPAIGN SCOPE:

The Romania-Bulgaria cross border area is characterised by an exceptional biological diversity and by valuable natural and cultural landscapes, which are subject to a variety of pressures and usage conflicts (e.g. from industry, intensive agriculture, climate change, transport as well as mismanaged tourism flows).

The economic structure of the region is traditionally dominated by agriculture which is a predominant employer. The specialization is mainly based on cereals, vegetables, grapes and fruit production, complemented by the animal sector. The predominant small household farms have a low labour productivity, therefore the competitiveness of basic products on food markets is low and marked by lack of investments in modern equipment and machinery. Much of the cultivated land has been developed for large-scale agriculture with huge areas under intensive arable cropping and irrigation.

The Bulgaria-Romania cross-border Region abounds in NATURA 2000 protected sites. Yet river and water pollution caused by agriculture causes serious damage to biodiversity. At the same time the growing market for organic food (especially in the large regional cities - Varna and Ruse in Bulgaria, Constanta and Craiova in Romania, as well as in the Black Sea tourism industry) give new development opportunities for the agricultural sector.

The area's **main problems** regarding agriculture are:

- Traditionally oriented uncompetitive agricultural activities;
- Low level of technological development;
- Frequent occurrence of floods;
- Poor management of natural resources, biodiversity and nature protection;
- High migration of workers.

In spite of the problems, there is a **good potential for growth in the area**, due to:

- A fertile, well-watered soil, good for agriculture (potential for eco products);
- Diverse natural resources;
- Developed network of universities and research institution in areas related to agricultural studies;
- Low cost, skilled labour force, with good basic education;
- Multicultural traditions and ethnical diversity;
- Cultural heritage in villages (potential for eco-tourism).

GAMPAIGN ACTIVITIES:

The information campaign will be carried out through **24 activities** which will be conducted in the cross-border region Romania-Bulgaria from **June 2016 to May 2017**.

In the framework of the campaign will be held a series of **public and promotional events** in Bulgaria and Romania - press conferences, discussion forums and workshops, events for dissemination of the project results, etc. They will present to the stakeholders the key messages of the reformed CAP and will provide an opportunity to debate the new aspects of the European policy on agriculture.

There are also a series of **training seminars for farmers** and other stakeholders planned. They will be focused on the possibility of support provided under the second pillar of the CAP. Some information and training materials aimed at stimulating the intensive use of support tools available through the second pillar of the CAP will be issued.

An important focus of the information campaign are **young people** from the Bulgarian-Romanian cross-border region. They will be encouraged to participate in project activities by organizing and conducting of an **on-line competition for business plans for sustainable agriculture** according to the CAP priorities for 2014-2020. The best 10 winning business plans will be presented during a public event in Varna, Bulgaria.

Electronic and printed version of a **Catalog of best practices** will be developed and distributed, among the stakeholders. It will content best practices collected from selected owners of farms and entrepreneurs in agriculture, dealing with organic farming and it will present their experience in terms of social functions of agriculture and CAP support for sustainable development. Further, an **informational film** under the title "How to grow our food today and not ruin the food of our children", short TV spots and targeted radio broadcast sessions will be aired.

A two-day exhibition of organic food and bio-products in Varna (Bulgaria) will be held in April 2017 with presentation on how bio-food can be included in the public catering services managed by the local administrations – school catering, university canteens, cooking and healthy life-style classes.

A multilingual website of the campaign will be developed, supported in English, Bulgarian and Romanian. To extend the access of stakeholders to the topics discussed within the information campaign modern information and communication technologies will be also used - Facebook page and YouTube channel will be created, where all the developed printed and video materials will be published, and where all events that take place within the campaign will be broadcast live on the internet via live-stream.

All project **publications and materials** developed under the project will be in Bulgarian and in Romanian language.

INDICATIVE SCHEDULE of all the upcoming events in the framework of the information campaign, where and when they will be held and who is invited to participate, you can find in Section "Events" - "indicative schedule" on the campaign web-site.

We hope that the information provided here is helpful and we have succeeded in provoking your interest, and we hope that you will be actively involved in the project activities, as we remain available for any further discussions.

More information about the project could be found on the campaign web-site: <http://agroinfo.dabu-edu.org>

All your questions, opinions and recommendations are very welcome on our e-mail: groinfo.project@gmail.com

Sincerely yours:

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