EUROPEAN LEADER ASSOCIATION FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT

European LEADER Association for Rural Development

INTERNATIONAL NON PROFIT-MAKING ASSOCIATION

-STATUTES-

ELARD - EUROPEAN LEADER ASSOCIATION FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT - AISBL

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Preamble

The European LEADER Association for Rural Development constitutes the continuation of the international association "ELARD" that was founded in Belgium in 1999 under the Belgian Law of 25 October1919 by the following National LEADER Networks of Local Action Groups (LAG's):

- French LEADER Network – LEADER France,
- Greek LEADER Network,
- Irish LEADER Network,
- Italian LEADER Network - Assoleader,
- Spanish LEADER Network - Redr,

conferring legal personality on international associations which pursue philanthropic, religious, scientific, artistic or pedagogical objectives.

In 2004, the Association was transferred to Madrid, Spain, in order to facilitate the Spanish Presidency's duties and for this occasion new statutes were signed in accordance with the Spanish Organic Law 1/2002 of 22 March 2002.

Title I. PROVISIONS INCORPORATING THE ASSOCIATION

Article 1: Name

There shall be set up an international non profit making Association bearing the name "European LEADER Association for Rural Development" in English and "Association Européenne LEADER pour le Développement Rural" in French, abbreviated as "ELARD", hereinafter referred to as "the Association". The Association is formed by virtue of the provisions laid out in Title III of the Belgian law of 27 June 1921 concerning non profit making associations, international non profit making associations and foundations (articles 46 to 57) published in the Belgian Official Journal (Moniteur Belge) of 1 July 1921.

In all acts, invoices, announcements, publications and other documents issued by the Association, the Association shall be referred to by its name and followed by the words "international non-profit making association", or by the corporate logo "AISBL" as well as the address of its registered seat.

Article 2: Registered seat

The registered office of the Association shall be in the area of Brussels. The Association is currently registered at 59, Avenue d' Auderghem, 1040 Brussels. The seat may be transferred to any other location in the Brussels region by decision made by simple majority of the Council, published within one month of the transfer in the Annexes of the Belgian Official Journal (Moniteur Belge).

Article 3: Duration

The Association is established for an indefinite duration. It can be dissolved at any moment in accordance with the law and the statutes.

Article 4: Aims

The association is set up to improve the quality of life in rural areas and to maintain their population through sustainable, integrated local development. The distinctive feature of ELARD is that it brings together Local Action Groups committed to involving all stakeholders in rural development at a local level.

More specifically, ELARD aims to spread the philosophy, principles and scope of the LEADER method grounded in the following seven specific features in order to achieve sustainable rural development across Europe:

- Area-based local development strategies
- Bottom-up elaboration and implementation of strategies
- Local public-private partnerships: Local Action Groups
- Integrated and multi-sectoral actions
- Innovation
- Networking
- Cooperation

The purpose of the Association is to promote the LEADER method in local development, to support rural and regional development, to promote cooperation between the national and regional LEADER networks and the Local Action Groups (LAGs) as well, to promote common projects and experience sharing through the networks and the members' partners both within and outside the framework of the LEADER program and to influence EU policies in favour of rural development.

The Association has as its aims the promotion of strategies and local and national initiatives for rural development, in particular by promoting and disseminating to the rural communities and the European Commission, the methodologies of rural development and the integrated approach in order to facilitate the recognition of rural society. The association also aims to support its members directly in their efforts to carry out innovative actions in the field of the rural development.

The Association will encourage, through the available means or the means granted to it, the promotion of actions concerning rural innovation at European level, by means of communication, dissemination of results and any other means that help the development of rural development initiatives.

Article 5: Objectives

The Association pursues the following objectives:

§1: General Objectives:

i. To promote the solidarity among the citizens of the European Union rural areas, in particular those arisen in the framework of the community Initiative LEADER or of other initiatives and national programs related to rural development, with regards to the endogenous and sustained development of rural areas, the strengthening and diversification of its economy, the maintenance of its population, the development of the Rural Economy and the quality of life of its inhabitants, and the conservation of the life environment and the natural and cultural resources.
ii. To promote the philosophy, the principles and the dimension of LEADER or of other programs and similar initiatives as well as their future evolutions.
iii. To support and to promote innovatory actions in the field of rural development by its members.
iv. To advise the European and international institutions in the elaboration of political and innovative programs regarding rural development.
v. To serve as a forum for the voluntary LEADER group networks who support NGO Rural groups and organisations interested in sharing their ideas and their experiences related with rural development and with the future of rural development, especially in what is referred to as Europe, but with a spirit of transnational cooperation.
vi. To represent the interests and needs of its members to other international, European, and national institutions.
vii. To liaise with the other actors and institutions that work towards an integrated rural development.
viii. To organize meetings between different Rural national, regional Networks and Local Action Groups (LAGs) at European level.
ix. To encourage initiatives that will lead to cooperation.
x. To help associated Groups that may be interested in locating partners for their cooperation projects.
xi. To create a database of innovative projects previously carried out, so that they can be used as a reference for members.

In order to carry out the objectives described previously, the Association may request aid, grants, funds, donations or contributions that are necessary to support its objectives.

§2: Specific Objectives

- Conservation, protection and appraisal of the environment and the rural environment areas, understood not only as a physical milieu but as a human milieu, in connection with the conservation of the landscape and the forest agrarian economy.

Title II. MEMBERS

Article 6: Categories of members

The Association consists of:

- Active members
- Associated members
- Observer members

The Active members are voluntary networks of Local Action Groups at national or regional levels and only in case that no such LEADER Network exists can be admitted a representative Local Action Groups (LAGs).

Article 7: Status and rights of members

- Active members: Active members participate in the meetings of the Association with the right to speak and the right to vote. They shall have the right to assume the Presidency and thus to represent the Association;
- Associated members: Associated members have the right to attend meetings to which they are invited, with the right to speak but without the right to vote. They have a temporary status for two years;
- Observer members: Observer members may attend meetings to which they have been invited but without the right to speak or the right to vote. They have a temporary status for one year;

The temporary status of associated or observer member can be renewed under specific circumstances to be decided by the General Assembly by simple majority.

Article 8: Register of members

A register of members is published under Annex of the present statutes.

Article 9: Admission of members

§1: General Conditions:

National LEADER networks or LEADER networks or Rural Development networks representing the majority of LAGs (Local Action Groups) at national level in European Union member states may become active members of the Association.

However, in the absence of national LEADER network, regional LEADER networks may become members and in the absence of regional networks, the Association may accept Local Action Group (LAG) as members for a transition period of two years. After that period and under specific circumstances the transition period can be renewed to be decided the General Assembly by simple majority.

The status of observer member may be requested by LEADER networks from EU member

states, pre-accession countries as well as from future members of the European Union or from organisations of third countries that promote the objectives of the network, for a period of one year maximum before requesting the status of associated or active member.

The General Assembly can accept organisations from third countries as members of the Association when they operate and share the LEADER philosophy.

§2: Procedure:

The application file must be lodged with the Co-ordination Office of the Association and shall contain the formal request to become member of the Association, the desired status of member as well as a complete description of the candidate's organisation, a list of its members and as far as may be necessary the appointment of a representative and a substitute for the General Assembly and the Council.

The admission of a member is made in a meeting of the General Assembly, based on a proposal and a formal decision made by the Council. Following that decision the member can participate in the mean time in the activities of the Association until the final admission decision is made or rejected by the next General Assembly.

Article 10: Resignation of members

Any active, associated or observer member may freely resign from the Association, effective on 31 December of the current year, by giving at least three months' notice by registered letter sent to the Coordination Office, who shall ensure that the various members of the Council are duly notified.

A resigning member shall be entitled neither to a refund of its membership fees nor a share neither in social assets, nor to any other distribution of social assets, or to receive any other financial distribution effected by the Association.

The resigning member must pay its membership fees and any other amounts still owing until the end of the calendar year in which notice is given.

Article 11: Exclusion of members

Non-payment of membership fees by an active or an associated member in the year in which they are due or failure to comply with the provisions of the present statutes may result in exclusion.

Decisions regarding exclusion may only be taken by the General Assembly. The member whose exclusion is being proposed will be heard by the General Assembly which is to decide upon its exclusion. That member may not vote on the question of its own exclusion.

As in the case of resignation, there shall be no refund of the membership fees, nor share in the social assets or any other distribution of social assets, nor any other financial distribution.

Membership fees shall remain due on a pro rata basis until the date the exclusion takes effect. The excluded member must pay its membership fees and any other amounts still

owing up to the actual date of its exclusion.

Title III: ORGANISATION OF THE ASSOCIATION

The bodies of the Association are:

- The General Assembly
- The Council
- The President

Article 12: General Assembly:

§1: Its Powers

As the supreme decision making body of the Association, the General Assembly shall decide on all important matters. It has the authority to perform all legal acts which are useful or necessary to achieve the aims of the Association insofar as these acts do not come within the competence of the Council.

The following powers are reserved to the General Assembly:

- the approval of the President and Vice-President
- the approval of different activity reports of the Association
- the appointment of working groups
- modifications to the statutes
- the discharge to be given to the Council
- the approval of the budget and the annual accounts
- the dissolution of the Association
- the admission, exclusion and renewal of temporary status of members
- any other competence given by the statutes or by the law

§2 Composition of the General Assembly

The General Assembly is composed of a representative of each active, associated or observer member. The members attend the General Assembly through delegates, which are the representatives of the Members. Each member LAG/National/Regional LEADER Network appoints two people, a regular and a substitute, responsible for representing it in the General Assembly.

Only the members' representatives designated by them are eligible for the Presidency, the Vice-Presidency or members of the Council terms of office.

In case a member changes its representative during their term of office, the Association has to be notified immediately, in order to proceed in new elections if necessary.

In the interim, the new designated representative will assume their predecessor’s functions.

§3 Meetings of the General Assembly

The General Assembly shall meet regularly, at least once in each calendar year during the

first semester. The General Assembly shall approve the accounts and the budget of the Association, shall elect and discharge the Council and shall take every decision that was registered on the agenda.

An electronic General Assembly shall be convened if requested by at least a quarter of active members or by the President.

An extraordinary General Assembly shall be convened if requested by at least a quarter of active members or by the President.

§4 Notice to be given of General Assemblies

Notices stating the date, time and venue and accompanied by the Agenda for the General Assembly shall be sent by registered letter, email or fax to all Members by the Co-ordination office at least fifteen days before the date of the General Assembly.

§5 Vote

Only active members are entitled to vote in the General Assembly. It is a national vote on the basis of one vote per member state, no matter how many members come from this Member State.

An active member may appoint another active member to act for him as a proxy holder in the General Assemblies. Each active member cannot be on possession of more than one proxy.

An active member can vote by e-mail or by proxy. The e-mail should be sent at the e-mail address allotted for this purpose. Proxies are given to the Co-ordination office at the beginning of the meeting.

The e-mail vote has to be related to a decision covered by a General Assembly's agenda. The e-mail vote is not admitted when the vote concerns the dissolution of the Association, the admission and exclusion of members, the discharge to be given to the Council and statutes modifications.

E-mail vote has to be sent to the Co-ordination office at least two hours before the beginning of the meeting depending from the proxy. The proxies are handed to the Co-ordination office at the beginning of the meeting.

An active member can vote by video conference. This type of vote is not permitted in case the vote concerns the dissolution of the Association, the admission and exclusion of members, the discharge to be given to the Council and statutes' modifications.

§6 Quorum and majority

Unless these statutes require a larger quorum, the General Assembly is validly constituted when at least half of the members (no matter if they are active, associated or observer) are present and at least one quarter of the active members is present.

If a General Assembly is not quorate, a second meeting must be held within the following fifteen days. A quorum is not required at this meeting under the restriction of the application *in casu* of the legal provisions.

To calculate the quorum, proxies are not taken into consideration. All the decisions will be adopted by simple majority. The adhesion of a new member or the exclusion of a member, the modification of the statutes and the dissolution of the Association will be adopted by a two-thirds majority

All the decisions are communicated to all the members.

To calculate the quorum the proxies and the e-mail votes are taken in account only for the specific matters.

§7 Minutes

The decisions of the General Assembly are registered in Minutes signed by the President and the Co-ordination officer. This register of minutes will be held at the registered office of the Association, where it may be consulted and copied by all Members of the Association.

All Members will receive copies of these minutes within 15 days of each meeting.

Article 13: The Council

§1. Composition of the Council

The Council consists of at least ten active members and can reach the number of thirty members maximum. The General Assembly decides on how many members will form the Council according to the number of the members of the Association.

The Council shall be composed of a President, a Vice-president and one representative of each active member and associated member.

The President and the Vice-president are appointed by the Council for a two years term. An active member may be re-elected for the Presidency after an interval of four years from the end of its last term of office.

An active member from a national or regional network may be elected for the Presidency after an interval of two years since his admission as an active member.

The term of office of the Council shall be two years.

§2 Duties

The main tasks of the Council are, with the assistance of the Co-ordination office, to manage the business and affairs of the Association, to implement the resolutions of the General Assembly and to prepare its meetings.

§3 Meetings and notices to be given of the Council

The Council shall meet regularly at least once each trimester. The Council shall be convened by the President. Notices shall be sent by the Co-ordination office by registered letter or email or fax at least fifteen days before the date of the meeting.

§4 Quorum and Majority

The Council can only deliberate officially if at least half of its members and one third of its active members are present. However, if a quorum has not been achieved, a second meeting may be convened within fifteen days. The Council can constitute a quorum when at least half of the members are present.

The decisions of the Council are adopted by simple majority of the votes cast by the members present or represented. If votes are tied, the President may cast the deciding vote.

An active member can vote by e-mail or proxy. The e-mail should be sent to a specific e-mail address dedicated to this matter. Proxies are given to the Secretariat at the beginning of the meeting.

The e-mail vote must be sent to the Secretariat at least two hours before the meeting according to the notice.

An active member can vote by videoconference.

To calculate quorum, the proxies and the e-mail votes are taken in account only for the specific matters.

§5 Minutes

The decisions of the Council are registered in Minutes signed by the President. This register of minutes will be held at the registered office of the Association. All active members showing a legitimate interest may take notice of the register.

All Members of the Council will receive copies of these minutes within 15 days of each meeting.

§6 Representation of the Association

The Association is officially represented by its President.

The Council can delegate daily management and/or administrative tasks to one, or more than one person.

Every commitment on behalf of the Association outside the scope of the day to day management requires the signature of the President.

The Association is validly represented in legal proceedings by its President, in the capacity of either plaintiff or defendant.

Article 14: The President

The President is proposed by the General Assembly for a two years term. He or she shall be in charge of the Association. In particular, he/she shall be responsible for:

- representing officially the Association;
- convening the Council and the General Assembly;
- preparing the Agenda of both meetings the Council and the General Assembly;
- managing the budget of the Association;
- opening bank accounts in the name of the Association;
- occurring expenses and issuing payment orders for the needs and the functions of the association;

She or he may be able to authorise another person either from the Council or the Coordination officer to carry out some of the above functions on behalf of her/him.

Article 15: The Co-ordination officer

The Co-ordination officer is proposed by the President for a two years term. He or she shall be in charge of the day-to-day management of the Association. In particular, he/she shall be responsible for:

- representing the Association in Brussels;
- assistance to the Council and the President;
- preparation and organisation of meetings of the General Assembly and of working groups;
- preparation and supervision of the minutes of meetings of the General Assembly and of the Council;
- contacts with members;
- relations with the press and public;
- updating the Website;
- maintaining budgets & finances and the keeping of accounts;
- maintaining archives;
- distribution of documents;

The Co-ordination office shall attend all meetings of the Council and all meetings of the General Assembly, but he/she is not entitled to vote.

Title IV: FINANCIAL PROVISIONS

Article 16: Membership fees of the members

The amount of the annual membership fees is determined by the General Assembly upon the recommendation of the Council. The membership fee varies according to membership.

Article 17: Management of the financial resources

The financial year begins on 1 January and ends on 31 December of each year.

The Council must submit the accounts of the previous financial year and the budget of the next financial year to the General Assembly for approval.

In order to achieve its aims, the Association may manage and use the following resources:

- The incomes from its patrimony.
- The annual membership fees
- The donations of natural or legal persons or civil entities.
- The grants or contributions provided by the Public Administration.
- Any funds derived from its participation in programmes or initiatives
- The income of exploitation activities or companies in which the Association may participate eventually.
- The services developed by the Association.

Article 18: Dissolution and Liquidation of the Association

The resignation or exclusion of one of its members shall not put an end to the Association.

Any proposal aimed at the dissolution of the Association must be issued by the Council or by at least one third of the active members of the Association.

The dissolution of the Association can only be decided upon by the General Assembly. The dissolution is put on the agenda if a motion to this effect is included in the notice dispatched in advance of the meeting in accordance with Article 12 §4 of these Statutes and is duly included on its agenda.

The meeting convened for this purpose will be validly constituted if at least two-thirds of its active members are present or represented.

The Association may be dissolved by a decision taken by qualified majority voting of the active members.

In the event the Association is dissolved, the General Assembly shall decide on how the assets of the Association will be made available.

Title V: MODIFICATION OF THE STATUTES

These statutes are valid for an indefinite period of time. Any proposal to modify the statutes shall emanate from the Council or from at least two thirds of the active members of the Association.

Any proposal shall be brought to the knowledge of all the members of the Association by the President.

The meeting convened for this purpose will be validly constituted if at least half of the active members are present or represented.

All decisions concerning modifications of the statutes are taken by a simple majority of the active members.

Title VI: FINAL PROVISIONS

Article 19: Language of the Association

The official language of the Association is English. Any official document of the Association shall be drawn up in English.

Article 20: Legal Personality

The present statutes enter into force vis-à-vis the members and third parties, as of the day of their publication by Royal Decree in accordance with the article 50§1 al.3 of the Belgian law of 27 June 1921 concerning non profit making associations, international non profit making associations and foundations.

Article 21: Provisions

Anything that is not laid down in the present statutes and notably the publication necessary in the Annexes of the Belgian Official Journal (Moniteur Belge), shall be regulated by the provisions of Title III of the Belgian law of 27 June 1921 concerning non profit making associations, international non profit making associations and foundations..

The members

1. LEADER FRANCE – France

2. MINHA TERRA – Federação Portuguesa de Associações de Desenvolvimento Local – Portugal

3. RED ESPAÑOLA DE DESARROLLO RURAL- REDR - Spain

4. Národní síť Místních Akčních Skupin České republiky, o.s. - Czech Republic

ANNEX

1. PORTUGUESE NETWORK FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT (MINHA TERRA)

Legal Form: Non Profit Association

Official Name: MINHA TERRA, FEDERACAO PORTUGUESA DAS ASSOCIACOES DE DESENVOLVIMENTO LOCAL

Address: MINHA TERRA
Rua Bartolomeu Dias, 172D – 1º esq
1400-031 LISBOA
Portugal
Tel. (+351) 217819230
Fax. (+351) 217819232
E-mail: minhaterra@minhaterra.pt
www.minhaterra.pt

Date of Establishment: 15 February 2000

Official Representative: João Carlos Da Silva PINHO

Passport Number: G744158

2. SPANISH NETWORK OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT (REDR)

Legal Form: Non-profit Association

Official Name: Red Española de Desarrollo Rural - REDR

Address: Juan Ramón Jiménez 8 primera planta.
Complejo Eurobuilding
28036 Madrid
Spain
Phone: + 34 91 277 64 04
Fax: + 34 91 350 47 52
E-mail: redr@redr.es
www. redr.es

Date of Establishment: 10 July 1995 (Ministerio del Interior – Asociaciones)

Official Representative: Aurelio García Bermúdez

National IDESP Number: 15911428M5

3. FRENCH LEADER NETWORK

Legal Form: Association Loi 1901

Official Name: Association Leader France

Address: Conseil Général de la Creuse – Mission Europe –
4 bis rue George Clemenceau
23000 Guéret
France
Phone: +33 544 302 339
E-mail: mdenis@cg23.fr

	www.leaderfrance.fr
Date of Establishment:	3rd December 1996
Official Representative:	Marcel Denis
Passport Number:	03VI50022

4. CZECH REPUBLIC LEADER NETWORK

Legal Form:	Civil Association
Official Name:	NÁRODNÍ SÍŤ MÍSTNÍCH AKČNÍCH SKUPIN ČR, o.s.
Address:	Karlovarská 6, 364 55 VALEČ Czech Republic
	phone: +420 353 399 708
	E-mail: nsmas@valec.cz
	www.leadercz.cz
Date of Establishment:	11 April 2007
Official Representative:	Jitka Doubnerová
Passport Number:	36602307