

## PRESS RELEASE on **RURALIZATION KICK-OFF**

The economic, social and territorial cohesion of the EU is threatened by the unequal development of urban and rural areas. Population is expected for instance to grow of 12% in urban areas between 2014 and 2020 while a decline of 7% is expected in rural regions. Significant differences are registered as well as in per capita GDP. All in all, rural areas are faced with specific constraints related with depopulation and apparently poor development opportunities and the transition from primary sector focused areas.

The RURALIZATION project, funded by the European Commission under H2020 programme, aims at developing knowledge and support policy making in answering some of the challenges above mentioned and more specifically to facilitate rural newcomers and new entrants to farming. In particular the project will improve understanding of rural regeneration, including the issue of access to land, define innovative instruments and strategies to facilitate generational renewal in agriculture and rural development and support policy making to make rural dreams for new rural generations true.

The projects counts with the participation of 18 organizations from 12 European countries, including Universities, research institutes, SMEs and other practitioners such as five members of the Access to Land Network. This multi-disciplinary consortium will put in place research and innovation activities ensuring the involvement of farmers, young people and rural entrepreneurs, following a multi-actor approach.

RURALIZATION will last for 48 months starting from May 1<sup>st</sup> this year. Representatives from the project partners and from the Stakeholders Advisory Board convened to Barcelona for the kick-off meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> May to discuss plan further in details project activities and distribute responsibilities. The kick-off meeting has been enriched by the participation of the European Commission services (DG AGRI) and the Research Executive Agency, as well as from the contribution of some of the members of the Advisory Board.