



ERIAFF NEWS

European Regions for Innovation in Agriculture, Food and Forestry



The origins of ERIAFF network in a nutshell

Tuscany Region, ERIAFF Secretariat

ERIAFF is the network of European Regions for Innovation in Agriculture, Food and Forestry and it was constituted as an informal partnership by a group of 17 European Regions, led by the Minister for Agriculture of Regional Government of Tuscany, which met on September 20th 2012 in Florence at the Expo Rurale. In the 1st Annual Conference (AC) a joint declaration constitutive was signed by 24 EU Regions. On October 2013 in Brussels, during the 2nd AC, the network was presented to the European Commission with a final declaration.

In The Hague, at the 5th AC, the 74 member Regions decided to support the proposal of Tuscany to launch thematic Working Groups (WG) on topics as priorities; while a Coordination Committee was established in 2019 to support Tuscany in the network coordination. Now we count 92 Regions (53 members, 39 observers) from 21 EU countries, 11 WG on different themes and new requests of membership are coming.

The AC is the ERIAFF main event and it has been held in: Tuscany (2012), Brussels (2013), South Ostrobothnia (2014), Extremadura (2016), South Holland (2017), South Ostrobothnia (2018), Tuscany (2019), Central Macedonia (2022), Bolzano/South Tyrol (2023); the 10th AC, will be in Seinäjoki, Finland (11-13 June 2024).

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WHY ERIAFF NEWS?

THE HUMUS PROJECT

ERIAFF 10th Annual Conference in Seinäjoki, Finland

Region of South Ostrobothnia

The ERIAFF 10th Annual Conference, will be organized in Seinäjoki, Finland, from June 11th to June 13th, 2024. The conference is hosted by members from the Region of South Ostrobothnia, Seinäjoki University of Applied Sciences and Regional Council of South Ostrobothnia in collaboration with FoodPathS project.

The theme of this year's conference is "Regions as Changemakers for European Resilience and Sustainability.". This theme underscores the crucial role of regions in fostering resilient and sustainable agri-food and forestry systems across Europe. The event aims to spark discussions among policymakers, developers, and researchers by promising insightful dialogues and collaborative sessions among participants. With the newly added poster session, as well as the versatile study visit options, the event offers even more invaluable opportunities for networking and knowledge exchange. By the end of the conference, we hope to be many steps closer in driving positive change and innovation in European agriculture, food, and forestry sectors.

We invite members from across the network to join us in Seinäjoki. With registration closing on May 10th, participants are encouraged to secure their spots for three days of enriching discussions and networking opportunities.

Read more and register in the event website: <https://www.eriaff2024.fi/>



DO YOU WANT TO JOIN US?

ERIAFF remains open to new adhesions and welcomes you to the first edition of the E-News.

We are pleased to cooperate with those organizations and projects that are sharing the same values and objectives of our network.

More information about ERIAFF:

<http://www.eriaff.com/>

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Facilitating regional collaboration for sustainable food systems

Food Systems Working Group

The Food Systems Working Group (FS-WG) has been operating since autumn 2021. There are 30 member areas represented in the group. The group's primary goals are the planning, scope and cooperation of joint projects, as well as increasing regional cooperation, synergies and compromises in various food systems, as well as influencing political decision-making.

In its early years, FS-WG has focused on representing the interests of the ERIAFF network in the FOODPathS project, piloting the implementation of a sustainable food system partnership model. The group meets approximately three times a year, twice online and once in person during the ERIAFF's Annual Conferences.

The upcoming meeting will be held in Finland, Seinäjoki on Thursday, June 13 at 9 a.m. in cooperation with the FOODPathS project. The theme of the meeting is "Just Food Systems Transition: What Role for Regions?" The keynote speaker is Professor Minna Kaljonen, a food industry expert from the Finnish Environment Centre.

This event aims to delve into the crucial role of regions in facilitating a just transition towards sustainable food systems. All stakeholders interested in contributing to the advancement of sustainable food systems are cordially invited to participate.

Welcome aboard!



Social farming at the centre of the 'social inclusion system'

Social Innovation in Rural Areas Working Group

Farming in Marche Region has always been proactive and represents an example of a multifunctional and multigovernance approach opened to the community.

Farming proactivity has been a driver for Marche Region, which for over twenty years has been supporting the most innovative agriculture enterprises through legislation in order to encourage the implementation of new activities addressed to the community, such as services for the fragile people. Farming activities for social inclusion are particularly aimed at children, elderly, people affected by autism as well as prisoners.

On June 12, 2024, during the next Annual ERIAFF Conference, within the context of the Social Innovation Working Group, after showing a video on the activities and experiments carried out by Marche Region over ten years, the floor passes to the stakeholders who implemented these activities in the field with courage and determination.





The European Network of Forested Regions

Forested Regions Working Group

It was a joint initiative of two regions, North Karelia and Castilla y León, suggested by Tuscany in 2017 and established in 2018, in the framework of the ROSEWOOD Horizon 2020 project, as part of the ERIAFF network.

The group brings together regions committed to promote both the innovation in forest-based sectors and the development of forest policies at European and regional levels. It is also a platform to provide information and coordinate the feedback to upcoming EU initiatives relevant for regions interested in the forest sector.

The working group meets regularly, every one or two months and usually once a year in person, thanks to the support of its two coordinators. For each meeting, an agenda and its minutes are prepared. Regular covered topics are “Update on forest related EU policies” and “Regional innovations” while every other meeting a European Innovation project is also presented for the around 25 attending people. The Network activities includes:

1. Preparation of position documents on European initiatives affecting forest policies.
2. Organization of workshops.
3. Meeting with responsible of forest related initiatives.
4. Networking among regions and with sectoral organizations.
5. Collaboration in proposals on forest innovation projects.



Why ERIAFF News? Let's help solve European common challenges

Communication Working Group

Extremadura Region in Spain deals with managing the dissemination of ERIAFF network activity both inside and outside the organisation. Within the ERIAFF, the focus is mainly on the crucial challenges related to agriculture in the European Union. These challenges include the production of healthy food in sufficient quantity for a growing population, the need for efficient and sustainable agricultural systems, the contribution to climate change mitigation.

The initial situation is the presence of unstable agricultural systems due to deterioration caused by both agricultural activity and climate change. In this context, we now launch this first issue of the ERIAFF News as communication plays a key role in raising awareness, informing and mobilising different actors, not only in the search for sustainable and efficient agricultural and food solutions, including by leveraging innovation at regional, national and international level, but also in the formation of consortia and partnerships.

The HuMUS project to involve and activate municipalities and regions to protect and restore soil health

ANCI Toscana

As part of the EU Mission Soil, the HuMUS - Healthy Municipal Soils - Project engages and activates municipalities and regions to protect and restore soil health.

HuMUS will support local stakeholders in the 14 locations of the project partner communities and through an EU-wide Open Call funding 20 local initiatives improving soil health by creating context-specific solutions, and using participatory methods and tools, to establish Territorial Management Agreements on soil health.



Regions and municipal stakeholders will also be empowered to reflect, deliberate, and propose appropriate solutions via a Soil Steward Training Programme (available by the end of April), providing knowledge and support tools for public officers working at regional and/or municipal level and other stakeholders willing to act as facilitators of soil health dialogues.

On 20 March, HuMUS hosted a webinar to discuss training and education for improving soil health, convening soil experts, educators, community organisers, representatives of European municipalities and regions, EU policymakers to co-create knowledge on the potential of training and education programs for enhancing the health of European soils. Recording and presentations are available on the HuMUS webpage.



ERIAFF, YOUR NETWORK FOR COLLABORATION

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