

## Devon and membership of RUR@CT

### Background

Devon County Council was a partner in Rural Innova, a European exchange network for innovative rural development policy, with Jen Brogan playing an important part. In December, at the final workshop of Rural Innova, I met Andrew Fieldsend, then working for Writtle College, in Essex. Subsequently Andrew developed a successful EU FP7 research bid – ‘RuralJobs’<sup>1</sup> - and is now on a fractional contract with the University of Plymouth for the duration of that project (Feb 2008 to July 2010).

One of the partners in RuralJobs, and a leading light in Rural Innova, was the Regional Council of Limousin, in France. Limousin is a very active local authority with respect to rural development, and has now established RUR@CT, a new network of rural regions. **Limousin has asked that Devon consider joining the network, and it seems appropriate to suggest that the Devon Rural Network could be the vehicle for this.**

### RUR@CT – some details

The RUR@CT website is at <http://www.region-limousin.fr/ruract>. It describes the network under three headings (the French say things differently, but you will get the gist):

#### **A technical resources centre**

- A database recording good practice and contact details;
- Methodological tools for the transfer of innovative experiences;
- An updated web site with a reserved access section.

#### **A global offer of good practices:**

- Shared by all regions of the European Union;
- Coming from different existing cooperation projects;
- Related to various themes of integrated rural development.

#### **Qualified innovative experiences:**

- Having produced concrete outputs and positive results;
- Analysed in terms of transferability;
- Presented with an operational framework.

**Membership** of the network is free of charge, and involves signature of a charter of undertaking and a general information form. Membership is open only to regional public authorities (or equivalent bodies) ideally representing NUTS II level (but note membership of Cheshire).

20 Regions are already officially members :

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<sup>1</sup> *New Sources of Employment to Promote the Wealth-Generating Capacity of Rural Communities*

- Andalousie (Spain)
- North Great Plain (Hungary)
- Kainuu (Finland)
- East Flander (Belgium)
- Salaj (Roumania)
- Brescia / Lombardia (Italy)
- Ader sousa (Portugal)
- Steiermark (Austria)
- Wallonie (Belgium)
- Extremadure (Spain)
- Basse Normandie, (France)
- Molise (Italy)
- Cheshire (UK)
- Jämtland (Sweden)
- Opolskie (Poland)
- Sardaigne (Italy)
- Bavière (Germany)
- Sicile (Italy)
- Aquitaine (France)
- Limousin (France)

9 further regions have officially confirmed their intention to participate:

- Auvergne (France)
- Midi-Pyrénées (France)
- Satu Mare (Roumania)
- ODARC-Corse (France)
- Açores (Portugal)
- Fier (Albania)
- County Council (Roumania)
- Poméranie (Poland)
- Podkarpackie (Poland)

Martyn Warren 3 December 2008