

Minutes of Working Group 2 “Economics of Green Care” COST Action 866 Brussels 4-5 December 2006

Monday, December 4th - Joined session between Working Group 2 and Working Group 3

During WG2 and WG3 joined session, that took place from 16 to 18.30 , short summaries of the different situations of Green Care farming in some european countries were presented in the following order:

Georg Wiesinger

Framework and structure of Green Care in Austria”

Thomas van Elsen

Social Farming in Germany

Bas Pedroli

Green Care Farming in the Netherlands

Beatrice Winterstein

Experiences from Green Care Farming in Greece

Francesco Di Iacovo

Social Farming in Italy

Leena Rantamäki-Lahtinen

The healthcare and social services provided by Finnish farms in the light of statistics

Andrej Udovc

Green Care in Slovenia

Tuesday December 5th – Working Group 2 session

Participants:

Saverio Senni (Italy, WG2 chair), Anna Carbone (Italy), Mieke Calus (Belgium), Joost Dessen (Belgium), Thomas Haase (Austria), Giulia Listorti (Italy), Demetris Litsas (Greece), Simon Oosting (Netherlands), Leena Rantamäki-Lahtinen (Finland), Henk Renting (Netherlands), Henrik Saxe (Denmark), Andrej Udovc (Slovenia)

The session started with five presentation on the following topics:

Andrej Udovc (Slovenia)

“The Interreg Neprovalter project and the social farming issue”

Thomas Haase (Austria)

“The healing garden project”

Simon Oosting (Netherlands)

“Farmer’s perspective of green care farms”

Anna Carbone (Italy)

“Consumers’ attitude toward social farms products”

Henk Renting (Netherlands)

“Care Farming within the Framework of Multifunctional Agriculture”

After the presentations there has been an ample debate on how to include Green Care farming in the context of multifunctional agriculture and on the relevant issues to be deepened in the future of the Working Group.

Summarizing the debate, it emerged that:

- Green Care programs and initiatives are very diverse across countries. There is a need of a more deep knowledge on what is going on in different countries and, concerning the economic side, on how the different experiences reach economic sustainability;
- when considering Green Care programs that are carried on in a farm context it should be taken into consideration that these activities affect the whole farm organization and its competitiveness. For this reason the focus should be on the whole farm and not specifically on the Green Care activities in “isolation”;
- researchers and/or experts from the health care and social sector should be involved in the future of WG2 activities in order to gain a view on the economics aspects related with the provision of health and social inclusion.

Two main suggestions emerged for the Wien Conference:

- sufficient time should be dedicated to specific case studies of Green Care farms and projects in different countries or regional context (rural versus urban). Some of the participants declared their availability to contribute to the design a socio-economic framework for the presentation of these case studies;
- researchers with a Health Economics” background should be invited to exchange theoretical and empirical approaches in order to evaluate the healing/therapeutic/social inclusion outputs generated by Green Care initiatives in agriculture.