

Programme for the Study of European Rural Societies



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COST Action A35 Progressore

With the participation of :

Centre de Recherches Historiques <http://crh.ehess.fr/>
Groupe de Recherches : Sociétés Rurales Européennes
Centre de recerca d'història Rural www.udg.edu/irh

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The countryside is sometimes viewed as the producer of food and raw materials, sometimes as a garden or a space for energy production; it is sometimes seen as a reservoir of manpower destined to serve the needs of cities and industries or as a peaceful haven for weary city-dwellers. It is thought to be inhabited by the irascible members of so-called backward societies or alternately as an idyllic haunt for nature-lovers, where local communities jealously keep watch over the quality of life. In short, the countryside is still very much at the centre of economic, social, political, and now environmental, concerns of governments and public opinion. The countryside of today, torn between contradictory demands, is clearly a place and a society in transformation, a transformation which itself is difficult to understand. The main objective of the final A35 Progressore conference is to provide keys to decode changing present-day European rural societies in the light of their historical experience. It aims to produce historical knowledge to frame discussions on the future of European country-dwellers, as they face the kinds of problems which historians have analyzed in past societies: under-employment and multiple occupations, migrations and rural depopulation, distortion of competition by the marketplace or by the policy choices of political authorities, competition with non-European producers, problems of allocating resources such as land and water, the distribution and redistribution of inheritances and land-holding, the future of owner-occupied farms and the function of agriculture as employer, the tensions between private ownership and public access to land, the impact of urban migrants on the environment and the need for sustainable development. This conference will examine and evaluate the work accomplished over three years, twelve workshops and the twelve publications which will emerge from them. The historical analysis of rural society will be extended over the last millennium in order to view the problems of the countryside over the long term and also to draw upon the commentary and expertise of policy-makers, stake-holders and specialists from other disciplines such as sociology, economics and anthropology.

RUI SANTOS and GÉRARD BÉAUR _____
Working Group 1
Policy, farming types and the social organisation of agriculture in Europe: 16th century to the future

PATRICK SVENSSON and JOSE VICENTE SERRAO _____
Working Group 2
Factors driving change in agriculture – the future in a historical perspective

PETER MOSER and RICHARD HOYLE _____
Working Group 3
Landscapes and rural societies, their changes and continuities

PHILLIP SCHOFIELD and NADINE VIVIER _____
Working Group 4
Changing power relations in the European countryside : from the middle ages to the present