

# EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

The Secretariat

## Mission report

**EP Agriculture Committee mission to Tallinn and Tartu  
(Estonia)**

**18-20 April 2017**



A delegation of the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development of the European Parliament was present in Estonia from 18 to 20 April 2017. The aim of the visit was to participate in the Agroforum Mare Balticum and in the *Maames 2017* Agricultural fair in Tartu.

The delegation was organised by the AGRI Secretariat in cooperation with the Estonian Permanent Representation to the EU in Brussels and included: the Chair of the Committee, Czesław SIEKIERSKI (EPP, PL), Franc BOGOVIČ (EPP, SL), Herbert DORFMANN (EPP, IT) Momchil NEKOV (S&D, BG), Susanne MELIOR (S&D, DE) and Maria Lidia SENRA RODRIGUEZ (GUE/NGL, ES). The delegation was accompanied by Mr Marko Gorban, Deputy Director General for Agricultural Policy and Trade, Mr Siim Tidemann, Ms. Liina

Tomlinson, Ms. Liisi Lees, Agricultural Counselors at the Permanent Representation of Estonia to the EU and Ms Pirjo Laanesaar, Chief Specialist of the EU Affairs Department at the Estonian Ministry.

## **TUESDAY, 18 APRIL 2017 - Tallinn**



The delegation started its work on Tuesday 18 April in Tallinn with a lunch organised by the Minister of Rural Affairs Mr Tarmo Tamm and the Chairman of the Estonian Parliament's Rural Affairs Committee Mr Helir-Valdor Seeder to discuss the Estonian priorities during the Presidency and the future of the CAP. Herbert Dorfmann MEP led the delegation replacing the Chair.

This picture shows Minister of Rural Affairs Mr Tarmo Tamm's intervention during the working lunch.



During the afternoon the delegation visited the Estonian Parliament, where an exchange of views took place with Mr Helir-Valdor Seeder (Chair of Rural Affairs Committee) and other Members. The discussion covered a large number of topics including the lack of balance in the food supply chain, unfair commercial practices, how to protect farmers from the negative effects of the crisis in the agricultural sector, the Omnibus proposal, the future of the CAP and the priority for a digital single market in rural areas.



The Chair reminded those present that 2017 is a year of new challenges at the EU level. The Official notification of article 50 concerning Brexit was triggered in March and as announced in President Juncker's 2016 State of the Union speech, the European Commission on 1 March presented a White Paper on the Future of Europe, which forms the Commission's contribution to the Rome Summit of 25 March 2017. In this context, the Commission has to present its proposals for a new Multiannual Financial Framework for the post 2020 period at the end of this year. 2017 will also be a year of preparation of the new CAP reform, he added. It will be the task of the European legislators (European Parliament and Council) to make crucial choices on the level of direct support, the role of risk management tools and/or the instruments oriented towards reinforcing rural cohesion.



On 25 March, the leaders of 27 EU Member States met in Rome to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the Rome Treaties and finally adopted and signed the Rome Declaration setting out a joint vision for the years to come. Our leaders declared that they are committed to the Rome Agenda but acknowledged that there are a lot of problems which need to be tackled.



Mr Helir-Valdor Seeder (Chair of Rural Affairs Committee at the Estonian Parliament) reminded those present of the priorities of the Estonian Presidency:

1. An open and innovative european economy
2. Safe and secure europe
3. Digital europe and the free flow of data
4. Inclusive and sustainable europe

The Estonian Presidency intends to work on the Omnibus proposal, continue the discussion on the 'Simplification of the CAP' and the monitoring of the market situation to facilitate the discussions in this regard.

A Communication on the future of the CAP and a proposal on Unfair Trading Practices (UTPs) are expected in autumn. The Estonian Presidency is ready to work on these issues.

Estonia will continue the work started by Slovak Presidency and continued by the Maltese on the Spirit Drinks proposal.



At the Estonian Parliament





### **Tartu - Reception at the University of Tartu Museum**

After the meeting at the Estonian Parliament, the delegation travelled to Tartu by bus. A reception was organised for the different delegations participating at the Agroforum Mare Balticum hosted by the mayor of Tartu Mr Urmas Klaas at the University of Tartu Museum.





**WEDNESDAY, 19 APRIL 2017**

**The Opening Plenary of the Agroforum Mare Balticum  
at the Estonian University of Life Sciences**

**Tartu**

Now in its fifth year, the Agroforum Mare Balticum is an annual international agriculture conference which took place in Tartu from 18 to 20 April 2017 and was focused on Agriculture and Rural Development. The Estonian University of Life Sciences with the Estonian Ministry of Rural Affairs and their partners have convened an international forum to bring together all stakeholders involved in agricultural development – policy makers, entrepreneurs and scientists – from all the Baltic Sea countries as well as from Eastern Partnership countries to discuss agricultural policy topics of wider interest.





The forum is quite unique, since it provides an opportunity for group discussions in a roundtable format and intergroup communication followed by the dissemination of information by reliable sector-specific organizations to the wider public. The topics selected for this year's 5th Agroforum included:

- Agriculture as one of the bases for rural development;
- Agricultural subsidies and support measures;
- Animal husbandry in rural development and rural environment protection;
- Risk management in the rural sector



The Agroforum was open by the Minister of Rural Affairs Mr Tarmo Tamm and by the rector of Estonian University of Life Sciences Prof. Mait Klaassen.

AGRI Chair Mr Siekierski delivered a speech on “*The role of agriculture for rural life*” with a focus on the question “*How can agriculture and the CAP contribute to the livelihood and the economic viability of rural areas?*” Agriculture remains an essential driver of the rural economy in much of the EU, he said, even though a number of rural areas have become increasingly driven by factors outside agriculture as a result of diversification of their socio-economic structure. The farming sector remains particularly important in predominantly rural areas and in the new Member States. Furthermore, agriculture generates additional economic activities in rural areas, especially through its strong linkages with food processing, tourism and trade.

One of the challenges for the new CAP is to strengthen territorial and social cohesion in rural areas, notably through the promotion of employment and diversification. As a result, achieving a balanced territorial development, including the support of rural employment, should become the third objective of the new CAP. The EP AGRI Committee placed the issue of ‘*rural jobs and the CAP*’ very high on its agenda in 2016. The EP resolution on this topic was adopted in October 2016. It makes a number of recommendations to improve the role of CAP in the creation of rural jobs. The resolution examines what can be done under the current CAP and how the CAP could be amended to improve the situation.



Others keynote speakers included: Mr Jerzy Bogdan Plewa (European Commission Director-General of DG AGRI), Mr Raimund Jehle (FAO Deputy Regional Representative for Europe and central Asia), Ms Carmel Cahill (Deputy Director of the OECD Trade and Agriculture Directorate), Mr Armen Harutyunyan (Deputy-Minister of Agriculture of Armenia), Mr Ion Paria (Deputy-Minister of Agriculture of Moldova), Mr Revaz Asdatiani (Deputy-Minister of Agriculture of Georgia). (The list of participating delegations in the AgroForum Mare Balticum is included in the annex).

### **Alatskivi Castle and the Onion Road**

The delegation had lunch at the Alatskivi Castle, a superb castle on the eastern border of Estonia. Here, the delegation got acquainted with the life and history of an aristocratic family who lived in the manor a century ago.





The western coast of Europe's fourth largest lake is dotted with traditional culture, scenic country roads where there is a friendly mix of different nationalities.

On the Onion Route three local cultures live:

1. Russian Old Believers (Peipsi area).

The Old Believers are a traditional religious minority recognised as hard-working and skilful fishermen, builders and keen onion cultivators. They live by the shores of Lake Peipus and hold their traditions in high regard. Varnja, Kasepää and Kolkja are villages with a distinctive atmosphere, where the delegation visited a local museum, a house of prayer, and a bed&breakfast. In the Kolkja museum, the delegation saw the traditional clothes, handicrafts, tools, photos, books and many other items associated with the Old Believers.

The Russian Old Believers have been following their religious traditions rigorously for more than a thousand years. There are 11 congregations of Old Believers with approximately 15,000 members in Estonia.



2. Baltic German Manor Culture.

The Baltic German manor culture, which used to thrive in this area, is represented by the dignified Alatskivi manor. One by one, the old stone buildings located in the heart of the manor complex are being put to use. The most remarkable of them is the aristocratic Alatskivi castle.

3. Estonian Peasant Culture.

With their typical industrious spirit, Estonians have greatly improved the village life and culture in this area.





The delegation visited the Mesi Tare Home Accommodation and met the family who provides a unique opportunity to stay the night in a traditional Old-Believer home in the Varnja Village of Old Believers by Lake Peipus (Peipsi). Guests can stay in an authentic house with a courtyard where the family offers visitors a homely atmosphere and a chance to experience the way of life of Old Believers as it has been for about a century with peace, quiet and no indoor plumbing.



The agricultural holdings are focused on dairy production, cereals, oilseed and protein crops.

The most important agricultural crop in this area is the onion.







At the home accomodation, Members were offered a typical snack and drink (bread with butter and fish and tea).



**THURSDAY 20 APRIL**

**AGRICULTURAL FAIR MAAMESS - TARTU**

The Estonian International Agricultural Fair Maamess 2017 took place from 20–22 April 2017 at the Tartu Fairs Centre. Maamess (see Map 2), which demonstrates different aspects of the rural economy, is the most renowned rural fair in the Baltic States. The exhibition is divided into four parts: agriculture, animal husbandry, forestry and horticulture. Now in its 25th year, the Maamess increases its international presence annually by providing the best opportunity to bring together various groups of people connected with the rural economy: farmers, foresters, manufacturers and vendors of professional equipment. Similarly to other fairs, it provides visitors with information on modern agricultural, forestry and timber processing machinery, plant production and animal husbandry, animal breeding, gardening and food (Agroforum 2017). The Maamess fair of 2017 had more than 43,500 visitors attending the exhibition.







The Agri Chair opened the agricultural fair with the Chairman of Estonian Parliament's Rural Affairs Committee Mr Helir-Valdor Seeder and the Mayor of Tartu Mr Urmas Klaas.













In the picture above Franc Bogovic MEP with the Chairman of Estonian Parliament's Rural Affairs Committee Mr Helir-Valdor Seeder.

**Contact person: Francesca Cionco**

Annexes:

- Programme of the mission
- Participants list
- List of delegations participating at the AgroForum Mare Balticum



**MISSION OF THE  
COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND RURAL  
DEVELOPMENT TO ESTONIA**

**Agroforum Mare Balticum 18 -20 April 2017**

***Program***

***Tuesday, 18 April***

*12.30 Arrival at Tallinn Airport (9:05 (BRU)-12:30(TLL)*

*Meeting at exit.*

*Welcome at the airport by Mr. Siim Tiidemann, Agricultural Counselor at the Permanent Representation of Estonia to the EU, Ms. Liina Tomlinson, Agricultural Counselor at the Permanent Representation of Estonia to the EU, Ms. Liisi Lees, Agricultural Counselor at the Permanent Representation of Estonia to the EU, Ms. Pirjo Laanesaar, Chief Specialist of the EU Affairs Department*

***Bus (HANSABUSS) transfer to restaurant CRU***

**13.15 - 14.45 Lunch hosted by Minister of Rural Affairs Mr. Tarmo Tamm and Chairman of Estonian Parliament's Rural Affairs Committee Mr. Helir-Valdor Seeder at the restaurant CRU, Viru 8**

*Accompanied by Mr. Olavi Petron, Deputy Director General for Fisheries Policy and Foreign Affairs of the Ministry of Rural Affairs, Mr. Siim Tiidemann, Agricultural Counselor at the Permanent Representation of Estonia to the EU, Ms. Liina Tomlinson, Agricultural Counselor at the Permanent Representation of Estonia to the EU, Ms. Liisi Lees, Agricultural Counselor at the Permanent Representation of Estonia to the EU*

**Topics:** Estonian priorities during Presidency and the future of the CAP

14.10 *Arrival of Mr. Siekierski*

*Welcome at the airport by Mr. Madis Pärtel, the Head of the EU Affairs Department, Mr. Siim Tiidemann, Agricultural Counselor at the Permanent Representation of Estonia to the EU*

14.45 **Walk** to the Parliament through the Old Town of Tallinn

15.15 - 16.00 **Meeting** with Estonian Parliament's Rural Affairs Committee Chair and Members at the Parliament's Conference Room, *Lossi plats 1a, 15165 Tallinn*

**Possible topics to be discussed:** the future of the CAP, the Food Supply Chain Initiative and the Omnibus regulation

**Members of the Estonian Parliament participating:**

- 1) Helir-Valdor Seeder – Chair of the Committee (IRL/EPP)
- 2) Siret Kotka – Member of the Committee (Keskerakond/ALDE)
- 3) Martin Repinski - Member of the Committee (Keskerakond/ALDE)
- 4) Inara Luigas – Member of the Committee (S&D)
- 5) Tanel Talve – Member of the Committee (S&D)
- 6) Arno Sild – Member of the Committee (EKRE)
- 7) Artur Talvik – Member of the Committee (Vabaerakond)

16.00 **Bus** trip to Tartu

18.30 *Arrival at the VSpa Hotel, Ujula 2, Tartu (<http://vspa.ee/kontakt/>)*  
*(The badges for the AgroForum will be given at the check-in)*

19.45 **Walk** to the University of Tartu Museum

20.00-22.00 **Reception** for delegations participating at the **AgroForum Mare Balticum** hosted by the **Mayor of Tartu Mr. Urmas Klaas** at the University of Tartu Museum, *Lossi 25*

## ***Wednesday, 19 April***

**AgroForum Mare Balticum – Agriculture for Rural Development Conference**

8.00-9.00 **Mr Siekierski : Breakfast** hosted by the Minister of Rural Affairs Mr. Tarmo Tamm for the **Heads of the delegations** at the Hotel Antonius, *Ülikooli 15*  
*Transportation for Mr. Siekierski and interpreters PL/ET/EN organized by the Ministry of Rural Affairs*

- 8.45 **Bus** *Departure from the hotel to the conference venue at the University of Life Sciences, Assembly Hall, Kreutzwaldi St. 1*
- 9.00 - 9.30 Welcome coffee
- 9.30 **Opening of the plenary by:**
- The rector of Estonian University of Life Sciences **Prof Mait Klaassen**
- Estonian Prime Minister **Mr. Jüri Ratas**
- Minister of Rural Affairs **Mr. Tarmo Tamm**
- Keynote speeches by:**
- Chairman of the COMAGRI or the European Parliament **Mr. Czesław Adam Siekierski**
- DG Agri Director-General **Mr. Jerzy Bogdan Plewa**
- FAO Deputy Regional Representative for Europe and Central Asia **Mr. Raimund Jehle**
- Deputy Director of the OECD Trade and Agriculture Directorate **Ms. Carmel Cahill**
- Coffee break
- Minister of Agriculture of Armenia **Mr. Armen Harutyunyan**
- Vice-Minister of Agriculture of Moldova **Mr. Ion Paria**
- Vice-Minister of Agriculture of Georgia **Mr. Revaz Asatiani**
- 12.30 **Bus** *Departure to Alatskivi Manor*
- 13.15 **Lunch** hosted by the Ministry of Rural Affairs at Alatskivi Manor
- Guided excursion to **Lake Peipus region** - *The western coast of Europe's 4th largest lake is home to Old Believers and colorful cottages marking the onion route (Estonian quality scheme)*
- Accompanied by Mr. Marko Gorban, Deputy Director General for Agricultural Policy and Trade, Mr. Toomas Kevvai, Deputy General for Food Safety, Research and Development, Ms. Kadi Raudsepp, Deputy Head of Trade and the Agro-Foods Department, Mr. Siim Tiidemann, Counselor for Agricultural Affairs, Ms. Liina Tomlinson, Counselor for Agricultural Affairs, Ms. Liisi Lees, Counselor for Agricultural Affairs, Ms. Pirjo Laanesaar, Chief Specialist of EU Affairs Department*
- Bus**
- 18.00 *Arrival at the hotel*



18.45 **Walk** to the restaurant

19.00 - 22.00 **Conference dinner** hosted by the Ministry of Rural Affairs at restaurant Atlantis, Narva mnt 2

## ***Thursday, 20 April***

### ***Check out of hotel***

10.00 **Bus** Departure from the hotel to Agricultural fair Maamess 2017  
(luggage can be stored in a bus for a direct departure to the airport)

10.15-12.15 **Guided tour and opening** of the **Agricultural fair Maamess 2017**  
*Meetings with the representatives from different sectors of interest to the Members of the delegation*

12.30 **Bus** Departure to Tallinn

13.30 **Lunch** hosted by the Ministry of Rural Affairs at Põhjaka Manor  
*Accompanied by Mr. Marko Gorban, Deputy Director General for Agricultural Policy and Trade, Mr. Siim Tiidemann, Counselor for Agricultural Affairs, Ms. Liisi Lees, Counselor for Agricultural Affairs, Ms. Pirjo Laanesaar, Chief Specialist of the EU Coordination Department*

16.00 *Arrival at the Tallinn Airport*

**Participants' list (draft)**  
**Mission to Estonia**  
**18-20 April 2017**

31.03.2017

**Members 1+5**

Czesław Adam Siekierski (Chair)	(PL, pl)	EPP
Herbert Dorfmann	(IT, de)	EPP
Franc Bogovič	(SI, sl)	EPP
Momchil Nekov	(BG, bg)	S&D
Susanne Melior	(DE, de)	S&D
Lidia Senra Rodríguez	(ES, es)	GUE/NGL

**Accompanying Members 1**

Marju Lauristin	(EE, et)	S&D
-----------------	----------	-----

**Political Groups 1**

Miron Podgorean (S&D)

**Interpreters: 5 active languages: PL, ET, EN, DE, ES**

Booth	First name	Last name
EN	SUSAN	ASHCROFT-HEMPSALL
EN	LATIFA	SADOC
DE	NATALIA	PALACIOS EHRlich
DE	THOMAS	EBERLE (team leader)
ES	MARIA	TABOAS RODRIGUEZ
ES	ELSA-MARIA	MICHAEL SACRISTAN
PL	WOJCIECH	SKRZYPCZAK
PL	AGNIESZKA	DURLAK-MOSKAL
PL	MARIA	WANAT
ET	HANNA LIISA	TAMM
ET	KADRI	METS
ET	JAN	ROHTMETS

**Conference technician 1**

Pascal Godart

**Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development (Secretariat) 2**

Francesca Cionco, administrator

Mary Ann van Oost Seeuws, assistant

## **List of delegations participating at the AgroForum Mare Balticum**

### **Armenia**

tbc

### **CBSS**

Bernd Hemingway - Deputy Director General of the Secretariat

Krista Kampus - Senior Adviser and Head of the Sustainable Development Unit – Baltic 2030

### **European Commission**

Jerzy Plewa - Director-General - European Commission, Directorate-General (DG) for Agriculture and Rural Development

Maret Suuroja - Programme Manager Estonian Rural Development Programme

### **FAO**

Raimund Jehle - Deputy Regional Representative for Europe and Central Asia

### **Finland**

tbc

### **Georgia**

Mr. Revez Asiatiani – Deputy Minister of Agriculture

Ms. Nato Modebidze - Chief Specialist

### **Latvia**

Mr. Ringolds Arnitis – Deputy Minister of Agriculture

Ms. Gita Jansone

Ms. Zane Lide

Mr. Agris Spunde,



## **Lithuania**

Mr. Rolandas Taraškevičius – Deputy Minister of Agriculture

Mr. Jonas Pupius - Chief Officer of Compensation and Investment Division within the Rural Development Department

Ms. Lilija Rudaitienė -

## **Moldova**

Mr. Ion Parea – Deputy Minister of Agriculture

Mr. Igor Burda

Ms. Magdalena Rusnac

## **Poland**

Wanda Chmielewska-Gill

## **Russia**

tbc

## **Ukraine**

tbc

### **Links to Media Coverage of Mission**

Please find below some examples of media coverage of the AGRI Committee Mission to Estonia

<http://maaleht.delfi.ee/news/maamajandus/uudised/maamess-mis-saab-eurotoetustest?id=77956640>

<http://maaleht.delfi.ee/news/maaleht/uudised/fotod-tartus-votsid-maamehed-linnapealt-voimule?id=77921554>

<http://www.aiandus.ee/loe.php?id=23055>

<https://www.emu.ee/ylikoolist/uudised/pressiteated/uudis/2017/04/17/agroforumil-arutletakse-pollumajanduse-olukorrast-rahvusvahelisel-tasandil>

<http://www.fao.org/europe/news/detail-news/en/c/882204/>