

# EU LAND POLICY – PATHWAY TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE EUROPE

## PÔDNA POLITIKA EÚ – – CESTA K UDRŽATELNEJ EURÓPE

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### I. Introduction

Land policy lies at the heart of economic and social life and environmental issues in all countries. The distribution of property rights between people has a tremendous impact on both equity and productivity. Inequitable land distribution, land tenure problems and weak land administration can lead to severe injustice and conflict. Changes to legislation, the distribution of property rights, and administrative structures are likely to have long-term consequences, positive or negative, for political, economic and social development. Similarly land policy is also crucial for environmental sustainability as it can create incentives for sustainable land-use and environmental management (EU Council and Parliament, 2004).

The current topic of the Land Policy in the conditions of the European Union has been reflected in the Jean Monnet project Centre of Excellence which has been awarded to the Slovak University of Agriculture in Nitra, Faculty of EU Studies and Regional Development in the frame of the Call of 2013 under the ref.no. 2013 - 2883/001 - 001. The approval and the grant awarding for completing the project aims means a commitment towards the main and partial aims of the project. This awareness is much more binding mainly due to the fact that the success in winning the Jean Monnet - Centre of Excellence project is the unique successful result in the effort of the Faculty of EU Studies and Regional Development by which the genesis of the Jean Monnet projects' implementation at the faculty is accomplished.

The paper provides an analytical overview of the Jean Monnet programme in separate project activities which have been

implemented at the Faculty of EU Studies and Regional Development during the period from 2004 until the present.

### II. Discussion

The topic of the EU Land Policy in the tight context of sustainability in the EU has been developed on the solid basis of the 7th Environment Action Programme to 2020, Strategy 2020, Soil Thematic Strategy and proposal of the EU Soil Framework Directive. The research activities planned within the main and partial aims of the project have been designed and worked out by the interdisciplinary approach of the scientists of the Slovak University of Agriculture in Nitra of both - the Faculty of EU Studies and Regional Development and the Faculty of Biotechnology. This aspect emphasizes the fulfillment of the main goal of the Centre of Excellence with the main expectation of the enhancement of the multidisciplinary approach of knowledge and skills from the field of the Policy and legislation of the land protection towards to the protection and the enhancement of the natural resources of the EU. The target group covers young scientists and researchers who do not act directly in the field of European integration studies. In accordance with this precondition the Centre of Excellence will design four Modules:

- EU Land Law,
- EU Agriculture and Land Policy,
- Sustainability of the Land in the EU,
- Agri-environmental legislation of the EU.

The reason for the “multidisciplinary character” of the project is arising from the awareness that the target group usually fo-

#### Abstract (EN)

The land policy plays a key role in the frame of priorities of the EU and influences the political, economic and social development of countries and regions. The Faculty of European Studies and Regional Development of the Slovak University of Agriculture in Nitra has been active in various aspects of the policy mainly by the support of national and international funding programmes. One of the most actively developed European funding programme at the faculty is the Jean Monnet programme. The structure and priorities of the Jean Monnet programme are sufficiently complemented to the mission and priorities of the faculty at the educational and scientific level. The paper especially focuses on the realization, impact and sustainability of achieved project results.

#### Keywords (EN)

European Union, European Policies, integration, European studies

#### Abstrakt (SK)

V rámci priorit EÚ zohráva pôdna politika kľúčovú úlohu, keďže ovplyvňuje politický, ekonomický a sociálny rozvoj krajín a regiónov. Fakulta európskych štúdií a regionálneho rozvoja, Slovenskej poľnohospodárskej univerzity v Nitre sa touto politikou aktívne zaoberá a to najmä prostredníctvom podpory z rôznych národných a medzinárodných podporných programov. Jean Monnet program patrí k jedným z najviac rozvinutých európskych podporných programov na fakulte, ktoré sa zaoberajú touto problematikou. Štruktúra a priority Jean Monnet programu vhodne dopĺňajú misiu a priority fakulty na vzdelávacej aj vedeckej úrovni. Príspevok sa zaoberá predovšetkým realizáciou, dopadmi a udržiateľnosťou dosiahnutých projektových výsledkov.

#### Kľúčové slová (SK)

Európska únia, európske politiky, integrácia, európske štúdiá

cuses narrowly on their research topics and often the basic link to the EU Legislation and Policy lacks.

The completion of the main aim of the project will be supported in essential part by the research conducted under the main focus of collecting and evaluating data related to the EU Land Policy and its implementation in Slovakia. Based on the results received measures will be set up to improve the awareness of the EU Land Policy and Law among the target group as well as the researchers, professional groups, and general public in order to strengthen their confidence in the EU Land Law. Thus the Centre is expected to provide the target groups with supportive scientific events such as:

- Study visits enabling the exploration of the principles of work within the land registry (the Netherland) and at the DG Environment (Belgium),
- Roundtable debates on the possibilities of the improvements the implementation of the EU Land Policy and Law,
- Scientific conferences,
- Project conferences within the topic of the Centre of Excellence.

The events expected in the frame of the Centre will supplement significantly the teaching and research part of the project's tasks. The most expected interactions are foreseen:

- between the current knowledge and the opportunity of exchanging the experiences and professional opinions on the land protection in the enlarged EU,
- between the complex research activities of the Centre and the teaching activities towards the target group where the theoretical knowledge could be practiced,
- among the newly created unique scientific board of experts on the EU Land Policy and Law whose outputs will contribute to the enhancement of the implementation of the principles of the Policy at local, national and European level.

The overall "society benefit" of the Centre is definitely its unique innovative character. This is reflected in several aspects:

- The innovative and complex teaching approach: ensured by the four modules which will address the priorities of the EU Environmental policy in agriculture and land protection. The special focus is towards the improvement of the implementation of EU Laws and of the environmental integration and Policy coherence.
- The strengthening the research activity by the Centre: with attention to the agricultural land policy and land law in the EU with the aim of supporting the sustainable land use in Europe.
- The creation of the open scientific board: consisting of the network of university teachers, researchers and professional groups at national and regional level. The network will interconnect common debates on improving implementation, assessment and monitoring of agricultural Land Policy and Law in order to achieve the sustainability of the land in Europe.

The current overview of implemented Jean Monnet projects at the Faculty of EU Studies and Regional Development of

the Slovak University of Agriculture in Nitra reflects the genesis started by the Jean Monnet Modules in several thematic fields, followed the by Jean Monnet Chair and rounding out by the Jean Monnet Centre of Excellence. Before the approval and awarding the grant for the Jean Monnet - Centre of Excellence (ref. no. 2013 - 2883/001 - 001) the following milestones have been set:

1. Jean Monnet Module "EU Agrarian Law", project number: 2004-2941/001-001 JMO JMO, 2004 - 2007,
2. Jean Monnet Chair "EU Agrarian Law", project number: 200123-LLP-1-2011-1-SK-AJM-CH, 2011-2014,
3. Jean Monnet Module "Financing of EU Programmes", project number: 141302-LLP-1-2008-SK-AJM-MO, 2008-2011,
4. Jean Monnet Module „Agri-Environmental Legislation of the EU“, project number: 154239-LLP-1-2009-1-SK-AJM-MO, 2009-2012,
5. Jean Monnet Module "European Union Business Law", project number: 175785-LLP-1-2010-1-SK-AJM-MO, 2010-2013,
6. Jean Monnet - Learning EU at Schools "European Integration in Slovak Schools", project number: 357581-LLP-1-2011-1-SK-AJM-ICS, 2012-2013.

### **Jean Monnet Module "EU Agrarian Law" and Jean Monnet Chair "EU Agrarian Law"**

The absolute pioneering project in the frame of the Jean Monnet- Module was the educational dimension project dealing with the topic of European Agrarian Law. The Module has been approved for granting with a start in 2004 and enabled the introduction and subsequent implementation of the current innovative principles of legislation applied on the specific rules and conditions of the field of agriculture. Thematic fields of lectures and accompanying events gave an approach to those target groups whose study programmes were not directly linked to the EU integration studies. With the passage of time the relevance of the first Jean Monnet Modules "EU Agrarian Law" showed its significance when its main principles were developed in the Jean Monnet - Chair in EU Agrarian Law project in 2011. The project proved to be a unique success of its time since until then no other projects of this category have been approved in Slovakia.

The project has reacted on the current needs of research, society and agricultural professional groups. The lack of current knowledge and awareness from the field in rural areas and Slovak agriculture were the essential motivation factors for the project. The already existing Modules in the field of EU Business Law and Agro-Environmental Legislation at the faculty could have been integrated by the unit of the Jean Monnet Chair. Within the Jean Monnet Chair the following - already existing - teaching modules have been set up:

- EU Agrarian Law,
- European Union,
- EU Legislation,

as well as two newly introduced modules have been successfully implemented:

- EU Public Administration Law of Agriculture ,
- EU Intellectual Property Rights Law in Agriculture.

The project has served as a comprehensive offer with the focus on the legal aspects of the Common Agricultural Policy while encouraged students to think in this area from the European perspective. The accompanying events of the project were widely covered by international seminars, workshops, roundtables, conferences and study visits. The visibility and sustainability of the project has been supported by relevant study materials, website and Journal "EU Agrarian Law". The impact of the project has strengthened the European dimension of the education by the enhancement of knowledge in European Agrarian Law. Moreover the hosting of the Jean Monnet Chair at the faculty was awarded by the "Plaque for the Jean Monnet Chair Grant No. 2011-3076" in 2012. The purpose of the plaque is twofold - it serves primarily as a label signifying quality in European integration studies and representing the achievements of the Chair in the field of Agrarian Law. At the same time it provides visibility for the activities of the Chair, presenting it as the focal point within our university for the promotion of European issues.

### **Jean Monnet Module "Financing of EU programmes"**

In the terms of the priorities of the Jean Monnet programme and the mission of the Faculty of European Studies and Regional Development of the Slovak University of Agriculture in Nitra the Module supporting the processes, principles and rules of financing of European programmes was approved for funding in 2008. The project reflected mainly the following priorities of the actual Jean Monnet Call: European Union, economic prosperity, growth and social cohesion. The learning outcomes of the students proved the improvement of their knowledge and skills in the field of EU funds while developing and realizing international EU projects. Special educational and research focus was given by this Module to the structure of European funds and the step-by-step process of project preparation, its implementation and sustainability after the termination of the funding of project activities. The Module has become attractive also for international students of the Faculty of EU Studies and Regional Development coming from the new member states of the EU because provides the wide range of tools which the EU uses for supporting member countries of EU and mainly those, which joined the EU just some time ago. The motivating challenge to submit this Module for funding were the actual changes happened in 2007 when essential changes occurred in the systems of EU financing. The educational concept of the Module gave by this an opportunity for comparison of two various programming periods and for receiving better concept and a clear direction in this difficult area. The successful completion of the Module gave students the solid basis for the constantly growing - bigger and stronger competition on the European labour market. Many of alumni could have utilised knowledge obtained in their practice as consultants at universities and other public and private entities dealing with EU programmes funding. This result could have been achieved also by the added value of the project which allowed professionals from the field to participate in the education process as well as allowed staff members of the faculty to participate in international seminars and conferences in order to ensure the enhancement of experiences obtained abroad.

### **Jean Monnet Module „Agri-Environmental Legislation of the EU“**

In 2009 the effort of the Module leader of the Agri-environmental legislation in the European Union met the interest of the Jean Monnet programme when the educational Module was granted. The reformed Common Agricultural Policy declared a strong highlight to the aspect of the integration of environmental considerations into its conceptual rules. The development of the agricultural practices preserving the environment and safeguarding the countryside issues got into the forefront. The demanding reaction of the society especially of those from the agricultural enterprises' sector proved the need to implement agri-environmental legislation into their legal relationships. The Module provided the target groups of students with a new multidisciplinary course which encouraged them by the way of thinking in this area from European perspective. By this characteristic feature the methodology and the work programme of Module achieved the Jean Monnet priorities regarding the increasing the multidisciplinary approach of EU integration Studies knowledge among those students who are not automatically connected to the field in their study programmes at the universities. The international aspect within the Module linked together experts and professionals from institutions and universities from Germany, Italy and the Netherlands. The Module has been maintained - as well as other Modules - after the period of the granting and plays an important role in the frame of the lifelong learning trainings.

### **Jean Monnet Module "European Union Business Law"**

The educational process covering study programmes of disciplines such as economy, management, accounting, finance and marketing have expressed the essential need to have a notion about the political and economic dimensions of EU. The response to this social demand was the Jean Monnet Module in the area of EU Business Law approved in 2010. Complementary to the business studies the Module offered a platform of knowledge on doing business in other EU countries through freedom of services or freedom of establishment and on cross border business activities including EU competition rules. The Module focused in major part on the mediation of legal aspects on the business opportunities in the European Union and facilitated better understanding of various issues related to the EU business. The linkage from theory to practice was ensured by this Module as well. Alumni have obtained a complete overview of the legal instruments for doing business in the EU and have the knowledge on how to use it in the practice. In detailed outline the following thematic parts of new knowledge could have been extended: EU law oriented to the cross border business activities including EU employment and social law, the competition rules, intellectual property protection and EU commercial policy. The final competencies received by the target group enabled better preparedness for the competitive labour market not only in Slovakia but also in the EU.

### **Jean Monnet - Learning EU at Schools "European Integration in Slovak Schools"**

The effort and activity of the Faculty of European Studies and

Regional Development in providing education in the field of EU Studies was extended via Jean Monnet programme to primary and secondary education when the project - Learning EU at Schools - European Integration in Slovak Schools - was approved for funding in 2012. The basic idea of the project focused on the enhancement of the students' skills in the field of EU integration, institutions and policies in order to be more integrated with the idea of the EU citizenship at the primary and secondary schools. In order to achieve the main aim - the project ensured the network of conferences with a purpose of support teachers at primary and secondary schools by methodological guidance including model - sample lectures from the field of EU Studies. The team of experienced lecturers of the Jean Monnet project facilitated easier understanding of the functioning of the European Union, where practical presentations given by professionals helped to understand the EU integration studies and to facilitate the access to EU interactively. The methodological basis of the project has been developed from the following thematic parts: European integration and basic facts, Institutions and Law of the EU, Common Policies of the EU and Financial integration. The project has contributed to the practice by developed pedagogical content and new didactic materials enhancing the teaching process at primary and secondary schools, as well as increased the awareness of general facts, knowledge and skills on the EU integration, its policies and institutions for both: teachers and students. The innovative character has been proved by the interactive teaching methods, vertical and horizontal involvement in cooperation and partnership of lecturers at university level, secondary and primary schools level and vocational training that creating mutual benefit with high added value.

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