



# Aims of the Charter of European Rural Communities 2019

## **Introduction:**

Since 1989 small rural communities, one from each of the countries of the European Union have a bond of friendship, which is registered in the “Charter of European Rural Communities”.

From every member state of the European Union there is one rural community represented in the Charter, however in exceptional cases even former- and non-EU member states could be represented in the network.

## **Objectives of the Charter:**

- A. European integration under the motto, “People meet people”.
- B. Be a structural network.
- C. Organise an annual network meeting.
- D. Stimulate the members to co-operate in different projects.
- E. Stimulate bilateral exchanges between the members.
- F. Stimulate small meetings of member communities throughout the year.
- G. Get to know each other and each other’s way of life.
- H. Affirmation of unity and co-operation of the member communities.
- I. Enlargement of the Charter in line with the official enlargement of the EU. Former- and non-EU members could be represented in the network as well.
- J. Have an efficient, accountable and transparent organisation.

## **Accomplishment**

### **A. Integration**

By bringing European citizens together to the “kitchen table” we are creating the European family of the future.

### **B. Network**

1. The network is the instrument to offer the inhabitants of the connected communities the opportunity to look literally across the borders.
2. The network is used to promote the mutual understanding in all possible areas.
3. The network is used to bring Europe closer to the citizens.

### **C. Annual network meeting**

1. This meeting is alternately organised by one of the member communities.
2. During the annual meeting the mayors of the connected communities decide about which communities will organise the future annual meetings.
3. From each member community a delegation, consisting of a maximum of 8 persons, participates.
4. The members themselves set up the delegations.
5. At least 50% of the delegation should be young people.
6. The network meeting is based on a current theme. There is a special programme for both adults and youngsters. The themes for adults and youngsters could be different.
7. It is recommended to organise the annual meeting during the summer months.

### **D. Projects**

1. The member communities themselves initiate the projects and invite other members to participate.
2. The projects should be connected to the projects of the European Union.
3. If possible the projects should also be co-financed by the EU.

### **E. Bilateral contacts**

1. Every community can initiate bilateral exchanges (in co-operation with Friends of Europe Associations).
2. It is recommended to place a report and photos of these contacts on [www.europeancharter.eu](http://www.europeancharter.eu)

### **F. Small meetings**

1. During the year there are 3 to 5 small meetings, for both youngsters and adults.
2. These meetings offer the opportunity for smaller groups to talk with each other about matters concerning specific themes.
3. Every member community can organise a small meeting.
4. The annual mayors' meeting decides about who will organise the future small meetings.
5. It is expected that every charter member takes part in one small meeting a year.
6. A maximum of 10 different communities visit the host community.
7. The basis is two to four participants per country, unless conditions for (European) grants ask otherwise. Supplemental to the visiting countries, the President or Vice-President must be one of the participants.
9. A report is made by the organising community. The report is placed on [www.europeancharter.eu](http://www.europeancharter.eu).

### **G. Getting to know each other**

To enable people to get to know each other and each other's way of life optimally, participants in events, exchanges and projects stay at guest families of the organising community or its neighbouring-villages, if this is possible.

### **H. Affirmation of unity and co-operation**

1. By signing the Charter the communities affirm the principle of unity and working together.
2. The members also have the obligation to communicate with each other and to inform each other.
3. The Internet site [www.europeancharter.eu](http://www.europeancharter.eu) is used for contact, communication and to publish

information . Minutes of the presidium and mayors' meeting are available to the mayors through the presidium.

4. Every member has an appointed communication officer to maintain mutual contacts.
5. The central communication officer of the Charter (Secretary) has been coupled to the Presidency.
6. English is the communication language.

## **I. Enlargement of the Charter**

With the enlargement of the EU, the Charter will accordingly invite new members to be part of its organisation. Former- and non-EU members could be represented in the network as well, however the network does not actively seek for enlargement outside of the EU. Former- and non-EU members for whom the Charter is not able to get financial contributions from the European Union or other institutes, will not receive financial support from the Charter.

## **J. Organisation**

1. Young people can participate in youngsters meetings of the Charter if they are of the age between 18 and 30 in the year of the meeting.
2. The Charter advises municipalities and / or foundations "Friends of Europe" to invest in the young people of their community and to make them part of their organisation.
3. The Charter itself has a Youth Coordination Team to encourage the involvement of young people in the Charter's activities.
4. During the annual network meeting there is a Mayors' Meeting of all member communities to confirm or reformulate the future policy of the Charter and to inform each other about projects.
5. The annual financial contribution of the members to the Charter is determined at the mayors' meeting.
6. The Charter has a Presidium of at least 5 and at most 8 members, chosen by the mayors during their meeting, for a period of 4 years with the possibility of reappointment to a maximum of two terms in total.
7. Cissé (France) is always a member of the Presidium, because the Charter was founded there.
8. The Presidium has a President, a Vice-President, a second Vice-President and members.
9. The President is appointed by the mayors during their meeting for a period of 4 years with the possibility of one reappointment, to a maximum of two terms in total.
10. The President is assisted by an appointed Secretary.
11. The vice president is responsible for the financial management of the Charter.
12. The Charter pays the real costs of the administrative support, working for the Charter is in basis a voluntary job.
13. The President and Vice-President(s) prepare the mayors' meeting.
14. The Vice-President as Treasurer annually provides a financial report during the mayors' meeting.
15. The presidium could meet a few times a year to adjust the policy where necessary and to talk about the organisation of the Charter.
16. The Charter pays the travel costs and if necessary the costs for the stay during the meetings of the presidium.
17. The competence of (re)presentation belongs to the President and Vice-President(s).
18. The Presidium can adapt the aims and will inform the Mayors' Meeting upon doing so.

Charter of European Rural Communities 2019

Boy Scholtze

President

Ratified: Mayors' Meeting, Põlva (Estonia), 20<sup>th</sup> July 2019