**Summary report**

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**8th Strategy Forum of the EUSBSR in Berlin 13 – 14 June**

**Seminar: Rural development Programmes contribution to the development of the bio-economy in the BSR**

**Time:** Tuesday, 14 June, 10:45 to 12:15 hours, Rathenau-Saal

The seminar was organized by the Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Lithuania. The aim of the seminar was focused on the role of Rural Development Programmes (RDP’s) and their impact on the fostering of bio-economy in the BSR. This seminar tried to identify solutions to increase the effectiveness of Rural Development Programmes for the period of 2014-2020 and after.

Maret Suuroja from the Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development (European Commission) informed that 7 RDPs (out of 12 in the Baltic Sea Region) programmed the Focus Area 5C from Rural Development 2014-2020 Priorities. This Focus area is dedicated for 'facilitating the supply and use of renewable sources of energy, of by-products, wastes and residues and of other non-food raw material, for the purposes of bio-economy'. 163 million euros of total public expenditure is planned. She provided examples of Rural Development measures supporting low-carbon economy.

Merle Saaliste, Head of Rural Development Department (Ministry of Rural Affairs of the Republic of Estonia) presented the link of Estonian RDP and bio-economy. She stressed that in order to have real impact, bio-economy needs a comprehensive approach.

Virginija Kargyte from Aleksandras Stulginskis University (Kaunas, Lithuania) pointed out such challenges for the development of bio-economy such as coordinating of funding and synergies between different instruments, public awareness and acceptance or engagement of SME’s.

Mikko Rahtola, agronomist and specialist of Natural Resources Institute Finland (Luke), discussed about recycled nutrients, which can be turned into fertilisers and soil amendments. The achievement would be less environmental problems and possibility to use waste for added value.

Darius Liutikas, event moderator and Head of Division of Program Evaluation and Supervision (Rural Development Department, Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Lithuania) presented new initiative – The Baltic Sea Network for EAFRD, which aim is to facilitate and strengthen transnational cooperation in the EAFRD in order to invigorate the link between the EAFRD and the EUSBSR.

Participants of the seminar discussed future possibilities of bio-economy in the Rural Development Programmes and answered to the audience questions.