

International Seminar:

**"Human capital, wage labour and innovation in rural areas"**

The International Seminar will be jointly organized by Harokopio University of Athens (HUA) and Agricultural University of Athens (AUA) in the city of Athens, 23-24 October 2015 in the premises of Harokopio University, 70 El. Venizelou Street, 176 71 Kallithea-Athens, Greece. [<http://www.hua.gr/index.php/en/university/access>].

***Rationale***

It is common knowledge that rural areas are not isolated locales, but they are increasingly approached as dynamic places which are continuously reconfigured and reconnected with other areas. The relevant research underlines the fact that rural residents are not considered a stable category containing a permanent population of farmers and/or groups that are traditionally associated with the local economy and society.

Many rural areas have not been ethnically homogenous and they often contain various ethnic groups which have historical origins in those areas or they are moving between the various places. Issues of social cohesion and/or social exclusion have been raised in many such areas in the context of the European multicultural society and the neo-liberal globalization.

The quality of life of the people living or working in rural areas has been a major objective in contemporary Europe and in the developed countries. However, the quality of life is connected with the employment opportunities, housing, health and education. Particularly for rural areas with poor demographic capacity, migrants and ethnic groups may contribute significantly to the availability of a better quality of life for the rapidly aging local population.

In the era of globalization, rural areas remain connected to the wider society and economy, but these socioeconomic connections are often considered as negative for rural areas. The current economic recession has initially deteriorated the conditions for the regeneration of rural areas at least in terms of funding and economic investments, but some argue that the economic recession provided a window of opportunity for rethinking and readjusting the strategies of local population and for increasing the resilience of local production systems.

The role of peoples' practices and strategies as well as the design and implementation of policies (e.g. Common Agricultural Policy) are considered as major tools for addressing the issues that improve the socioeconomic conditions in rural areas. Especially in southern European countries, the interactions between local and national level, the local initiatives and the survival strategies at the level of rural/farming households are some of the adjusting mechanisms for rural regeneration.

### ***Aim and thematic axes***

This International Seminar aims at bringing together academics, researchers and practitioners working on the development of rural areas, who will have the opportunity to discuss and exchange their ideas over a number of contemporary issues including - but not limited to - the demographics and in/out migration of rural areas; the role of wage labour in agriculture and food production; the transformation of Local Food Systems (LFS); the quality of life of the indigenous and migrant populations in agricultural areas; the precarious status and/or labour rights of wage labour; the contribution of migrants in marginal rural areas; the potential of human capital in rural areas; the parameters of efficiency in primary production systems; and the innovation practices and policies implemented in rural areas, with a particular focus in southern European countries. Also we welcome contributions which address the new developments in the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and the impact on rural areas as well as the treatment of the already mentioned issues in the context of the current economic recession. Finally, we are interested in attracting research papers which focus on migrants' contribution to the regeneration of rural areas and case studies which show the resilience of rural societies in the context of the economic downturn.

Abstracts of no more than 500 words should be sent to Loukia – Maria Fratsea ([fratsea@hua.gr](mailto:fratsea@hua.gr)) by 31<sup>st</sup> July 2015. Notification of acceptance will be sent by August 24<sup>th</sup> 2015.

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