

Hochfilzen/Austria 26-09-2019

Dear ladies and gentlemen,

LEADER-forum Österreich (Austria) is a LAG (LEADER/Local Action Group) network on voluntary basis. All 77 LAGs in Austria are members in this network and therefore we cover the opinion of all these members in this contribution.

Furthermore, we also want to refer to the European LEADER Network ELARD, which also considers, that a block exemption should be taken into account in their position paper.

A block exemption would not only reduce the bureaucratic borders but would also help to focus on the LEADER methodology on local level.

In our view LEADER does not include major risks of creating unfair competition between businesses, as

- LEADER projects are most likely quite small related to other funds
- LEADER focuses on cooperation and multi-sectoral values
- LEADER is driven by the local (public) community and therefore has often a collective dimension

In around 1/3 of the LAGs in Europe the CLLD-multifund approach is already active and therefore it would be not understandable to have the block exemption in the EFRD (Interreg) on LAG level, but not in LEADER.

Therefore, we hardly support the expansion of the idea of the GBER not only for InvestEU, Horizon 2020 and ETC but also for LEADER.

Sincerely, in the name of 77 LAGs from Austria,



Stefan Niedermoser
President