

Leading a better life in Europe's villages

European Village Renewal Award 2014

29 villages from 12 different countries compete for the highly coveted European Village Renewal Award 2014, under the motto "Lead a better life". The international and interdisciplinary jury has begun its assessment process in the course of a meeting in Bozen. In the months of May and June, this process will continue with On-Site-Visits of all the participating locations. The decision will be made in Munich by the end of June, the award presentation will take place in September in Switzerland.

"Especially in times when the word crisis appears to paralyze many, it is of immense value that people proactively strengthen the sustainability of their immediate habitat. This is exactly what happens within the villages and municipalities that applied for the 13th European Village Renewal Award", stated the Luxembourgish chairman of the contest-jury Charles Konnen during the First Assessment Meeting in Bozen, Italy. He finds the courage, creativity, persistence and foresight the projects are presented with to be very impressive, and he is certain that these projects will sustainably enhance the economic potential, the ecological quality, the solidarity and the cultural identity of the participating villages.

Organizer of the contest, which has been awarded every other year since 1990, is the European Association for Rural Development and Village Renewal. Aside from the "European Village Renewal Award", which remains reserved for the winning village, other awards can be obtained as well. These include awards for "Sustainable, holistic and motto-adequate Village Development of excellent quality", for "Special Achievements in multiple fields of Village Development" as well as for "Special Achievements in individual fields of Village Development". The assessment focuses on the reaction of the community when faced with the strengths and weaknesses that arise at the beginning of the developmental process, as well as the reaction to external threats and chances. This concerns the specific actions and projects in the sense of economic development, creation of contemporary social facilities, architecture, settlement development, ecology and energy supply as well as the cultural initiatives and advanced training activities. Just as important, however, are the chosen methods and strategies, which should point out an integrated attempt, orientation towards sustainability, civic involvement, individual initiative and a willingness to cooperate.

The members of the international and interdisciplinary contest-jury will visit every single participating location in order to get an idea of the area - these visits will take place throughout May and June, followed by another Assessment Meeting in Munich in June, during which the decision will be made. The award presentation will take place within a multi-day event on September 12th, 2014 in Vals, Switzerland, the recipient of the European Village Renewal Award 2012.

"The aim of this contest is to bestow recognition on the commitment of villages and municipalities, to further motivate them and to enhance the exchange of experiences with other rural areas throughout Europe. Additionally, we want to encourage other villages and regions to imitate them, we want to raise public awareness for the importance of rural areas for society as a whole, and we want to enhance the integration of Europe", explains Theres Friewald-Hofbauer, chief executive of the European Association for Rural Development and Village Renewal.