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5 May 2021

**Rural Semester, as a tool to
deliver a truly holistic policy for
rural areas**




1 – What do we mean by Rural Semester?

- Engaging with the existing European Semester and ensuring that the full range of rural concerns (environmental, social, economic, digital, educational ...) are reflected in it.
- An integrated process taking into account the issue of territorial cohesion as such, in our case for less densely populated areas.
- With specific targets related to rural areas and policies associated
- Different / complementary to Rural proofing



2 – Why does the EU (We) need it?

- Rural areas = the basis of our resilience, collectively and individually. They shelter resources that will become more and more precious.
- Most of MS focus on spending European funds (ERDF, ESF, Cohesion Fund or EAFRD) in rural areas, but not on designing specific measures or regulations for people, enterprises or services fit for low-density places.
- Weak coordination between national and sectoral policies for rural areas.
- Lack of suitable and common criteria of success



3 – What should be the content and how to proceed ?

- Focus on policies providing well-being in rural areas
- Multi-Level Governance approach : cooperation between the different levels + involvement of stakeholders (a European Rural Platform, and national and/or regional partnership dialogues?)
- Definition of 3 or 4 specific common targets, measures and indicators adapted to the rural context i.e. sparsely populated areas and/or remote places (diversified economy, quality and sustainable food, innovation and digitalization, access to public services)
- EU Guidelines set-up on the basis of benchmarking (national and or regional policies / effective measures) and genuine rural data (a European Observatory?)