

# CONNECTIONS

THE EUROPEAN RURAL DEVELOPMENT MAGAZINE

## NEWS AND UPDATES

- **SUPPORTING CAP PLAN PREPARATION**
- **LINKING RURAL NETWORKS**
- **THE EUROPEAN GREEN DEAL AND RURAL AREAS**

## RURAL ISSUES, RURAL PERSPECTIVES

- **BUILDING BRIDGES, BREAKING BOUNDARIES WITH RURAL YOUTH EUROPE**
- **PROMOTING CULTURAL LIFE IN RURAL AREAS THROUGH LEADER**
- **"SECURE THAT FUNDING" – A CALL TO ACTION FOR RURAL CONNECTIVITY**

## FOCUS ON...

## RURAL VISION WEEK



## **EUROPEAN NETWORK FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT**

The European Network for Rural Development (ENRD) is the hub that connects rural development stakeholders throughout the European Union (EU). The ENRD contributes to the effective implementation of Member States' Rural Development Programmes (RDPs) by generating and sharing knowledge, as well as through facilitating information exchange and cooperation across rural Europe.

Each Member State has established a National Rural Network (NRN) that brings together the organisations and administrations involved in rural development. At EU level, the ENRD supports the networking of these NRNs, national administrations and European organisations.

Find out more on the ENRD website (<https://enrd.ec.europa.eu>)

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1<sup>st</sup> edition

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## EDITORIAL



Welcome to this summer edition of Rural Connections! As rural areas of Europe are expecting changes with the new CAP, including for rural networking, this edition of the magazine is very much forward-looking.

The **News** section (page 4) includes an overview of the latest ENRD activities, as well as an 'au revoir' note by the current Contact Point Team Leader.

In the **Rural Issues, Rural Perspectives section** (page 12) we asked a number of rural development stakeholders to look at the future of their territories and of rural Europe. Enjoy their inspiring views on the role of rural youth, the importance of broadband development and the use of LEADER to support cultural projects.

From page 23 we **Focus on...** the outcomes of the Rural Vision Week, the landmark ENRD event that brought together stakeholders from all over Europe and beyond to imagine how rural areas should look by 2040 and how to get there. At the time of publishing this magazine, the European Commission is finalising its Communication on a Long-Term Vision for Rural Areas, taking those inputs into account.

Times ahead may be challenging and changing, but rural networking does not stop, and continues to count on your constructive and inspirational support!

**Elena Di Federico**

Publications Manager, ENRD Contact Point

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## NEWS &amp; UPDATES

## ENRD NEWS



## Au revoir from the current ENRD Contact Point team!

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After seven years, the current ENRD Contact Point team's contract in support of the work of the ENRD will draw to a close in July.

COVID-19 has inevitably preoccupied us all recently but it is important that we also reflect on the vast range of relevant work we have done and can do. Rural Connections is a magazine with an enormously rich history and following, having a quick flick through the various issues reminded me of just how many real networking highlights we have shared together. Making rural connections work has been a part of our networking mission

for the last seven years and rural networking has never been more important than now and in addressing change and uncertainty. I sincerely hope that we leave this with you in good health and safe hands – keep networking!

**John Grieve**, Team Leader, ENRD Contact Point

## Supporting CAP Plan preparation

The Contact Point has continued its series of activities to support Member States with the programming of their CAP Strategic Plans (CSPs). On 10 May this work focused on regions and stakeholders through the webinar 'Getting the CAP Strategic Plans done: the voice of regions and stakeholders', a high-profile event involving European Commission Executive Vice President Timmermans and Commissioner Wojciechowski. Useful best practices were shared and discussed during this online web-streamed event by a panel of experts from CEJA, WWF, the European Parliament, the Committee of the Regions, the Coalition of European AGRIREGIONS and representatives of both the current (Portugal) and future (Slovenia) presidencies of the EU Council.

Further peer networking between CAP experts involved with programming took place on 10 June at another ENRD webinar. Technical content concentrated on exchanging and experience concerning some practical aspects of designing the intervention

logic and different intervention types under the future CSPs, including some financial elements. Outcomes have helped to clarify the practical arrangements Managing Authorities need to know regarding the design of investment and coupled income support interventions as well as certain financial aspects of the future CSP.

 FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

ENRD workshop 'Getting the CAP Strategic Plans done: the voice of regions and stakeholders':

[https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/news-events/events/getting-cap-strategic-plans-done-voice-regions-and-stakeholders\\_en](https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/news-events/events/getting-cap-strategic-plans-done-voice-regions-and-stakeholders_en)

ENRD workshop 'Preparing the CAP Strategic Plans:

Operational Design': [https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/news-events/events/preparing-cap-strategic-plans-operational-design\\_en](https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/news-events/events/preparing-cap-strategic-plans-operational-design_en)

CAP post-2020 information portal: [https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/policy-in-action/common-agricultural-policy-post-2020\\_en](https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/policy-in-action/common-agricultural-policy-post-2020_en)

## Linking Rural Networks

The ENRD Workshop for NRNs on 'Working together: linking Rural Networks' (4 May 2021) discussed how to create networking linkages across different geographies, themes and initiatives. Over 50 participants from 25 Member States had the opportunity to share lessons on best practices and the added value of collaboration, consider virtual linkages and foster new collaborative initiatives between NRNs. The cooperation between the French and the Romanian NRN and the Nordic-Baltic Network's monthly 'virtual coffee breaks' were just some of the good practices showcased.

The 20<sup>th</sup> NRN meeting took place on 15 June 2021. The event looked at recent actions in the consultation process on the Long-Term Vision for Rural Areas, reflected on NRN activities during Rural Vision Week and their role in supporting

communication and stakeholder involvement around the Vision. There was also a presentation on the Conference on the Future of Europe, and how NRNs and rural stakeholders could get involved.

 FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

ENRD Workshop for NRNs on 'Working together: linking Rural Networks': [https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/news-events/events/enrd-workshop-nrns-working-together-linking-rural-networks\\_en](https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/news-events/events/enrd-workshop-nrns-working-together-linking-rural-networks_en)

20<sup>th</sup> NRN meeting: [https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/news-events/events/20th-nrn-meeting\\_en](https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/news-events/events/20th-nrn-meeting_en)

Romanian and French National Rural Networks cooperation: [https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/news-events/news/romanian-and-french-national-rural-networks-cooperation\\_en](https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/news-events/news/romanian-and-french-national-rural-networks-cooperation_en)

## NEWS &amp; UPDATES

## The European Green Deal and rural areas

The fourth and final meeting of the ENRD Thematic Group (TG) on the European Green Deal (EGD) in rural areas, organised on 20 May 2021, explored tested experiences of promoting the green transition at the local or sub-regional level and discussed how to ensure the uptake of environmental and climate interventions in the future.

The TG's work extends beyond the online meetings through factsheets that help disseminate further examples of EAFRD-supported initiatives.



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 FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

4<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Thematic Group on the European Green Deal and rural areas:

[https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/news-events/events/4th-meeting-thematic-group-european-green-deal-and-rural-areas\\_en](https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/news-events/events/4th-meeting-thematic-group-european-green-deal-and-rural-areas_en)

ENRD Thematic Group on the European Green Deal and Rural Areas:

[https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/enrd-thematic-work/greening-rural-economy/european-green-deal-rural-areas\\_en](https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/enrd-thematic-work/greening-rural-economy/european-green-deal-rural-areas_en)

At the same page, find also the Factsheets produced by the ENRD Thematic Group:

- 'Using the CAP to upscale sustainable agriculture and forestry management practices'
- 'Effective approaches for facilitating a transition to clean energy in agriculture and forestry sectors using the CAP'
- 'Territorial and local approaches encouraging the uptake of environmental and climate action under the CAP Strategic Plans'

## Governance updates

The 15<sup>th</sup> Rural Networks Steering Group (SG) meeting took place on 25 May 2021. Members of the SG exchanged on the CAP reform and other relevant EU policy Initiatives. They also received an update by the European Commission on

the preparation of the Long-Term Vision for Rural Areas. The meeting provided an update on planned and forthcoming EU rural networks' activities, including an exchange where members provided input on future networking needs.

Two more governance meetings are scheduled for the second part of this year: the 16<sup>th</sup> Rural Networks SG meeting on 19 October and the 8<sup>th</sup> meeting of the EU Rural Networks Assembly on 7 December.



**25/05/2021**  
**WEBINAR**  
**15th Rural Networks Steering Group Meeting**

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 FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

15<sup>th</sup> Rural Networks Steering Group Meeting:

[https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/news-events/events/15th-rural-networks-steering-group-meeting\\_en](https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/news-events/events/15th-rural-networks-steering-group-meeting_en)

16<sup>th</sup> Rural Networks Steering Group Meeting:

[https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/news-events/events/16th-rural-networks-steering-group-meeting\\_en](https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/news-events/events/16th-rural-networks-steering-group-meeting_en)

8<sup>th</sup> meeting of the EU Rural Networks Assembly:

[https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/news-events/events/8th-meeting-eu-rural-networks-assembly\\_en](https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/news-events/events/8th-meeting-eu-rural-networks-assembly_en)

## NEWS &amp; UPDATES

## Long Term Rural Vision

The fourth and final meeting of the ENRD Thematic Group (TG) on the Long Term Rural Vision took place on 5 May 2021. Participants took stock of the main messages coming out of the ENRDs' Rural Vision Week, organised in March 2021 (see page 23) and heard about inspiring experiences of developing integrated national strategies for rural development in Ireland and France. Break-out discussions were organised to exchange ideas on what can be done in the Member States to put in place more holistic and future oriented strategies, and how the EU Rural Vision can facilitate these processes. Following a presentation of a regional level example from Spain (Catalonia), participants shared views about how stakeholders can cooperate at regional and local level to make the future Vision become a reality and how networks can best provide support.

The highlights reports of the TG meetings are available on the dedicated TG page and on the related Portal, together with other inspiring information on networks and initiatives across Europe.

## FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

ENRD Thematic Group on the Long Term Rural Vision: [https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/enrd-thematic-work/long-term-rural-vision\\_en](https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/enrd-thematic-work/long-term-rural-vision_en)

4<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Thematic Group on the Long Term Rural Vision: [https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/news-events/events/4th-meeting-thematic-group-long-term-rural-vision\\_en](https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/news-events/events/4th-meeting-thematic-group-long-term-rural-vision_en)

ENRD's Long Term Rural Vision Portal: [https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/enrd-thematic-work/long-term-rural-vision/long-term-rural-vision-portal\\_en](https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/enrd-thematic-work/long-term-rural-vision/long-term-rural-vision-portal_en)



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## LEADER activities

The ENRD organised its seventh LEADER Thematic Lab on 26 April 2021. This online event focused on 'LEADER funding made simpler' and explored the possibilities offered by the application of simplified cost options (SCOs) for LEADER funding and implementation during the transition period and under the CAP Strategic Plans. Participants had the opportunity to learn about the updated Commission guidance on the application of SCOs and exchange about various Member State approaches and plans based on their practical experiences.

This was the last of the series of practical and practitioner-oriented ENRD LEADER Thematic Labs, organised between 2019 and 2021, which have explored the interplay between LEADER/CLLD and a variety of topics related to rural development, from Smart Villages and youth involvement to green issues.

On 3 June, the ENRD organised the workshop 'LEADER – 30 years and preparing for the future – Delivering LEADER's unique added value'. The online event, which gathered 74 participants from 25 Member States, explored LEADER's positive, long-term impacts in rural areas and discussed

how its added-value can be maximised in the future through better partnerships, local development strategies, as well as local projects and initiatives under the CAP Strategic Plans. Highlights reports and documentation from all the LEADER Thematic Labs and other events are available in the LEADER Resources section of the ENRD website, where you can also access other relevant resources, from guidance and publications to videos, showing how LEADER works 'in practice'.

## FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

ENRD workshop 'LEADER – 30 years and preparing for the future – Delivering LEADER's unique added value': [https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/news-events/events/leader-30-years-and-preparing-future-delivering-leaders-unique-added-value\\_en](https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/news-events/events/leader-30-years-and-preparing-future-delivering-leaders-unique-added-value_en)

LEADER Resources: [https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/leader-clld/leader-resources\\_en](https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/leader-clld/leader-resources_en)

LEADER/CLLD video playlist on ENRD's YouTube channel EURural: <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL20DD755E804D9CDD>



## NEWS &amp; UPDATES

## UPDATE FROM THE EVALUATION HELPDESK

EUROPEAN  
EVALUATION  
HELPDESK  
FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT

### The 16<sup>th</sup> Good Practice Workshop: 'Improving data management and information systems for the purpose of CAP evaluations'

The 16<sup>th</sup> Good Practice Workshop of the Evaluation Helpdesk on 'Improving data-management and information systems for the purpose of evaluation', took place online on 16-17 March 2021. It brought together 119 participants from 26 different EU Member States, including RDP Managing Authorities, evaluators, European Commission representatives, researchers, National Rural Networks and other evaluation stakeholders. The overall objective of the workshop was to reflect on innovative experiences in relation to data management and information systems for evaluation purposes in the context of the CAP. The workshop explored EU projects (Sen4CAP,<sup>(1)</sup> MINDSTEP,<sup>(2)</sup> MEF4CAP,<sup>(3)</sup> etc.) that deal with data infrastructure, collection, and monitoring to identify their relevance and usefulness for evaluation.

#### RELEVANCE OF EU PROJECTS FOR EVALUATION

EU projects enrich and expand existing data sources/databases that are commonly used for monitoring and evaluation, such as FADN or IACS, by offering additional geospatial information to build larger data sets or introduce digital innovations.

These projects also provide new and/or better data for indicators, while also developing new indicators that may be relevant for future evaluations of

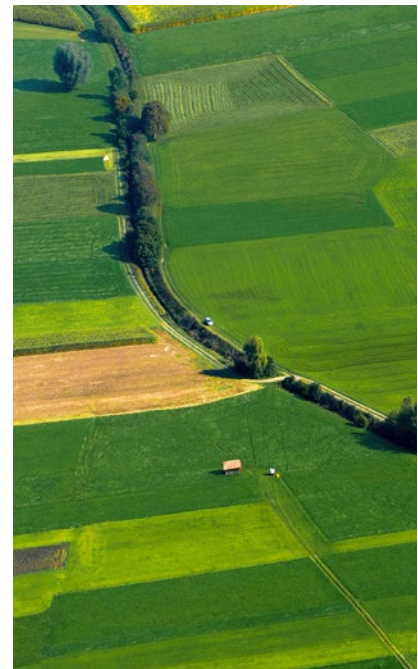
the CAP (e.g. FLINT's<sup>(4)</sup> sustainability indicators or NIVA's<sup>(5)</sup> proposed new agri-environmental indicators).

A valuable contribution of these EU projects is the creation of interfaces between databases that were not previously linked. This is very useful for Managing Authorities and evaluators who often in the past struggled to derive data from a variety of different sources.

Lastly, EU projects contribute to improved governance and data management, through cooperation between farmers and other data providers, researchers, and Paying Agencies, with the potential to also involve evaluators and Managing Authorities, the last of which play a key role in the design and management of CAP evaluations.

#### POTENTIAL TRANSFERABILITY FROM THE EU TO THE MEMBER STATE LEVEL

One of the key factors that may facilitate the transfer of these experiences with data management from the EU to the Member State level is to identify and implement the necessary adaptations of existing data collection and monitoring systems. Methodologies for data collection would need to be developed, while evaluation methodologies would need



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to consider the use of the indicators developed by these projects. Training and the exchange of experiences may also be required in order to use the new data, new systems or new indicators developed. Finally, preventing further burdens on farmers should be ensured. Data collection 'for' the farmer and not only 'from' the farmer has been at the core of these projects, thus ensuring that where possible any potential 'burden' serves the wider purpose of using data for developing and improving the policy.

#### FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

Explore the Presentations and Workshop Report:  
[https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/evaluation/good-practice-workshops/improving-data-management-and-information-systems-purpose-cap\\_en](https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/evaluation/good-practice-workshops/improving-data-management-and-information-systems-purpose-cap_en)

(1) <http://esa-sen4cap.org>

(2) <https://mind-step.eu>

(3) <https://www.mef4cap.eu>

(4) <https://www.flint-fp7.eu>

(5) <https://www.niva4cap.eu>

## NEWS &amp; UPDATES

**UPDATE FROM EIP-AGRI**

## EIP-AGRI events foster innovative farming practices to contribute to climate neutrality and enhance soil health



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Over the past few years, EIP-AGRI has carried out a lot of work to address sustainability challenges faced by European farms and forests. A number of activities such as focus groups, workshops and seminars focused on fostering a more sustainable and productive agriculture and forestry through innovative practices that help mitigate and adapt to climate change. Attention was also devoted to the importance of healthy soils and the sustainable management of soil resources. Between March and April 2021 two important EIP events looking at these two themes took place online, bringing together over 250 people from knowledge and practice.

The EU Green Deal aims to reach climate neutrality by 2050 and agriculture and forestry can play a key role to deliver on this priority. The EIP-AGRI workshop 'Towards Carbon Neutral Agriculture' took place online on 24-25 March 2021. It aimed at networking and sharing existing experiences among projects addressing innovative solutions, farm systems and practices contributing to the optimisation of carbon balance in the European farming systems. The event addressed four different farm types (permanent crops, annual crops, intensive livestock, and mixed systems and extensive livestock) and provided the space to identify practices, challenges, and practical solutions to be further supported and disseminated across Europe.

The EIP-AGRI Seminar 'Healthy soils for Europe: sustainable management through knowledge and practice' was held online on 13-14 April 2021. This interactive event aimed to raise awareness about and address soil management challenges and solutions to enhance soil health. About 60-70% of soils in Europe are affected by unsustainable management. Climate change can also influence soil health in different ways. The seminar, building on the outcomes of previous EIP-AGRI events and their results, explored best practices for improving soil health and fostering its different functions that could mitigate or even reverse these negative effects, including the impacts of climate change.

### FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

More information on EIP-AGRI climate- and soil-related activities:

- EIP-AGRI Seminar 'Healthy soils for Europe': <https://ec.europa.eu/eip/agriculture/en/event/eip-agri-seminar-healthy-soils-europe-sustainable>
- EIP-AGRI Workshop 'Towards carbon neutral agriculture': <https://ec.europa.eu/eip/agriculture/en/event/eip-agri-workshop-%E2%80%98towards-carbon-neutral>
- EIP-AGRI activities on soil: <https://ec.europa.eu/eip/agriculture/en/news/safeguarding-our-soils>
- EIP-AGRI activities on agriculture and climate change: <https://ec.europa.eu/eip/agriculture/en/news/eip-agri-agriculture-and-climate-change>

## NEWS &amp; UPDATES

**EU NEWS**

## State of play of the CAP reform negotiations

During the spring 2021, an intense rhythm of inter-institutional negotiations –or trilogues- has been taking place between the European Parliament, the Council, represented by the Portuguese Presidency, and the European Commission on the future CAP. A ‘super-trilogue’ meeting covering all three of the proposed regulations<sup>(1)</sup> of the CAP reform package took place between the three institutions at end May, held back-to-back with a meeting of the Council of EU Agriculture Ministers.

Although progress was made in several areas, a number of key issues remained outstanding – keeping in mind that the principle that ‘nothing is agreed until everything is agreed’ applies. All parties are fully committed to securing a deal before the end of

the Portuguese Presidency of the Council on 30 June, so that the new CAP reform can enter into force from 1 January 2023.<sup>(2)</sup>

Good progress has been made during the May meetings on the overall objectives and performance orientation of the new CAP, including the result indicators which will be used to track its progress. Important steps have also been made on how to reflect the roles of regions within the future CAP Strategic Plans.

Some of the key points that remain under discussion between the co-legislators include ring-fencing of support for the new eco-schemes; some aspects of the conditionality in the green architecture; the new social dimension of the CAP (see more detail below) and the targeting and re- distribution of direct payments.

## Social Conditionality

Linked to the CAP reform negotiations, in 2020 the European Parliament put forward a new proposal on social conditionality to link CAP payments to social working conditions in an ‘easy and un-bureaucratic manner’.<sup>(3)</sup>

The request for a stronger social dimension of the new CAP was clearly expressed in an open letter signed by over 100 organisations and individuals and published in February 2021.<sup>(4)</sup>

The topic led to counter-proposals from the side of the Council and, more recently, some convergence around aspects of a Commission proposal, with certain technical aspects – such as date of entry into force and the exact scope of the rules on social conditionality to be covered – still under discussion in the trilogues.



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(1) [https://ec.europa.eu/info/food-farming-fisheries/key-policies/common-agricultural-policy/future-cap\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/food-farming-fisheries/key-policies/common-agricultural-policy/future-cap_en)

(2) <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/cap-future-2020/>

(3) <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-8207-2021-INIT/en/pdf>

(4) [https://www.etuc.org/sites/default/files/document/file/2021-02/Open%20Letter%20-%20The%20new%20CAP%20needs%20Social%20Conditionality%20-%20With%20signatories\\_Final.pdf](https://www.etuc.org/sites/default/files/document/file/2021-02/Open%20Letter%20-%20The%20new%20CAP%20needs%20Social%20Conditionality%20-%20With%20signatories_Final.pdf)

## NEWS &amp; UPDATES

## Recovery and Resilience Facility

The Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF) is the centrepiece of NextGenerationEU (NGEU), a €750 billion (in 2018 prices) temporary recovery instrument to help repair the immediate economic and social damage brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic.<sup>(1)</sup> The RRF aims to mitigate the economic and social impact of the pandemic and make European economies and societies more sustainable, resilient and better prepared for the challenges and opportunities of the green and digital transitions.

By early May 2021, most Member States had submitted their National Recovery and Resilience Plans (RRPs). The Commission is working hand in hand with Member States to translate the recovery plans into agreed programmes that target investments specifically, making Europe fit for the future.

In addition, the Commission encourages Member States to propose flagship investment and reform initiatives that would add value for the EU as a whole. These include accelerating the development and use of renewables and the roll-out of broadband.

Once received, Member State programmes are assessed by the Commission and then approved by the Council.

## Flagship areas for investments and reforms

## Power up

Clean technologies and renewables

## Renovate

Energy efficiency of buildings

## Recharge and fuels

Sustainable transport and charging station

## Connect

Roll-out of rapid broadband services

## Modernise

Digitalisation of public administration

## Scale-up

Data cloud capacities and sustainable processors

## Reskill and upskill

Education and training to support digital skills

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## Conference on the Future of Europe

The Conference on the Future of Europe is a unique and timely opportunity for European citizens to debate Europe's challenges and priorities. The European Parliament, the Council and the European Commission have committed to listen to Europeans and to follow up, within their sphere of competences, on the recommendations made.<sup>(2)</sup>

The Conference is the first of its kind: a major pan-European democratic exercise offering a new public forum for open, inclusive, and transparent debate with citizens around key priorities and challenges.

The Conference aims to reflect diversity and bring Europe beyond its capital cities, reaching every corner of the EU, especially rural areas. A multitude of events and debates across the EU, including an interactive multilingual digital platform,<sup>(3)</sup> launched on 19 April 2021, will strengthen the link between Europeans and the institutions that serve them. Young people are particularly encouraged to take part and share their ideas. European, national,

regional and local authorities, as well as civil society and other organisations can also organise events to involve as many people as possible.

By spring 2022, the Conference is expected to reach conclusions and provide guidance on the future of Europe.

## The Future of Europe: topics



Climate change and the environment



Health



A stronger economy, social justice and jobs



EU in the world



Values and rights, rule of law, security



Digital transformation



European democracy



Migration



Education, culture, youth and sport



Other ideas

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(1) [https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/recovery-plan-europe\\_en#nextgenerationeu](https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/recovery-plan-europe_en#nextgenerationeu)

(2) <https://futureu.europa.eu>

(3) *ibidem*



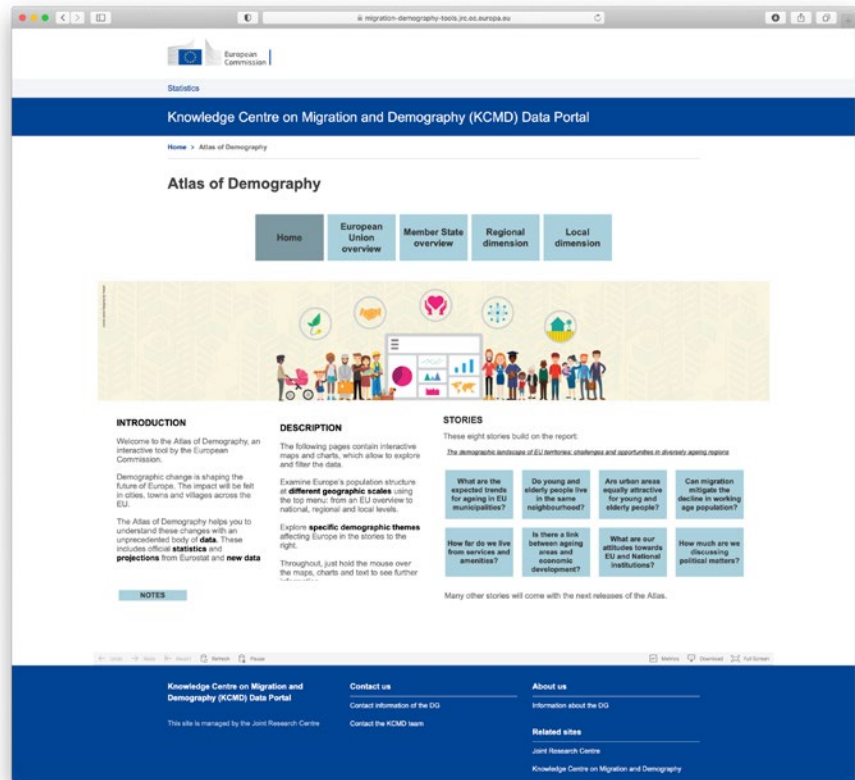
NEWS & UPDATES

# Atlas of Demography

The Atlas of Demography<sup>(1)</sup> is a new interactive knowledge management tool developed by the European Commission that enables policy-makers and citizens to observe, monitor and anticipate demographic challenges.

Together with the green and digital transitions, demographic change is the third transformation shaping the future of Europe. A good understanding of how demographic change and the local, regional and national realities interact is key to tailoring EU policies to the changing conditions on the ground.

The Atlas of Demography collects an unprecedented body of data, including official statistics and projections from Eurostat and new data produced by the Joint Research Centre of the European Commission. The tool is expected to reach global coverage by December 2022.



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(1) <https://migration-demography-tools.jrc.ec.europa.eu/atlas-demography/>

## RURAL ISSUES, RURAL PERSPECTIVES

# Building bridges, breaking boundaries with Rural Youth Europe

**Linzi Stewart and Siobhán Gallagher**

What are the perspectives, achievements and challenges for the future of European rural youth?



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In 2020, Rural Youth Europe experienced a shift from physical activities to online events due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This digital shift has had a positive impact on our work as, whilst nothing compares to physically gathering rural young people together for our events, technology has allowed us to reach and engage with more of our grassroots members than ever before. We have hosted numerous online events and webinars in conjunction with our member organisations and launched our “Rural Voices”<sup>(1)</sup> podcast, reaching thousands of rural young people across Europe.

The first series of our podcast took the form of interviews with change makers, experts and grassroots members on topics important to rural young people, including shrinking civil spaces, non-formal learning, sustainable communities and LGBT+ rights and inclusion. Many interviews stand out but the one that resonates with us the most is with Anja Fortuna. Anja, a member of Zveza slovenske podeželske mladine (ZSPM) – Association of Slovenian Rural Youth, one of our member organisations, was recently elected to the position of Vice President of the European Youth Forum and is a former president of MSS – The Youth Council of Slovenia. She told us that if it were not for attending a Rural Youth Europe event, she would not be where she is today, both personally and professionally.

The digital shift, which intensified during 2020, has paved the way for us to plan more online events for

2021. We want to continue to upskill our members in many areas so that more rural young people take on roles in their communities and organisations and engage further in decision-making processes. While our physical events remain currently uncertain, we are using new online platforms and tools to reach and engage with more rural young people and grassroots members than before. We hope to further develop our international platform on which rural youth can exchange best practice sharing techniques, enjoy intercultural experiences and learn through non-formal education.

Typically, most rural young people do not engage in democratic and decision-making processes. By facilitating such events and creating safe spaces for participants to network and build their competences, we are helping to ensure that their voices are heard. Following our events in 2019, which focused on mental health, a number of successful projects were initiated by member organisations. The Young Farmers Clubs of Ulster is a prime example. They established a mental health committee and are now rolling out their mental health campaign to members. This is just one example of the drive and enthusiasm of our grassroots members in ensuring that rural young people are not left behind. More examples of the work carried out by our members are available on the blog section on our website. Be sure to take a look.<sup>(2)</sup>

(1) <https://www.ruralyoutheurope.com/podcasts/>

(2) [www.ruralyoutheurope.com](http://www.ruralyoutheurope.com)





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Our current project, Together Thursdays, funded by the European Parliament, was launched in January 2021. Running for 18 months, it brings together rural young people from our member organisations to discuss the issues they face either individually or as part of their communities and organisations. Over the course of the project, we will continue to run workshops and webinars and create a strategic working group with grassroots members. The project will assemble the concerns and experiences of rural young people, transmit them at the European level and actively engage our members with the European Parliament and non-governmental organisations. It will allow us to further network with our members, share the successes and struggles of rural youth, exchange best practices and provide support as we emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Furthermore, some rural areas are thriving due to lifestyle changes linked to the pandemic; the move to working from home has resulted in young people returning to live in rural areas with their lower accommodation costs and more open spaces. Less time commuting has created more freedom in time and finances and arguably a far better quality of life. However, much needs to be done to provide better infrastructure, broadband, access to education and medical care in rural communities. These will become even more vital as the population in these rural areas increases.



We will support our members and continue to build on rural competences, skills and techniques to equip young people to become active members of society, engage with decision makers and project the voice of rural youth. Changes to rural areas will bring new challenges and the need for sustainable practices will be greater than before. The pandemic has highlighted the importance of educating people on sustainable food production, keeping food miles low and supporting local farmers, businesses and rural enterprises. Over the coming years, we will explore sustainability on a deeper level, empowering rural youth to become active and responsible citizens.

#### FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

Rural Youth Europe is a European non-governmental organisation dedicated to rural young people. We have a reach of 500 000 youth across our network of 24 member organisations in 20 countries in the EU and beyond.

Rural Youth Europe brings together rural young people from all across Europe to learn tools, skills and gain confidence through non-formal learning. Through these activities, Rural Youth Europe gives participants the knowledge and power to take part and speak up in decision-making processes at local, national and international levels.

[www.ruralyouth europe.com](http://www.ruralyouth europe.com)

<https://www.ruralyouth europe.com/blog/>

## RURAL ISSUES, RURAL PERSPECTIVES

# Portrait of a young ‘agroinfluencer’

**Maria Coto Sauras**

In recent years, more and more young people have taken to social media to document their daily life in rural areas. This is helping to bridge the gap between the rural and urban world by allowing urban dwellers to get an insight into the realities of rural life. By chronicling their activities, the rural youth are breaking down stereotypes and prejudices associated with agriculture and in particular livestock farming.



**Maria Coto Sauras**,  
Rural Development  
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We interviewed Miriam Delgado Barrios, a perfect example of this trend. At just 25, this young woman from Burgos (Castilla y León, Spain) is not only a livestock farmer, she also serves as the mayor of her village. She has more than 17 000 followers on Instagram where she publishes daily stories and posts about her activities.

Miriam is in love with both rural life and her job, and shares this on Instagram. Although she spent two years living in the city, studying to become a beautician, she later decided to move back to her village. After taking a professional training course to obtain skills in the agrifood sector, she joined her brother on the family farm where she has been working for five years now.

Miriam’s objective on social media is to show and publicise the different steps of her work “from sowing to harvesting” and proudly illustrating rural life.

“Nowadays, in cities, there are children who believe that milk comes out of a bottle! This is why it is of paramount importance to highlight the work involved in producing a litre of milk, so that it can be appreciated! Milk farmers wake up every day at six in the morning to take care of the cows, milk them and feed them, so that the milk can reach the shops and people’s breakfast tables. It is a huge effort that is not always recognised and appreciated as such!”

Miriam stands for gender equality and encourages all women who work in the fields to make their work visible on social media. “Rural women should highlight their day-to-day work to demonstrate that we too can do what men do. (...) It can seem strange to see a woman in the fields taking care of animals. There are few of us but come on! Here we are and we are good enough.”

Since 2019, Miriam has also served as the mayor of Villaquirán de la Puebla, a small municipality with 52 inhabitants, located in the Spanish province of Burgos.

“I have always liked the idea of representing my people. I ran for the municipality’s elections together with another young woman and we won with an absolute majority! For me it was, and still is, a great source of pride! I believe that it is important that in rural areas and villages, young people get politically involved and take action for their future.”

Since becoming mayor, Miriam has set herself a goal: ensure that her village becomes a vibrant place by continuing its development. For now, both the social centre and the bar have been renovated. Above the bar there is now free accommodation available for a family willing to take over the small business. There are also plans to rehabilitate ‘the people’s house’ by turning a former teacher’s house into social housing for a low-income family willing to settle in the village. This will happen within the framework of a programme run by the region of Castilla y León.

For Miriam, the main challenge for rural villages is to be able to attract and retain young people. To achieve this goal, jobs and resources are needed, as well as housing and other associated services. During our telephone interview, the call was cut several times: “This is how it works here,” says Miriam, “we still have many internet and telephone coverage issues that need to be resolved. This is essential if we want young people to come and live in rural areas!”

Miriam’s vision for the future is positive and enthusiastic. She would like administrations to pay closer attention to the concerns of people who live and struggle on a daily





© Miriam Delgado Barrios



© Miriam Delgado Barrios

*"Beyond what I learnt in the training course, I grew up observing the work my father and uncle carried out on the family farm. In fact, I would like to pay tribute to our elders, especially my uncle Dario Delgado, from whom I inherited my passion for caring for animals and cattle."*

basis in small towns and villages. This can be achieved through "constant communication with the mayors of the territory's small municipalities". In terms of the primary sector, she calls for the prices of agricultural products to better reflect their value, taking into account all the work involved in the creation of the final product. "Why do we have subsidies if, at the end of the day, the prices are so low as to be akin to giving our products away for free?"

In her final message, Miriam encourages rural young people, and women in particular, to keep on fighting. "If we lose our villages, we lose the heart of the primary sector, which for me is the most important. Lose that and we lose everything!", concludes Miriam.

**i FOR FURTHER INFORMATION**

Miriam Delgado's Instagram account:  
[https://www.instagram.com/jovenes\\_agricultoras/?hl=es](https://www.instagram.com/jovenes_agricultoras/?hl=es)

## RURAL ISSUES, RURAL PERSPECTIVES

# Promoting cultural life in rural areas through LEADER<sup>(1)</sup>

**Samo Darian**

LEADER is one of the most successful instruments for the development of rural regions in the EU. With its bottom-up approach, the programme reaches 60% of all rural inhabitants in Germany. LEADER is based on well-structured, local networks of stakeholders that allow it to pursue a broad-based approach to regional development covering many cultural, environmental, social and economic aspects. So, what role does culture play in LEADER?



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## WHY CULTURE AND LEADER?

It is no surprise that LEADER support is sought when culture seeks funding options. LEADER already funds a great deal of culture. However, most regions tend to largely fund investment measures in local cultural infrastructure: upgrading accessibility of museums, signposting cultural routes or purchasing furniture.

In addition to LEADER support for these key infrastructure investment measures, many cultural actors, regional development representatives, mayors and district authorities are calling for non-investment measures to be considered to a greater extent. Art and culture can contribute significantly to social cohesion, which, as evidenced in many regions, is disappearing even in rural areas. Cultural activities establish identity, ensure social participation whilst conveying cultural heritage and shaping the future of regions.

Should art and culture not be seen as a key component of regional development? And should more resources from regional and structural funds not be used for artistic and cultural projects? This is precisely what some LEADER and public authority representatives are calling for.

## COMBINING CULTURAL PROJECT WORK AND STRUCTURAL FUNDING

In the TRAF0 programme (see box page 17), we came into contact with LEADER for the first time in 2015 in the Swabian Alb region, which includes five LEADER LAG areas, supported under the Rural Development Programme of Baden-Württemberg. Our project partners wished to implement more art and culture in LEADER as part of the development of their TRAF0 project. So TRAF0 combined cultural funding with LEADER in the project 'Learning cultural region Swabian Alb'.<sup>(2)</sup> The joint funding from TRAF0 and LEADER provided €968 000 in total for eight projects, including 'Heimatkarawane'<sup>(3)</sup> project and the 'Netz-Werk-Orchester'<sup>(4)</sup> of the Württemberg Philharmonic Orchestra in Reutlingen.

Culture and regional development share many interests and areas of activity. Both are witnessing changing social structures, such as decreasing opportunities and spaces for meeting and dialogue. Against a backdrop of demographic change, one aim is to preserve and develop attractive rural regions by offering a high quality of life and enabling social participation. Appealing to young people or strengthening volunteering are two key challenges actors are facing. Linking regional and structural funding with cultural projects offers opportunities for culture

(1) First published in "Kulturpolitische Mitteilungen, Zeitschrift für Kulturpolitik der Kulturpolitischen Gesellschaft", issue IV/2020, no. 171, p. 12-14

(2) <https://lernende-kulturregion.de>

(3) <https://www.heimatkarawane.de>

(4) <https://www.wuerttembergische-philharmonie.de/musik/netz-werk-orchester/>





© TRAF0

in rural regions, not least because of the government's growing interest in better integrating culture and regional development.

### RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PROMOTING ART AND CULTURE IN LEADER

LEADER is a key instrument in achieving closer integration of culture and regional development. With LEADER's new funding period coming, TRAF0 and the German Federal Cultural Foundation invited interested state ministries and regional parties from eight federal states, as well as from BAG LAG (the German association of LEADER LAGs) and the German Rural Network to engage in dialogue. Recommendations were made to further open LEADER to artists and cultural actors by adopting different approaches in funding and administration, so that LEADER can be better designed to fund non-investment artistic projects or process-oriented project work:

- At the EU level, LEADER could focus on a dynamic approach to project planning where applications for funding could be based on a concept and budget plan rather than pre-determined definitions of content and costs. Regular uptake of funds could also reduce delays between application and approval.
- At the German federal level, standard application-oriented regulations would be desirable as key funding aspects are dealt with differently in every state. VAT should be eligible in all states, own-account work should be included in the self-financing element and contributions to artists' social security funds should be recognised.

- At the regional level, art and culture should be included in the future local development strategies and cultural actors involved in the decision-making process of the Local Action Groups.

No other EU programme has the potential to pursue such a broad-based approach to local development as LEADER. With just a few practical adjustments, LEADER could be effectively deployed in regional cultural promotion, reaching initiatives, small organisations and associations acting as the driving forces in social, cultural and environmental projects in rural areas.

#### FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

TRAF0 – Models for Culture in Transformation is a nationwide programme initiated by the German Federal Cultural Foundation in 2015 to support rural regions throughout Germany to open up their cultural institutions to new tasks. A key role of TRAF0 is to review the existing funding landscape and look for new ways, together with our partners, of using its instruments for art and culture in a sustainable way.

The museums, theatres, music schools and cultural centres participating in TRAF0 respond to societal challenges in their regions and develop a new self-perception. The programme also aims to contribute to enhancing the status of culture in the public's perception and strengthening cultural policy structures in municipalities and administrative districts.

[www.trafo-programm.de/LEADER](http://www.trafo-programm.de/LEADER)

[www.trafo-programm.de/recommendations](http://www.trafo-programm.de/recommendations)

## RURAL ISSUES, RURAL PERSPECTIVES

# What does the EU Green Deal mean for rural development?

Clare Taylor

Under the new Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), it is up to Member States to find the best way to realise the goals of the European Green Deal. In rural areas, the CAP is expected to play a key role in delivering both economic and environmental sustainability.



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Since the publication of the European Green Deal (EGD) in December 2019, the ENRD has organised three Thematic Group (TG) meetings and a LEADER Thematic Lab,<sup>(1)</sup> focusing on the implications of the EGD for rural development. Working with a range of stakeholders and using examples of successful projects, the group has examined how Member States can align their strategic plans under the future CAP with the EGD objectives.

## A NEW RURAL FUTURE?

Europe began to experience the first effects of the COVID-19 pandemic shortly after the EGD was announced. Since then, the ongoing crisis has emphasised the necessity of creating more sustainable economies, societies, and health systems, and has reformulated notions of urban and rural life.

Rural areas have a fundamental role to play in creating systems that are robust and resilient to shocks. Several elements of the EGD, like the Biodiversity Strategy<sup>(2)</sup> and the Farm to Fork Strategy,<sup>(3)</sup> have overt implications for rural development. It is clear, for example, that rethinking food and biomass supply chains will be central to European policy over the next five years. But strategies related to the climate, energy, circular economy, mobility and forestry also

present significant challenges and opportunities for rural communities.

The Farm to Fork and Biodiversity Strategies set out common goals for Member States to achieve by 2030. These include a 50% reduction in harmful pesticides, a 25% increase in farmland used for organic farming, a minimum 50% reduction in nutrient losses while ensuring no deterioration in soil fertility, and supporting the transition to sustainable farming.

It is up to Member States to devise a way not only to achieve these ambitious targets, but also to improve economic resilience and social viability in the process.

## A WAY FORWARD

The ENRD TG meetings have highlighted support strategies that ensure rural communities benefit from the EGD agenda.

Meetings in December 2020 and February 2021 looked at how Member States can use CAP interventions and instruments to support fully sustainable practices in agriculture and forestry, and promote the clean energy transition in rural areas.

CAP cooperation instruments can be used to support collective approaches and producer organisations. In Ireland, a project for protecting pollinators<sup>(4)</sup> established

(1) ENRD LEADER Thematic Lab 'Developing local strategic approaches to address green issues': [https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/news-events/events/enrd-leader-thematic-lab-developing-local-strategic-approaches-address-green\\_en](https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/news-events/events/enrd-leader-thematic-lab-developing-local-strategic-approaches-address-green_en)

(2) European Biodiversity Strategy 2030, [https://ec.europa.eu/environment/strategy/biodiversity-strategy-2030\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/environment/strategy/biodiversity-strategy-2030_en)

(3) Farm to Fork Strategy, [https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal/actions-being-taken-eu/farm-fork\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal/actions-being-taken-eu/farm-fork_en)

(4) Protecting Farmland Pollinators, <https://ec.europa.eu/eip/agriculture/en/find-connect/projects/protecting-farmland-pollinators>



itself as an EIP-AGRI Operational Group using the current rural development Cooperation measure (M16). The project incentivised farmers to restore pollinators through actions such as low-to-zero pesticide inputs on fields, ensuring flowering margins and hedgerows, and growing pollinator-friendly trees and flowers on farms; showing that this could all be done without compromising on productivity. A scoring system was developed, and payments of up to €3000 per farmer were made, based on results. The project was implemented across a range of farm types, with 40 farms participating. In each area the project was steered by a local 'champion' farmer.

### STARTING LOCAL

Environmental and climate priorities differ between Member States and regions, and locally tailored solutions are necessary.

In November 2020, the ENRD organised a LEADER Thematic Lab on the role of LEADER in developing strategic approaches and initiatives with the potential to contribute to EGD objectives. The discussion highlighted that, while all EGD themes can have local relevance for the future of Local Action Groups (LAGs), topics such as local food, short supply chains, circular economy and sustainable mobility are particularly important.

LAGs have the capacity to do 'transformative' work and raise awareness to foster a 'green' transition that benefits local communities. Speaking at the meeting, Michael Fischer, from the Austrian National Rural Network (NRN), explained that the EGD will be the NRN's priority topic in 2021. Two thirds of the planned actions, he said, will "focus on enabling LAGs to play an active role in implementing EGD objectives."<sup>(5)</sup>

### BUILDING NETWORKS

Collective approaches create economies of scale, and this will be key for upscaling local initiatives and making environmental protection economically viable.

In Belgium, the LAG Tiges et Chavées has brought together small forest owners in a collaborative project to make forest management sustainable as well as profitable.<sup>(6)</sup>

The project involves both public partners from municipalities and civil society representatives. By involving citizens, it addresses all levels of the chain, thus boosting economic activity in the region. "This local approach gives us more support than big suppliers," says carpenter Benoît Marchand, "we can always get wood of a consistent quality."<sup>(7)</sup>



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### KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE

Farm Advisory Services and actions that support knowledge exchange and the dissemination of information will be important for promoting the uptake of tried and tested sustainable practices across the agriculture and forestry sectors. Advisory services need to develop land managers' knowledge on sustainable practices, and using farmer 'champions' can accelerate the buy-in. Network building is also key to knowledge dissemination.

"Meeting competent people in the association gave me a lot," says woodland owner Guy Cornélis from Tiges et Chavées, who is now managing his forest in a sustainable and profitable way. "I've learned a lot and now I can manage the forest better and have great sales opportunities."

#### FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

ENRD Thematic Group on the European Green Deal and rural areas: [https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/enrd-thematic-work/greening-rural-economy/european-green-deal-rural-areas\\_en](https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/enrd-thematic-work/greening-rural-economy/european-green-deal-rural-areas_en)

ENRD LEADER Thematic Lab 'Developing local strategic approaches to address green issues': [https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/news-events/events/enrd-leader-thematic-lab-developing-local-strategic-approaches-address-green\\_en](https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/news-events/events/enrd-leader-thematic-lab-developing-local-strategic-approaches-address-green_en)

ENRD's YouTube channel EURural features interviews from LAG stakeholders across Europe: <https://youtu.be/g088KtDITDo>

(5) ENRD Thematic Lab 'Developing local strategic approaches to address green issues' – Highlights report, [https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/news-events/events/enrd-leader-thematic-lab-developing-local-strategic-approaches-address-green\\_en](https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/news-events/events/enrd-leader-thematic-lab-developing-local-strategic-approaches-address-green_en)

(6) [https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/projects-practice/tiges-et-chavees-sustainable-management-private-forests\\_en](https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/projects-practice/tiges-et-chavees-sustainable-management-private-forests_en)

(7) This interview can be viewed online at [https://youtu.be/ZpbacV8\\_sw](https://youtu.be/ZpbacV8_sw)

## RURAL ISSUES, RURAL PERSPECTIVES

# “Secure that funding” – A call to action for rural connectivity

Jan Dröge

The BCO Network and the ENRD have closely cooperated during the past years with a common mandate: to facilitate the further development of European rural areas. The economic and social advancement of rural communities nowadays very much depends on the use of digital resources, which can only operate through fast and resilient internet connections.



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Our Network of Broadband Competence Offices (BCOs) works at national level in every Member State, as well as in many regions, to drive high-speed broadband deployment in underserved areas throughout Europe – which are mostly rural and/or remote. With the ENRD, we work to bring information on EU and Member State support for rural connectivity to rural stakeholders. Our overarching objective is to overcome the digital divide between Europe’s rural and urban citizens.

Despite recent progress, however, this digital ‘gap’ between urban and rural areas remains significant. As you see below, while overall access to high-speed connectivity has increased greatly in recent years, rural areas are not seeing the same results.

It is therefore with some excitement, but also some concern, that we reach out to you about rural connectivity in the next EU funding period.

Broadband support remains a priority in the new Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF), under the wider umbrella of digital transformation. Broadband investments will continue to be eligible expenditure under both the **European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD)**. In both cases, broadband is one of many “infrastructure” investments that Managing Authorities can support.

As you know, the needs in many rural areas are great and, unless you have your voice heard, broadband might not get the priority it deserves. Therefore, as the **CAP Strategic Plans** are being drafted, if you are in an underserved area: make sure that your voice is heard and that bringing high-speed connectivity to your areas is part of the plan. Similarly, in many countries the Operational Programmes (OPs) for the allocation of the ERDF are also still under discussion, presenting another opportunity to allocate funds for rural connectivity.

I am also writing to you as 2021 will see a new generation of EU funding through the **Recovery and Resilience Facility**.<sup>(1)</sup> This huge budget of **€672.5 billion** is specifically aimed at addressing the consequences of the COVID-19 crisis and helping Europe emerge from the recession it triggered in most of our countries, with a particular focus on the need for a green and digital recovery. Critically, the European Commission has stated that Member States should allocate at least 20% of these funds to digital recovery.

Given the importance on-line tools have proven for every person, business, community and public body in this challenging period, we can understand why supporting fast internet connections for areas where they do not yet exist is a priority under this new fund. **For rural areas, the Recovery and Resilience Facility therefore offers a chance to secure**

(1) [https://ec.europa.eu/info/business-economy-euro/recovery-coronavirus/recovery-and-resilience-facility\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/business-economy-euro/recovery-coronavirus/recovery-and-resilience-facility_en)



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### 'High-Speed Broadband Network in the North', Finland

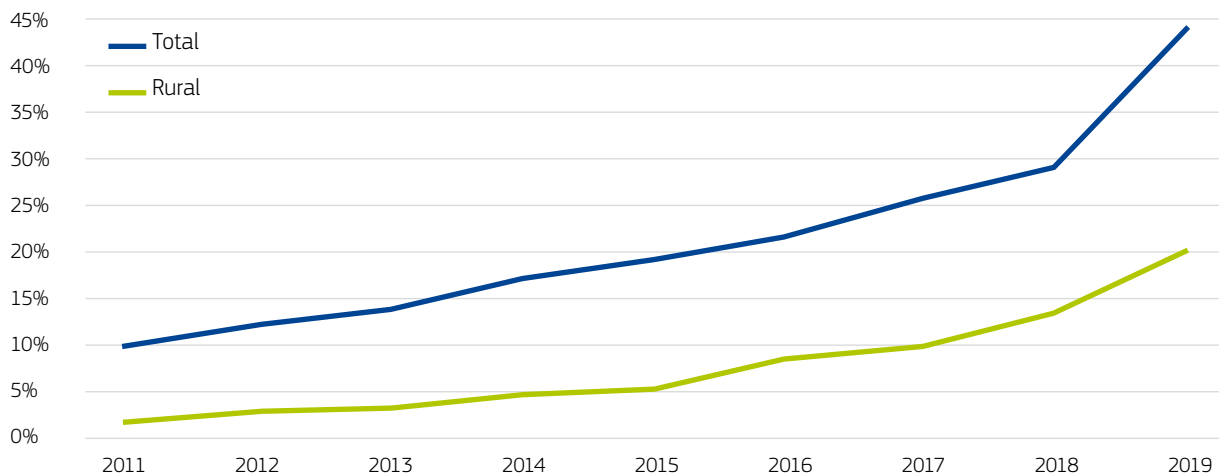
The Finnish project 'Kuitua pohjoiseen – High-Speed Broadband Network in the North' is a citizen-driven initiative in the extremely sparsely populated area of rural Lapland, in which locals built their own high-speed broadband networks. The project, run by LEADER LAGs Fell Lapland and Tunturi-Lappi, helped 20 different cooperatives by providing legal and financial consultation and sharing good practices among the cooperatives. The cooperatives worked mainly with volunteers for the implementation, overcoming several challenges such as the fact that the ground freezes relatively early in the year in this region and the work could only be done during the summer. The project used funding from RDP Measure O1 – Knowledge transfer & information actions of the Finland Mainland RDP and managed to connect 31 different villages in Lapland. As a result, over 3 000 rural households gained access to high-speed connectivity.

Video: <https://youtu.be/9G1wYEagXKA>

This project won the ENRD's Rural Inspiration Awards 2019 in the category 'Rural revitalisation':

[https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/projects-practice/kuitua-pohjoiseen-high-speed-broadband-network-north\\_en](https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/projects-practice/kuitua-pohjoiseen-high-speed-broadband-network-north_en)

### Fixed very high capacity network (VHCN) coverage (% of households) in the EU, 2011-2019



Source: IHS Markit, Omdia, Point Topic and VVA, Broadband coverage in Europe studies.





© PRIP2

### 'PRIP2', Lithuania

The Lithuanian project 'PRIP2' aims to bring Next Generation Access to agri-businesses and households in rural areas where there is no connectivity and no commercial interest in providing it. In order to encourage private operators to invest, Plačiajuostis Internetas – the public enterprise established by the Lithuanian government to run broadband projects – built the necessary 'backbone' infrastructure of 342.6 km of optic fibre and allowed 24 different operators to build the 'last mile' connection to the end users. As a result, the cost of investment was significantly reduced for the private operators and the project managed to connect 400 rural activity centres. The project was 85% funded by the EAFRD, from RDP Measure 07 – Basic services and village renewal, and followed on from PRIP, a project funded by the EAFRD in the 2007-2013 period.

'PRIP2' won a European Broadband Award in 2019 and was part of the 2014-2020 Lithuanian Digital Agenda programme.

VIDEO: <https://youtu.be/yhVir2rPGhU>

Project factsheet: <https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/content/support-broadband-infrastructure-stage-ii-prip2-lithuania>

### the funds to get every household, farm and business connected.

In some countries, governments are still working on their Recovery and Resilience Plan to allocate these funds. Make sure you are also heard by these planning authorities.

As the mix of funding options in 2021-2027 is such that the EAFRD is just one among several funds – including the ERDF, CEF2 Digital and the Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF) – it is essential to ensure that the support for rural broadband is coordinated.

The funding is there. With over **€134.5 billion** available for digital from the RRF alone – which is 20 times more than the **€6 billion** allocated under the previous MFF (2014-2020) – each Member State has the possibility to allocate EU support to ensure that all rural areas are connected.

Now, during this crucial time when allocations are being decided, is the chance for rural voices to ensure

that rural areas get their fair share and the support they need.

Rural Development Programmes have supported several successful initiatives for broadband expansion (see boxes page 21 and in this page). Still, the people in charge of telecommunications policy do not always hear rural development stakeholders. In many countries, the people in charge of rural development know little about telecommunications, and the people in charge of telecommunications know little about rural areas.

In order to bridge this gap, all EU countries have set up Broadband Competence Offices (BCOs). These teams act as single point of contact on all issues related to broadband. We encourage you to **reach out to your BCO to make sure your voice is heard where it needs to be**. You can find your BCO in the online BCO Network Directory: <http://directory.bconetwork.eu>



## A FOCUS ON... RURAL VISION WEEK

## INTRODUCTION

## Towards a long-term vision

Conscious of the challenges faced by rural areas, as well as of their potential and opportunities, the European Commission will publish a Communication on a long-term vision for rural areas under its 'A new push for European democracy' political priority. The aim of the Communication, foreseen to be adopted at the end of June 2021, is to draw attention to the specific needs of rural areas and launch a debate between the European Commission, Parliament and Council as well as local and regional authorities. It is also expected to propose a roadmap with new actions aiming, among other objectives, to address the main challenges for rural people as highlighted by stakeholders during the public consultation and to improve the coordination of policies affecting rural areas.

The Communication on the Long-Term Vision for Rural Areas is being prepared in close consultation with people living in rural areas, as well as local and regional authorities. The process of developing the vision has included a foresight exercise led by the Commission's Joint Research Centre organised in conjunction with an ENRD Thematic Group, a large-scale online public consultation (OPC) and public workshops (see box page 26), various research projects funded through Horizon 2020 and numerous other sources.

Two Eurobarometers have also been carried out to complement the results of the OPC with a representative sample of EU population.

One of the milestones in developing the Vision was the virtual event 'Rural Vision Week: Imagining the future of Europe's rural areas' (22-26 March 2021), organised by the ENRD in close cooperation with the European Commission.

The Rural Vision Week event included high-level presentations, participative workshops, a marketplace, and 'fringe' activities. These involved stakeholder participants in working together to contribute to the preparation of a future vision for Europe's rural areas. High-level discussions, plenary sessions and the ENRD Rural Inspiration Awards ceremony were web-streamed and recordings are available on ENRD's communication channels.<sup>(1)</sup>

The event brought together a wide variety of rural actors and stakeholders bringing forward their views about the future of rural areas in Europe. European Commission Vice President Dubravka Šuica, Commissioner for Agriculture Janusz Wojciechowski and Commissioner for Cohesion and Reforms Elisa Ferreira, together with other European and international key speakers, led the event, emphasising the European Commission's commitment to listen to rural voices when drawing up the planned Communication. An Action Plan is expected to accompany the Communication and to address the challenges and concerns identified, by building on the emerging opportunities of the EU's green, digital and fair transitions.

More than 650 participants from 35 countries attended the online event, debating during eight workshops, four plenary sessions and 11 fringe meetings, and 23 organisations showcased their rural perspectives in Our Rural Marketplace. 22 young rural stakeholders from across the EU shared their views on the future in the 'My Rural' video testimonials.

'Our Rural' Marketplace provided a virtual space on the ENRD website for National Rural Networks, rural stakeholders, research projects and other initiatives to display and present their key activities and messages that are relevant to the Vision. You can still visit the Marketplace here: [https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/news-events/events/rural2040-vision-week/our-rural-marketplace\\_en](https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/news-events/events/rural2040-vision-week/our-rural-marketplace_en)

'Fringe' Workshop events (which took place on 25 March 2021) provided a space for various stakeholders and organisations with an interest in rural areas to present their activities, perspectives and messages within their own rural vision session. Check the list of Fringe Workshop events here: [https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/news-events/events/rural2040-vision-week\\_en](https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/news-events/events/rural2040-vision-week_en)

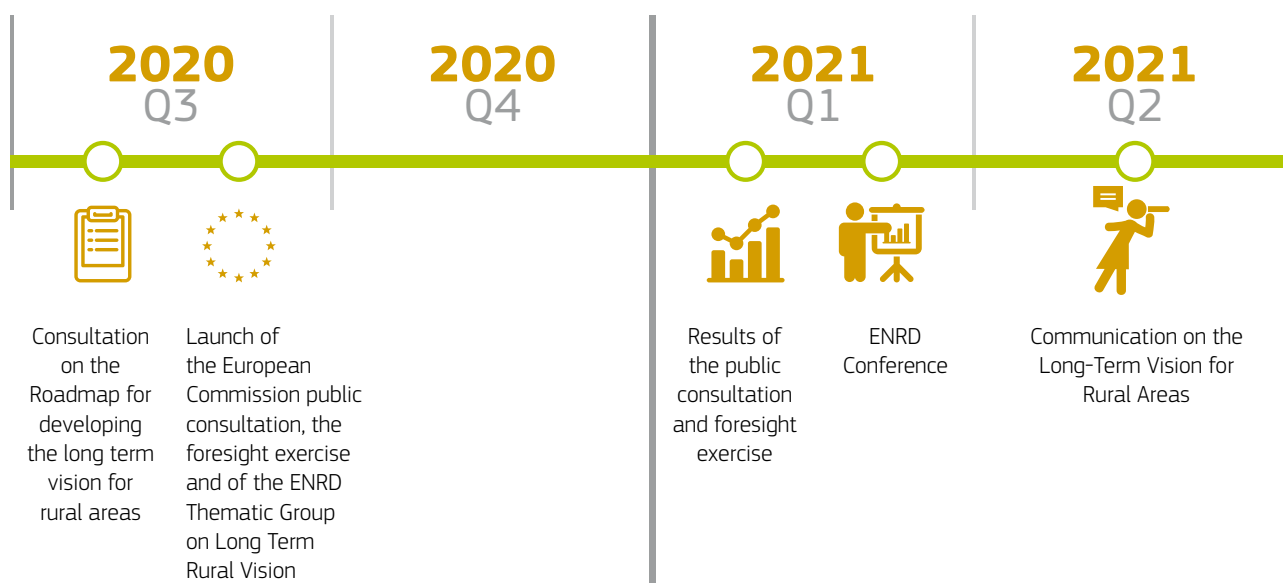
The Rural Vision Week also hosted the ceremony of the Rural Inspiration Awards 2021, where, out of 20 nominees, five projects were awarded for their outstanding achievements in four thematic categories and one online 'popular vote'. See more details at page 28.

(1) [https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/news-events/events/rural2040-vision-week\\_en](https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/news-events/events/rural2040-vision-week_en)



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## Timeline Roadmap 2020-2021


 FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

For more information, presentations and video recordings from the event, visit the Rural Vision Week page on the ENRD website: [https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/news-events/events/rural2040-vision-week\\_en](https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/news-events/events/rural2040-vision-week_en)

Read the highlights report of Rural Vision Week: [https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/publications/rural-vision-week\\_en](https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/publications/rural-vision-week_en)

Watch the Rural Vision Week videos on ENRD's YouTube channel EURural: [https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLocST8\\_B8egYLud6YZcJVsn7bUaC6ZBlw](https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLocST8_B8egYLud6YZcJVsn7bUaC6ZBlw)

Learn more about the Long-Term Vision for Rural Areas at [https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/enrd-thematic-work/long-term-rural-vision/long-term-rural-vision-portal\\_en](https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/enrd-thematic-work/long-term-rural-vision/long-term-rural-vision-portal_en)

Read the ENRD report 'Rural Voices', a qualitative analysis of the findings from stakeholder workshops contributing to the long-term vision for rural areas: [https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/publications/rural-voices\\_en](https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/publications/rural-voices_en)

A FOCUS ON... RURAL VISION WEEK

## TESTIMONIALS

# “This is my rural...”



“The future of rural Europe can only be shaped locally. The public consultation will lead to a new strategy and vision for rural Europe in 2040 from and by rural people.”

Ursula von der Leyen,  
President of the European Commission



“We have heard that the Vision has to be concrete and not just ink on paper. I couldn't agree more. (...) We will leave no-one behind. We have heard what you have to say and with this in mind will elaborate and present our European Rural Vision in June.”

Dubravka Šuica,  
European Commission Vice-President  
for Demography and Democracy



“The development and successful implementation of a long-term vision for rural areas will require all of us to work together.”

Janusz Wojciechowski,  
European Commissioner for Agriculture



“‘Building back better’ means preparing our countries for a green transition, but it also means more balanced territories, avoiding concentration in a single pole of development (...) and on the big metropolitan areas.”

Elisa Ferreira,  
European Commissioner  
for Cohesion and Reforms



“We have plenty of opportunities in rural areas to participate in the green transition and I think we have to unlock the potential of rural areas.”

Mihail Dumitru,  
Deputy Director-General for Agriculture and  
Rural Development, European Commission



“In 2024, [my vision is that] our rural areas will be extremely modern and we will be able to support ourselves – even during global crises.”

Sandra Eimane, farmer, Latvia



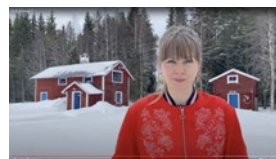
“I believe that by 2024 we will have many more young farmers, because we are the future.”

Vedrana Poletar, young farmer, Croatia



“In 2040, [my vision is that] biodiversity management will already have been a profitable part of my farm's business plans for years.”

Willem Voncken, farmers, the Netherlands



“In 2040, [my vision is that] the rural wisdom and perspectives are the foundation for a truly sustainable society.”

Kristina Emehad, farmer, Sweden

## PUBLIC CONSULTATION ON A LONG-TERM VISION FOR RURAL AREAS

The online public consultation on the Vision, held between 7 September and 30 November 2020, aimed at gathering input from European citizens and stakeholders to assess what the long-term vision on rural areas should focus on, with particular attention given to people from rural areas. Its results were presented during the Rural Vision Week (22-26 March 2021).

A total of 2 326 respondents from all EU Member States participated in the public consultation, providing their views on rural areas today, aspirations for the future of rural areas as well as involvement of citizens in decision-making and the vision itself.

Over 50% of respondents stated that infrastructure is the most pressing need for rural areas. Access to basic services and amenities, such as water and electricity as well as banks and post offices, was also cited as an urgent need for 45% of respondents.

Over the next 20 years, respondents believe that the attractiveness of rural areas will largely depend on the availability of e-services, especially in the fields of health and education (94%), digital connectivity (93%), social innovation (92%) and on improving the climate and environmental performance of farming (92%).

When asked if people felt left behind by society, 39% of respondents responded by the affirmative. This share increases for participants involved in farming (45%), living in rural areas (41%) and living in remote rural areas (56%). The most important reasons cited for this are the outdated infrastructure and lack of services (61%).

In terms of decision-making, 83% of participants believe that decisions taken at local level impact the lives of rural people while only one quarter (27%) consider that particular attention is given to rural areas in public policy design. 68% believe that debating rural areas in rural areas is the most efficient way of involving rural people in the public debate and ensuring their voices are heard.

The online consultation was complemented by the **'Welcome to our rural'** workshop series, which provided local communities and stakeholder groups with further opportunities to share their vision for their own locality as well as local stories. Over 2 900 people participated and 166 contributions were collected from across 19 EU Member States, as well as one contribution from an EU-level association.

Two **Eurobarometers** have been also carried out with a representative sample of the EU population. 27 237 EU citizens from different social and demographic

categories were interviewed for the **Special Eurobarometer 504<sup>(1)</sup>** on the situation of rural areas, how things have changed between 2009 and 2020, and the objectives of rural development, the second pillar of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). A **dedicated Flash Eurobarometer 491** was also carried out, assessing the priorities on which the long-term Vision for rural areas should focus. A total of 25 841 EU citizens were interviewed over the telephone.

Another important piece of the European Commission's work on the Vision was the foresight exercise led by the Joint Research Centre (JRC) and involving the ENRD Thematic Group (TG) on the Long Term Rural Vision. Based on the inputs and ideas provided by the TG members, the JRC developed four scenarios that provide plausible and consistent stories about the future and offer useful insights for the LTVRA.

### FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

Online public consultation on the Long-Term Rural Vision – information and results: <https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/have-your-say/initiatives/12525-Long-term-vision-for-rural-areas/public-consultation>

'Welcome to our rural' workshop package: [https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/enrd-thematic-work/long-term-rural-vision/long-term-rural-vision-portal/process\\_en](https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/enrd-thematic-work/long-term-rural-vision/long-term-rural-vision-portal/process_en)

Results of the public consultation process were presented by the European Commission and the ENRD Contact Point during day 1 of the Rural Vision Week – see the presentations:

- 'Results of the Open Public Consultation' by María Gafo Gómez-Zamalloa (European Commission – DG Agriculture and Rural Development)
- 'Stakeholder input to the Rural Vision' by Zelig Peppiette (European Commission – DG Agriculture and Rural Development)
- 'Rural Voices – from the local to the EU' by Paul Soto (ENRD Contact Point)

all available at: [https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/news-events/events/rural2040-vision-week\\_en](https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/news-events/events/rural2040-vision-week_en)

See also the presentation by Maciej Krzysztofowicz (Joint Research Centre of the European Commission) on 'Rural areas 2040 – building future scenarios', also available at the same page.

(1) <https://europa.eu/eurobarometer/surveys/detail/2229>



## A FOCUS ON... RURAL VISION WEEK

## HIGHLIGHTS

Summary of the  
Rural Vision Week

By **Enrique Garcilazo**, Head of the Regional and Rural Policy Unit – Centre for Entrepreneurship SME's, Regions and Cities, OECD.



### COMMONALITIES FOR LONG TERM (LT) VISION

- Rural policies need to be holistic
- The LT vision needs to address the wide diversity of rural places and deliver tailor-made responses
- A vision and strategy needs to be shaped through bottom-up processes and the views of local communities
- The vision needs to be participatory and promote inclusion
- The LT vision needs to break isolation and promote open rural communities
- The LT vision needs to be future ready



### HOW DO WE GET THERE?

- Responses to help build the capacity of local actors (local empowerment) to help manage the transition
- Responses on supporting enabling factors
- Need practical tools to support flexible, cooperative models, bring simplifications and embrace new economic models
- Better policy design and resources
- Generating good data and knowledge of rural places, to develop concrete indicators and support good analysis (Rural Observatory)
- Not just producing information but also communicating with local stakeholders and using in the policy design
- Resilience and forward looking solutions for mobility and services



### POINT FOR CONSIDERATION

- The geographic scale is key
- Vision needs to be clear, and a living document to be revised and updated periodically, with views from bottom-up and top-down
- Autonomy and building capacity – avoid using unfunded mandates
- Going beyond rural proofing
- Importance of a framework that is flexible and can combine policies and resources from EU, national, regional and local levels
- Resilience and forward-looking approach: from a policy to react to a policy to anticipate

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### FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

Summary of Rural Vision Week by Enrique Garcilazo, Head of the Regional and Rural Policy Unit – Centre for Entrepreneurship SME's, Regions and Cities, OECD – day 5 of the Rural Vision Week: [https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/news-events/events/rural2040-vision-week\\_en](https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/news-events/events/rural2040-vision-week_en)

A FOCUS ON... RURAL VISION WEEK

## MEET THE WINNERS

# Rural Inspiration Awards 2021: Our Rural Future

The theme of this year's Rural Inspiration Awards (RIA) was 'Our Rural Future', in line with the Long-Term Vision for Rural Areas being drawn up by the European Commission. In this edition, 125 entries were received from National Rural Networks in 22 Member States for the four thematic categories: Green Futures, Digital Futures, Resilient Futures and Socially Inclusive Futures.

The jury nominated a winner per thematic category and around 10 200 people from all Europe chose the winner of the Popular Vote category through online voting. European Commissioner for Agriculture, Janusz Wojciechowski announced the winners of the Rural Inspiration Awards 2021 during a virtual Award Ceremony.



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### Green futures:

#### ReWI Visions (Resource Wise Visions) – Finland

The ReWI project inspires young people to examine entrepreneurship from the perspective of the circular economy. The project has opened up a wide range of opportunities for young people, resulting in 40 new circular economy enterprises.

[https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/projects-practice/rewi-visions-resource-wise-visions-finland\\_en](https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/projects-practice/rewi-visions-resource-wise-visions-finland_en)



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**Digital futures:**  
**The HofladenBOX – Germany**

HofladenBOX is an online marketplace where customers can order products directly from more than 60 different farmers in the Fürth district (Bavaria).

[https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/projects-practice/hofladenbox-germany\\_en](https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/projects-practice/hofladenbox-germany_en)

**Socially inclusive futures:**  
**Green Care – Where people flourish – Austria**

Green Care projects on family farms offer social services close to home in rural areas. They increase the quality of life for people, secure and create jobs while also helping to preserve small-scale agriculture and forestry.

[https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/projects-practice/green-care-where-people-flourish-austria\\_en](https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/projects-practice/green-care-where-people-flourish-austria_en)



© Green Care Austria Association





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**Resilient futures:**  
**Pilot Project on Circular Bioeconomy – Spain**

The project has enabled the living-lab Josenea (Navarra region), which is focused on organic farming, to collect bio-waste from neighbours and transform it into compost to fertilise their crops, with environmental, economic and social benefits.

[https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/projects-practice/re-thinking-management-organic-waste\\_en](https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/projects-practice/re-thinking-management-organic-waste_en)

**Popular vote:**  
**Angelic Gardens / Anielskie Ogrody – Poland**

Angelic Gardens (Anielskie Ogrody) is a forward-looking project that aims to create oases of biodiversity in farms and gardens. It shows that a small productive garden on a family farm can be beautiful and provide high quality organic food. Angelic Gardens leads these way in these times of COVID-19 pandemic and climate change with high quality 'step by step' educational materials and easy internet communication.

[https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/projects-practice/angelic-gardens-anielskie-ogrody-poland\\_en](https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/projects-practice/angelic-gardens-anielskie-ogrody-poland_en)



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**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION**

Learn more about the finalists and the winners of RIA 2021 at [https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/news-events/events/rural-inspiration-awards/rural-inspiration-awards-2021-our-rural-future\\_en](https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/news-events/events/rural-inspiration-awards/rural-inspiration-awards-2021-our-rural-future_en)

Check the upcoming EAFRD Projects Brochure on RIA 2021 at [https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/publications/search\\_en?f%5B0%5D=im\\_field\\_enrd\\_publication\\_type%3A20484](https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/publications/search_en?f%5B0%5D=im_field_enrd_publication_type%3A20484)

# Books & publications

## *The EU's 2021-2027 long-term budget & NextGenerationEU: facts and figures*

**Directorate-General for Budget  
(European Commission)**



In 2020, the EU provided an unprecedented response to the coronavirus crisis that hit Europe and the world. At its heart is a stimulus package worth € 2.018 trillion in current prices (€ 1.8 trillion

in 2018 prices). It consists of the EU's long-term budget for 2021 to 2027 of € 1.211 trillion (€ 1.074 trillion in 2018 prices), topped up by € 806.9 billion (€ 750 billion in 2018 prices) through NextGenerationEU, a temporary instrument to power the recovery.

The EU sets the limits of its spending in the multiannual financial framework (MFF), the EU's long-term budget for the next seven years. In this way, the EU secures the resources for its political priorities, like digitalisation and green deal. The budget also ensures room for flexibility, thus enabling the EU to respond to unforeseen circumstances. The 2021–2027 long-term budget, or MFF of € 1.211 trillion, will seek to support the recovery while investing in the EU's regions, farmers, companies, researchers, students, citizens in general as well as our neighbouring countries.

ISBN 978-92-76-30627-6

<https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/d3e77637-a963-11eb-9585-01aa75ed71a1/language-en>

## *Is our life good enough?*

**ESPON**

Enhancing quality of life (QoL) is a key objective for policymakers at different scales and it has become more relevant in the policy agenda along with increasing demands for the participation of citizens in the political process.

This working paper makes an important contribution to this process by providing a methodology to assess QoL through a place-based and citizen-centric approach based on the results of the ESPON applied research project 'QoL – Quality of life measurements and methodology', recent literature review and taking into account the current European policy processes, in particular the priorities of the Slovenian Presidency of the Council of the European Union.

ISBN 978-2-919795-84-0

<https://www.espon.eu/is-our-life-good-enough>



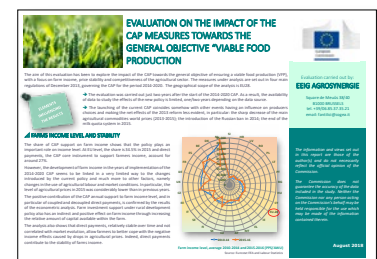
## *Evaluation on the impact of the CAP Measures towards the general objective 'Viable food production'*

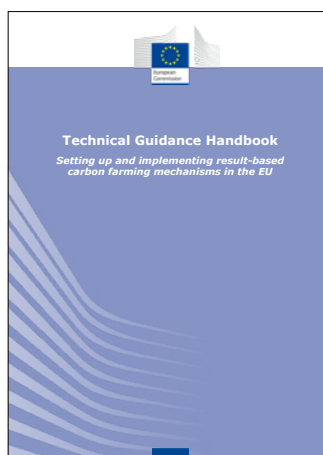
**European Commission**

The aim of this evaluation has been to explore the impact of the CAP towards the general objective of ensuring a viable food production, with a focus on farm income, price stability and competitiveness of the agricultural sector. The measures under analysis are set out in four main regulations of December 2013, governing the CAP for the period 2014-2020. The geographical scope of the analysis is the EU28.

DOI 10.2762/144130

[https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/food-farming-fisheries/key\\_policies/documents/eval-supply-impact-cap-viable-food-prod-leaflet\\_2018\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/food-farming-fisheries/key_policies/documents/eval-supply-impact-cap-viable-food-prod-leaflet_2018_en.pdf)





### *Technical Guidance Handbook*

Setting up and implementing result-based carbon farming mechanisms in the EU

**COWI, Directorate-General for Climate Action (European Commission), Ecologic Institute, IEEP**

This Technical Guidance Handbook is intended to support the development of result-based payment schemes for carbon farming in the EU. The Handbook has been prepared as part of a wider study, 'Analytical support for the operationalisation of an EU Carbon Farming Initiative'. The study, funded by the European Commission, explores the options for wide-scale adoption of result-based carbon farming schemes or initiatives linked to climate change mitigation and adaptation.

ISBN 978-92-76-29655-3

<https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/10acfd66-a740-11eb-9585-01aa75ed71a1/language-en>



### *Making Peace with Nature*

A scientific blueprint to tackle the climate, biodiversity and pollution emergencies

**United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)**

The first synthesis report by UNEP – United Nations Environment Programme is based on evidence from global environmental assessments. The resulting synthesis communicates how climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution can be tackled jointly within the framework of the Sustainable Development Goals. The report serves to translate the current state of scientific knowledge into crisp, clear and digestible facts-based messages that the world can relate to and follow up on.

It first provides an Earth diagnosis of current and projected human-induced environmental change, by putting facts and interlinkages in perspective, including by using smart infographics. In building on this diagnosis, the report identifies the shifts needed to close gaps between current actions and those needed to achieve sustainable development. The analysis is anchored in current economic, social and ecological reality and framed by economics and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. By synthesising the latest scientific findings from the global environmental assessments, the report communicates the current status of the world's urgent issues and opportunities to solve them.

ISBN 978-92-807-3837-7

<https://www.unep.org/resources/making-peace-nature>



# ENRD PUBLICATIONS

Keep up to date with all the latest news, views and developments in European rural development by reading the various ENRD publications.

These are available on the Publications section of <https://enrd.ec.europa.eu> by filling in the online form at <https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/publications/search>

## EU RURAL REVIEW

The EU Rural Review is the ENRD's principal thematic publication. It presents the latest knowledge and understanding of a particular topic relevant to rural development in Europe. Themes range from rural entrepreneurship and food quality to climate change and social inclusion. It is published twice a year in six EU languages (DE; EN; ES; FR; IT; PL).

### No.31 – Rural social economy



KF-AJ-21-001-EN-N

### No.30 – Climate action in rural areas



KF-AJ-20-001-EN-N

### No.29 – LEADER Achievements



KF-AJ-19-002-EN-N

## EAFRD PROJECTS BROCHURE

The ENRD publishes brochures presenting good and interesting examples of EAFRD-funded projects. Each edition highlights successful project examples around a particular rural development theme. The brochures aim to showcase the achievements of the EAFRD and inspire further projects. They are published in six EU languages (DE; EN; ES; FR; IT; PL).

### Rural Inspiration Awards 2020



KF-AP-21-001-EN-N

### Vibrant Rural Areas



KF-AP-20-001-EN-N

### Rural Inspiration Awards 2019



KF-AP-19-002-EN-N

## FINDING INFORMATION ABOUT THE EU

### Online

- Information about the European Union in all the official languages of the EU is available on the Europa website at: [https://europa.eu/european-union/index\\_en](https://europa.eu/european-union/index_en)

### EU publications

- You can download or order free and priced EU publications at: <https://op.europa.eu/en/publications>
- Multiple copies of free publications may be obtained by contacting Europe Direct or your local information centre (see [https://europa.eu/european-union/contact\\_en](https://europa.eu/european-union/contact_en)).

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