



# The long-term vision for rural areas: key achievements & ways forward

[European Commission report on the long-term vision for rural areas](#)

27 March 2024

**Mario Milouchev and Wallis Vandebrock-Goelen**

**Rural pact coordination group - 16 April 2024**



**#RuralVisionEU**

# The long-term vision for EU's rural areas



Rural areas are a formative part of the European economy and cultural diversity.

They are home to hundreds of millions of Europeans who enjoy living and working there. We stand by their side and want Europe's rural areas to flourish.

Europe is investing in rural areas because their prospects are Europe's future.

**European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen**  
**27 March 2024**



# The long-term vision for EU's rural areas



Vice-president of EC  
Demography & Democracy  
Dubravka Šuica

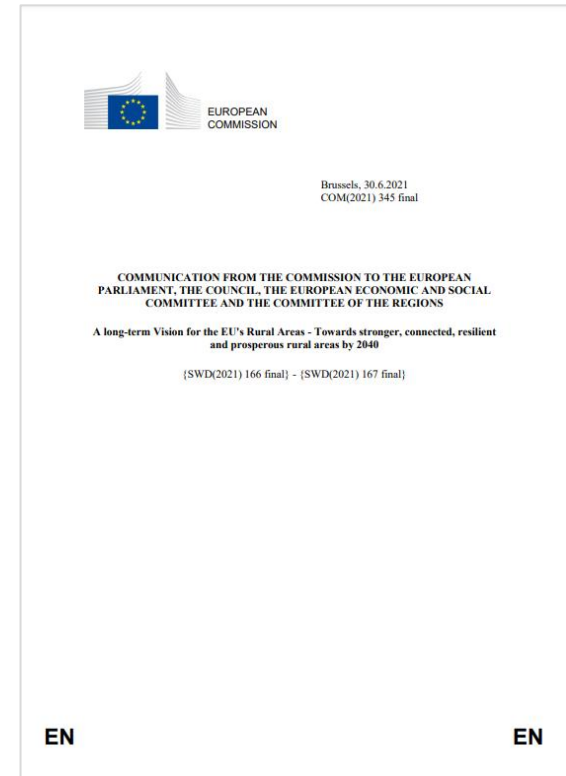
**Communication from the EC**  
**(June 2021)**



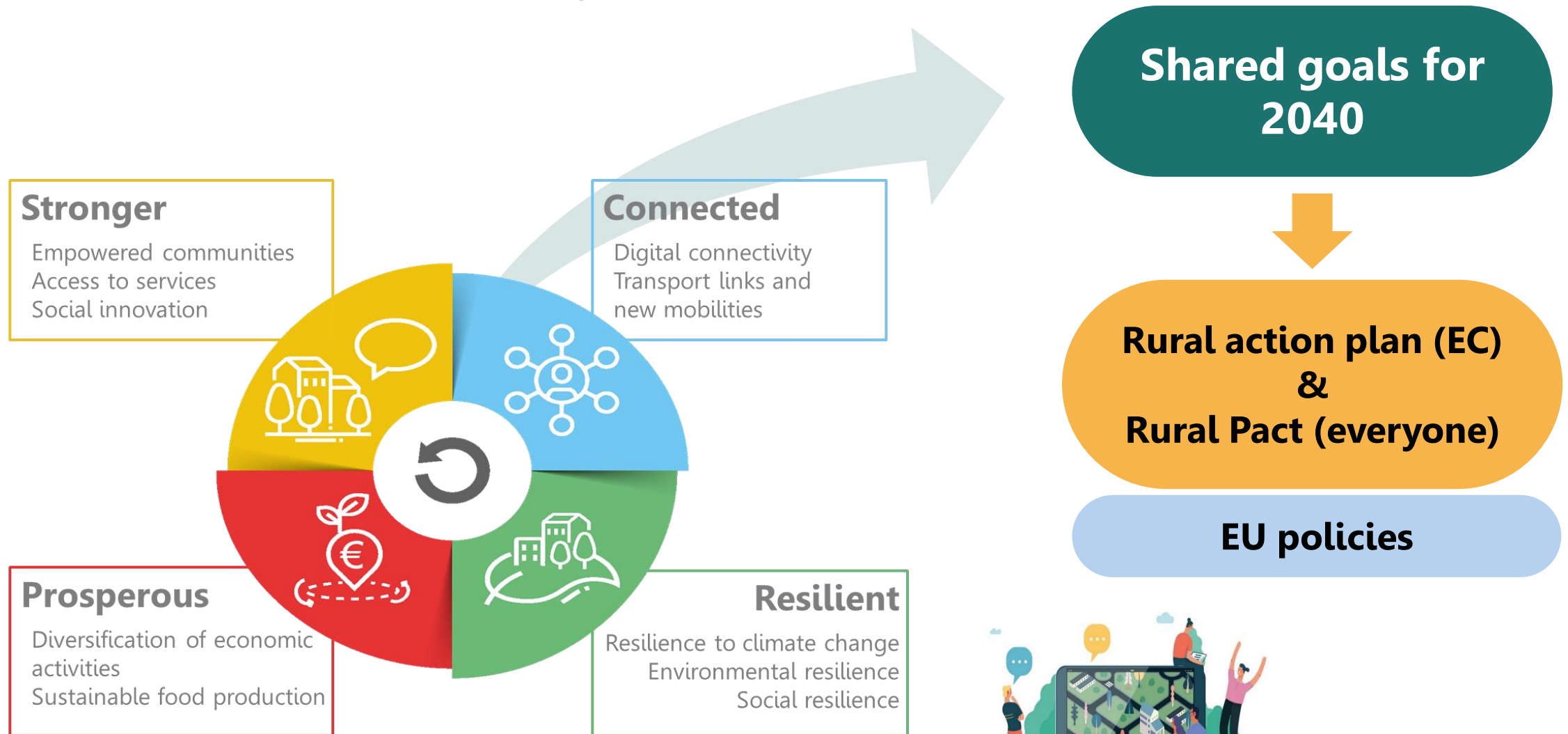
Commissioner (Agriculture)  
Janusz Wojciechowski



Commissioner (Cohesion and reforms)  
Elisa Ferreira



# The rural vision by 2040



# The long-term vision for EU's rural areas



**Communication from the EC**

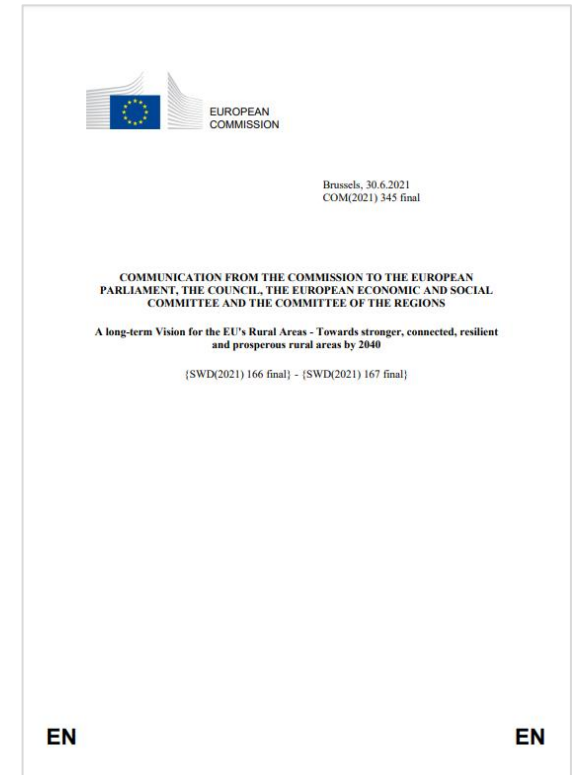
**(June 2021)**



The Commission will **take stock of what actions have been carried out and programmed** under support schemes for rural areas in 2021-2027 for the CAP and Cohesion policy and highlight gaps where necessary.

A set of **reflections on possible orientations for enhanced support action and financing for rural areas**, as well as on the **ways forward**, will be included in **a public report by the first quarter of 2024**, based on the implementation of the EU rural action plan. The discussions around the report will feed the reflection on the preparation of the proposals for the 2028-2034 programming period.

**Communication on the LTVRA, "Next steps".**

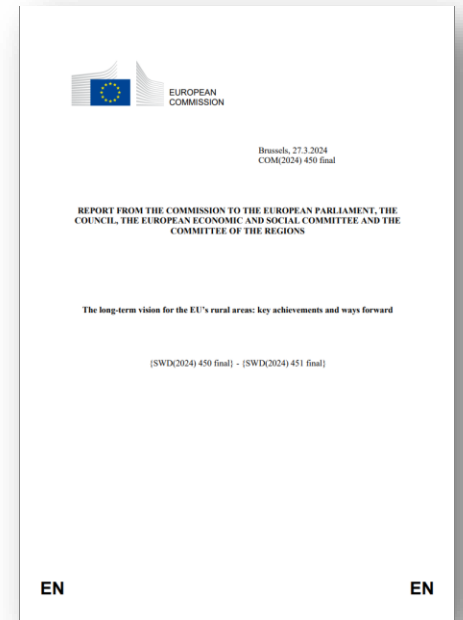


# Report on the implementation of the long-term vision for EU's rural areas

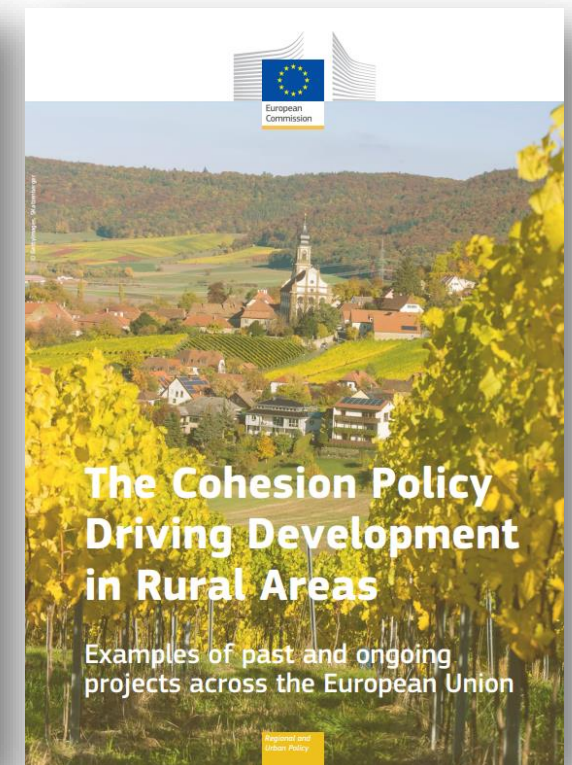
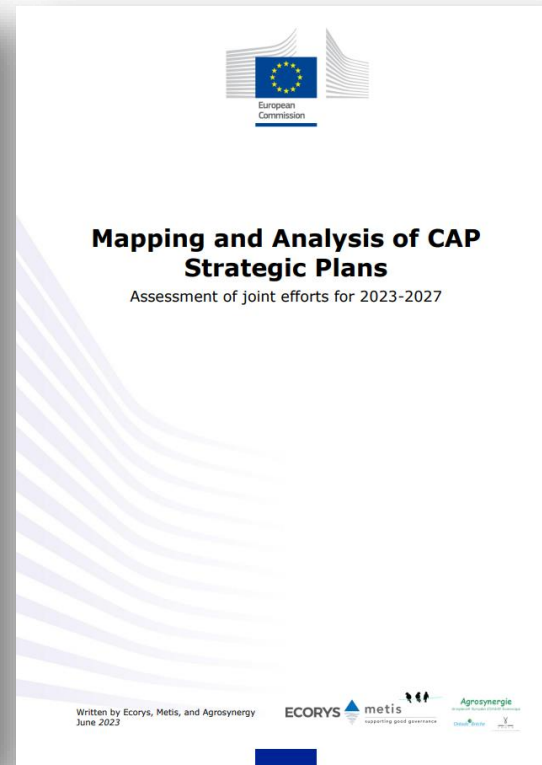
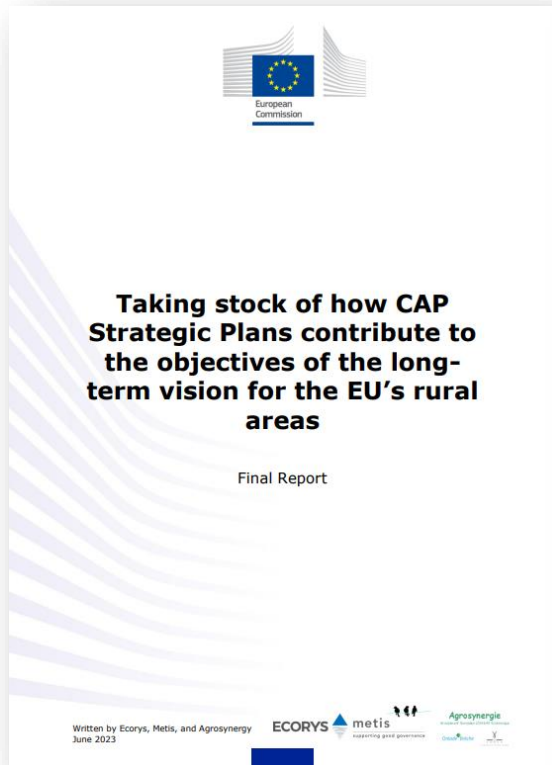
1. **New evidence under the four action areas**
2. **Looking back at 30 months of implementation**
  - 2.1. How do **EU policies** contribute to rural areas?
  - 2.2. Where are we with the **implementation of the EU rural action plan**?
  - 2.3. The **launch** and development of the **rural pact**
3. **Looking forward**
  1. **Consolidating** achievements and implementing the **EU rural action plan**
  2. **Consolidating the rural pact**
  3. **Reflecting on how to enhance support for rural areas** in the future
4. **Conclusions and next steps**

**Staff working documents:** [‘Taking stock of rural action plan implementation’](#) & [‘Reviewed EU rural action plan’](#)

**Report from the EC  
(March 2024)**



# EU policies contributions to rural areas



**2023-2027 CAP**  
Study reports on [September](#) & [November](#) 2023  
+ Report from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council:  
"[Summary of CAP Strategic Plans for 2023-27: joint effort and collective ambition](#)"

**2021-2027 Cohesion policy**  
Report [May](#) 2023  
+ Collection of examples [March](#) 2024

# The rural action plan: 24 thematic actions



▶ **Rural revitalisation platform launched**

▶ **Research and innovation for rural communities**

- **€253 million** in **Horizon EU**
- European **Startup village forum** launched

▶ **Networking for LEADER** (EU CAP Network) **and Smart villages** (SmartRural 21 & 27)

▶ **Study on land-use for sustainable agriculture** launched

▶ **Youth:**

- Inclusion in **ERASMUS**
- EU youth Strategy **Goal 6**
- **Study** on rural youth opportunities for learning



▶ **Networking on mobility for rural communities under SMARTA-NET**

▶ **Urban mobility framework published** & urban mobility plans being updated

▶ **Rural Digital Futures**

- **€23.5 billion** invested in **connectivity**
- Pilot on digital education in remote areas "Learning from the extremes"
- **Rural digital indicators** in digital decade reports

▶ **Broadband competency office network renewed**

▶ **R&I projects for digitalisation of agriculture**



▶ **Rural energy communities advisory hub** (RECAH)

- **27 municipalities** received technical assistance
- **Guidance** for all

▶ **Certification of Carbon removals**

▶ **EU mission: A soil deal for Europe** (R&I calls)

▶ **Social resilience and Women in rural areas**

- European **care strategy** (2022) highlighting rural
- Study on **working conditions** of farm employees



▶ **Entrepreneurship and social economy (SE)**

- European social economy **action plan**
- **Good practices for rural** under "Transition pathway for proximity and social economy"
- Funding for **consortia in SE in rural areas**

▶ **Education for youth**

- WG education & values
- Rural under school education platform & online teacher community

▶ **Toolkit for producer groups in GIs**

▶ **Thematic group for forest-dominant municipalities**



# The rural action plan: 6 cross-cutting actions

More and easier  
to access rural  
data

▶ Better statistics: twice more indicators, geospatial datasets, new legislation on population statistics

▶ Proposed method to define functional rural areas

▶ Rural observatory on-line

Easier access to info on  
funds

▶ Toolkit on rural funds

Mechanism in place to  
rural-proof policies

▶ Rural proofing included in 'Better regulation guidelines', toolbox, methodologies

Improving governance

▶ Rural Pact operational at EU level, pacts being adopted at national and regional levels

# The Rural Pact

## All building blocks are operational



+2460

Rural Pact  
Community  
Members by  
Nov 2023

+120

Commitments to  
act



Rural pact  
support  
office  
created  
(Dec 2022)

Rural Pact  
Coordination  
Group



Rural pact  
Coordination  
group created  
(June 2023)

Welcome to the Rural  
Pact community platform!

Join us



Rural pact  
community  
platform  
launched  
(June 2023)

# The Rural Pact in figures

One EU-wide community with a clear ambition



## Amplify rural voices through

- 2 Rural Pact Conferences
- 1 High-level Policy Forum
- 2 Policy labs
- 1 Policy briefing translated in 24 languages



## Enable networking through

- 1 online Rural Pact community platform
- 10 policy & networking events
- 1 magazine translated in 24 languages



## Encourage voluntary commitments

- 121 commitments to act towards the shared goals of the rural vision
- 70% expressed by from organisations –
- 30% by individuals

## Connected through the Rural Pact online Community Platform...

- > 650+ [registered members](#)
- > 140 news, 100 events, 50 good practices, 7 community groups, 5 publications

## ... with an emphasis on Rural Revitalisation

- > 110 news, 73 events, 37 good practices, 5 publications

# Looking forward – EU Rural action plan

## *Some key milestones*

### **Stronger** - Empowerment, services, innovation, youth

- > Improving the **revitalisation platform**
- > Programming **rural research** under **Horizon EU work programmes 2025-2027**
- > Continued **networking for LEADER**
- > Startup Village **forum in 2024**
- > Finalising **study on youth participation in ERASMUS**

### **Prosperous** – Economy

- > Continue work on the **social economy and formal education in rural areas**
- > **Review** of the implementation **of the youth guarantee** addressing barriers to equity

### **Connected** - Physical and digital connectivity

- > **SMARTA-NET final conference** Autumn 2024
- > Improving the **regulatory environment for digital transformation**
- > support to **digital innovation for agriculture** and other rural sectors (Horizon, DEP)

### **Resilient** – Environment and social

- > continue work on **rural energy communities** through the **new facility launched in 2024**
- > new **Mission soil calls** to enhance soil health
- > Developing **methodologies for rewetting peatland**



# Looking forward – Rural Pact

- **Keep up facilitation through the Rural pact support office**
- **Improve the community platform**
- **Sustain efforts at national level**
  - Using policy brief “**Making the rural pact happen in Member States**”
  - Developing inspiring “**Country pages**”
  - Raising awareness through the **Rural Pact Coordination Group** and **national experts**
  - Cooperating with **international organisations** to engage States
  - **Government-level commitments**
- **Going more local**
  - **Policy lab on translating the pact at local level** (22 May 2024)
  - Working closely with those who committed
  - Good practice webinars
- **Rural Pact conference 2025**



# Looking forward – EU policies



**Contributions from  
EU institutions &  
stakeholders**

# Ways forward – Questions for reflection

- ▶ What are the **key challenges** arising from depopulation, ongoing transitions and structural changes?
- ▶ What are the best ways to **address them** in a targeted way?
- ▶ How to **enhance financial support** for rural areas and communities through EU, national and regional funds, including improving synergies and complementarities?
- ▶ What is needed to **improve financing, quality of delivery and effectiveness** via e.g. CLLD/LEADER?
- ▶ How to improve the **monitoring and assessment of the resources** from the different EU funds and programmes?
- ▶ What is needed to **improve access to support** for the final beneficiary?
- ▶ What can be done for wider implementation of the **rural proofing mechanism** at all levels?
- ▶ What are the best policy tools to ensure **institutional, governance and integrated support** for rural areas?
- ▶ How to improve the **availability of policy-relevant rural statistics and data**, without increasing the administrative burden?

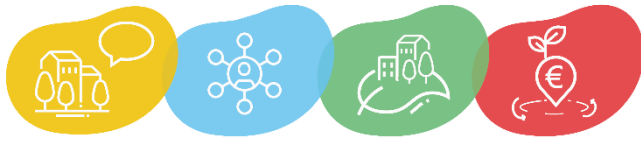
# Ways forward - Opportunities for debate

- Strategic Dialogue on the future of EU agriculture (January to summer 2024)
- Cohesion forum (11-12 April 2024)
- Rural Pact coordination group (16 April + Autumn 2024)
- Workshop on future CAP – Solidarity and rural communities (May 2024)
- EU CAP Network Assembly and related events (2024)
- Two Rural Pact policy labs (Q4 2024)
- Public consultations and engagement activities on EU policies



# Discussion

- ▶ What is your opinion about the key achievements and ways forward as presented in the report?
- ▶ How do you see your organisations contributing to the reflections on the ways forward? How do you see the wider rural pact community contributing?



## Join the Rural Pact Community and online platform

[https://ruralpact.rural-vision.europa.eu/become-member\\_en](https://ruralpact.rural-vision.europa.eu/become-member_en)



<https://www.rural-vision.europa.eu>



# Be informed, participate and take action

## Steps

1

Join the Rural Pact Community

Form: <https://ruralpact.rural-vision.europa.eu/become-member>

2

Take action contributing to the vision & share it with us

Form:

<https://ec.europa.eu/eusurvey/runner/TheRuralPactCommitmentCanvas>

