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
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Rural pact coordination group - 16 April 2024

#RuralVisionEU
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

Communication from the EC
(June 2021)

Vice-president of EC
Demography & Democracy
Dubravka Šuica

Commissioner (Agriculture)
Janusz Wojciechowski

Commissioner (Cohesion and reforms)
Elisa Ferreira

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The rural vision by 2040

Shared goals for 2040

Rural action plan (EC) & Rural Pact (everyone)

EU policies

**Stronger**
Empowered communities
Access to services
Social innovation

**Connected**
Digital connectivity
Transport links and new mobilities

**Prosperous**
Diversification of economic activities
Sustainable food production

**Resilient**
Resilience to climate change
Environmental resilience
Social resilience

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The long-term vision for EU’s rural areas

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**’
EU policies contributions to rural areas


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

Rural Pact Support Office
- Policy Action Labs
- Webinars
- Good Practices
- Animation Networking
- Website & Social Media
- Magazines, Newsletters
- Commitments to act

Rural Pact Coordination Group
Rural Pact Community Members by Nov 2023
+2460

Rural Pact Community Platform launched (June 2023)

Rural Pact Coordination Group created (June 2023)

+120 Commitments to act

Rural pact support office created (Dec 2022)

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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

*Data collected on 10 April 2024.
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

**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*

**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)*
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

Questions for reflection

Debate on post-2027 EU policies (> Mid-2025)
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://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