

## **RED calls for an integrated, global and CLLD territorial approach to the European Rural Pact**

*"A plea for a Europe that is able to meet the expectations of all citizens and players in rural areas (see definition of RED), by offering them a mobilising European policy framework and appropriate resources to : Act in cohesion at these levels, cooperate among themselves and between rural and urban areas".*

### **Consider**

- The **urgent and decisive** responses needed to meet the social, climatic, ecological and economic challenges of a troubled world undergoing profound change... The commitment of communities in the diversity of **rural areas** is essential.
- The urgent need to **convince European citizens (in particular) in rural areas, through tangible actions and public policies, that it is possible to act through collective action "with and through Europe" for a chosen future that is "sustainable and based on solidarity"**. This is an urgent need, once again expressed by **the vote of rural citizens at the European elections in June 2024**.

#### **By voting, citizens are calling for :**

- A **clarification of European social and economic objectives** in a globalised Europe which is less protective
- **More cohesion**. They expect this issue to be effectively reflected in the programmes of the Member States and the regions. Article 174 of the Lisbon Treaty expresses what is at stake here and necessity!
- **Genuine consideration for their fundamental rights** (*Charter of Fundamental Rights, etc.*) and the social rights base)
- **RED's declaration** at the COR conference in Leipzig on **5 and 6 May 2003**. RED has already called for the **recognition of rural territories as development poles, and for them to be included and taken into consideration, in these terms, in cohesion policy**,
- The RED communication "**For a European rural development policy**", which was included in the **opening declaration of the Salzburg conference** on rural development in **November 2003**.
- The **challenges and objectives of mobilising RED in favour of a European Rural Agenda, in particular** :
  - A first public appeal during the seminar "**For a white paper on rurality**" that RED co-organised with the **European Committee of the Regions** on **19 April 2016**. The organisations of the European Countryside Movement in support.
  - A second Appeal at the "**CORK 2.0**" Assembly in **September 2016**
- The **European Countryside Movement's September 2016 communication in favour of a European Rural Agenda**. A statement in support of the RED call.
- The **conclusions of the seminar held on 4 July 2017 "in favour of a European Rural Agenda"**. Co-organised by the European Committee of the Regions and RED, this seminar concluded in particular on the need to have such a policy framework (*strategy, integrated financial framework and associated programmes, continuous evaluative monitoring...*) in order to:
  - Stimulate the objectives of territorial cohesion and inter-territorial cooperation (rural-urban...) by recognition and promotion of rural areas as centres of development and innovation,
  - **Giving substance to Rural Proofing**: The presentation of initiatives from Quebec, Finland... in references...



- The vote by the EU Parliament on **3 October 2018**, at the instigation of the RUMRA intergroup, of a resolution in favour of a European Rural Agenda.
- The publication of Rural Agendas by the governments: **French on 20 September 2019, Catalan on 22 May 2022** and the commitment by the summit of the Grande Région to create a rural reference centre.
- RED's new call for a European rural AGENDA in January 2020
- The communication from the President of the European Commission on the long-term vision for rural regions on **30 June 2021** and as preliminaries: RED's contribution to the June 2020 public consultation, the conclusions of the **COR** seminar **co-organised with the "Rumra-Smart Villages" intergroup, RED, Euromontana on 27 November 2020** "The implementation of a Rural Agenda is urgent", RED's press releases following this conference and the **Leipzig** conference **on 26 November 2020** (Territorial Agenda) at which RED was a speaker...
- The regulation laying down common provisions, which advocates integrated territorial development and the CLLD approach (as a follow-up to the common strategic framework) for an increased number of funds, but without the EAFRD (except for LEADER).
- RED's call (06-2022) for an ambitious inclusion of culture in the European Rural Pact and the European Rural Action Plan
- The debates at the European Rural Pact conferences in June 2022 (Brussels) and September 2023 (SIGÜENZA) and the work of the European Rural Pact coordination committee, of which RED is a member.

### Noting

"An approach to the Long Term Vision through the prism of RED's policy proposals".

That the long-term vision for rural areas, **communicated after approval of the 2021-2027 regulations and programme**, is more a collection of observations and intentions than a policy document. Indeed, it expresses **no recommendation for a strategic framework for communication (integrated territorial development and CLLD)**, which would be likely to stimulate subsidiarity in this sense:

- A strategic analysis broadly shared by RED members (role and importance of rural areas underestimated and potential insufficiently developed, lack of services/health, education, digital connections, etc., active role of rural areas in green and digital transitions, central role in the implementation of the 20 principles of the European social rights base, etc.).
- A statistical representation of rural areas that appears to be limited to low-density areas. An option that weakens the proactive perception of the diversity of rural territories: **30% of the population in the current communication compared to 58% for the 2014-2020 programming period (Update DG Agri 2014)**.
- An inspiring development scenario "**Stronger, Connected, Prosperous, Resilient Rural Areas**", underpinned by a holistic approach but without the formal expression of the aforementioned policy framework.
- Structural and functional guidelines in line with RED's political guidelines: **encouraging participative governance, seeking to improve the quality of life of rural communities (digitisation for better deployment and access to services, cultural activities, etc.), promoting public-private partnerships and the establishment of social and cooperative enterprises, support for innovation and the sharing of knowledge as well as equal opportunities, greater consideration for border regions but limited to mobility issues, consideration for the diversity of rural regions with a particular focus on remote and less developed regions....**
- Territorial development strategies are seen as instruments for taking account of specific local characteristics, **but without a recommended structural framework underpinning the long-term vision!**
- The challenge of bringing CAP strategic plans into line with Objective 5 of cohesion policy in order to promote integrated territorial development: **An analysis of Member States' CAP strategic plans reveals a failure to take into account**
- A proposal for functional instruments in line with the objective of the Rural Agenda, **without as yet retaining the title and the organising power of subsidiarity**: This entails the risk of an operational reading of the long-term vision which could remain stuck on a thematic or even sectoral approach (a reality observed, in dominant practice, over the 2014-2020 programming period) : **The added value of**



integrated territorial development and the CLLD/LEADER approach rather timidly promoted (*rural action plan...*)...

- **A proposal for instruments to promote progress towards the long-term vision: European Rural Pact, European Rural Action Plan, Rural Proofing, Rural Observatory, etc.**  
The European Rural Pact proposed as the first area for reflection at European level, with recommendations for debate and recommendations at the level of the Member States and their regions and local communities.

## In view of the foregoing :

### RED recommends :

- **To replace the concept of rural regions with that of rural territories (RED definition)**
- To organise the strategic and operational approach to the long-term vision, bearing in mind the challenge and need for a European Rural Agenda. As a structural basis for organisation :
  - **The European Rural Pact** expressing the **political and strategic framework**
  - **The Rural action plan** formalising **the operational framework programme**
  - **Rural Proofing** is more than just a test or evaluation device. It should be **promoted in a pro-active vehicle for the convergent mobilisation of all Community funds and programmes.** The regulation on common provisions has been developed into a regulatory framework and a tool for
  - **The European observatory** to measure progress as it happens and feed rural proofing
- **Integrated, global and CLLD territorial development as a strategic regulatory framework.**
- **To structure the European Rural Pact around two interacting issues:**
  - Building on the integrated sustainable development of the diversity of rural areas: revealing and enhancing their potential resilience and their potential to meet the European challenges of the present and the future....
  - Promoting and supporting sustainable agricultural and forestry approaches at local level: Responding to Stimulate innovation and the adaptation of training to changes in professions, in order to increase the number of people in work...

## RED proposes to organise the European Rural Pact around :

### ➤ Three strategic objectives

*"Optimising the development of rural areas and their responses to the major European challenges of transition".*

**Objective 1:** To generalise "**global and integrated**" territorial development by focusing on the involvement of local communities: CLLD

**Expected results:** To support the development and implementation of integrated sustainable development projects in each rural area based on a shared political ambition for local development. Territorial projects organised around : interacting issues and objectives, a multi-annual action programme, an implementation strategy, etc.

**Some examples of integrated content (Com RED 2020, Tribune culture de 2022):** territorial energy mix, economy/entrepreneurship/training, rural tourism, sustainable housing, basic services/community life/intergenerations, integrated cultural and cultural mediation approaches, territorial food strategies, etc.

**Objective 2:** Stimulate and support the territorialisation of farming and forestry businesses and the integration of their development plans into local strategies.

**Expectation:** consolidate (family) farms and forestry businesses by facilitating generational renewal and their response to local challenges: food, climate and energy transition, water and biodiversity, digital, land, etc.



**Among the structuring objectives:** The green deal as part of territorial cooperation, with a view to enhancing and integrating farm management and facilitating consideration, generational renewal, development of agricultural and forestry assets, development of income and investment resources, simplification through multi-level and multi-actor cooperation, etc.

### **Objective 3: Boost training and the exchange of knowledge and experience to encourage innovation and the development/adaptation of professions**

**Expected. Supporting and accompanying local communities :**

- Learning about traditional rural trades and how they are changing, the emergence of new trades and practices (teleworking) by organising links between players to help meet new local needs and challenges (**coworking**).
- development of initial and continuing vocational training (*teaching and training systems and standards/targeted work-linked training*) and exchanges for innovation: **innovation brokerage platform in rural areas**.
- **Developing local engineering by pooling resources and promoting exchange and cooperation networks**  
**The development of local cooperative platforms to support innovation and knowledge sharing, as well as mediation (third-party centres, etc.) at the heart of the issues at stake**

## ➤ **Two political imperatives for structural organisation**

"Facilitating and boosting networking, multi-stakeholder and multi-level approaches".

### **Imperative 1: Boost and support cooperation between players and regions: integrated regional projects as catalysts**

**Whereas:**

- **Strengthen intelligent cooperation and inter-territorial exchanges** (regional, cross-border...), between players and territories...
- **Co-constructing innovative solutions based on mutual recognition of the specific nature and added value of urban, rural and peri-urban project areas:** multi-stakeholder operational groups, cross-border and transnational networks, etc.

### **Second imperative: Define and implement operational programmes for infrastructure, communication services, mobility, etc.**

**Expected.** Strengthening connectivity, but also mobility within and between regions, and accessibility for all citizens from an intergenerational and cultural perspective: programmes to support the development of Smart Villages or Smart Rural Territories; broadband deployment in rural areas and the eradication of white areas for mobile telephony; multimodal mobility (rail, public transport, soft mobility, etc.), cross-border or international routes, etc.

## ➤ **A functional and financial strategy**

### **1) A global, participative and cross-functional strategic approach**

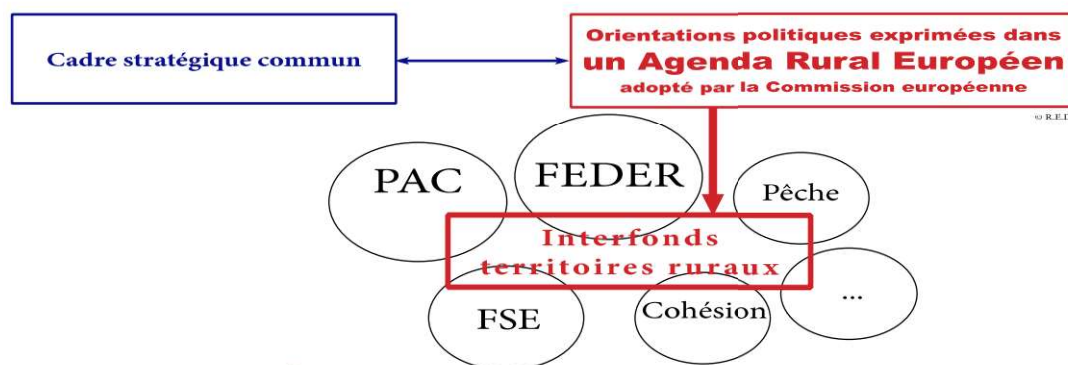
- Multi-level participatory governance as a frame of reference: **CLLD approach**
- A cross-cutting approach to **the added value of rural areas** in European policies that ensures a fair share for rural areas and players: **territorial cohesion...**

**Respect for 3 principles:** Rural-urban balance; Equal rights for all citizens (cf. Charter of Fundamental Rights); Equality of resources and practices between all players and territories (pooling of skills, etc.).

### **2) A "strategic and financial" political reference framework: A rural agenda and an Interfund**

- **Include the guidelines of a long-term vision/White Paper in a European Rural Agenda:** policy framework, measures, contractualisation of objectives, etc.
- **Mobilise, in a convergent and proactive way,** all the programmes and budgetary resources of the European Union to finance the strategies of the territories (CLLD): **An Interfund to organise**

**interrelations between the funds** and minimum financial reserves in the FESI for integrated development/ CLLD approach.



Modernisation,  
cohérence et  
efficacité

**Expected marker:** minimum 5% for funds under the common provisions regulation (*ERDF/Cohesion Fund, ESF+, FEAMPA, etc.*) and 10% for the EAFRD.



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