



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

22 April 2026

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Good practice webinar on territorial instruments

#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 - Towards stronger, connected, resilient and prosperous rural areas by 2040

The rural vision now



European Commission
2024-2029 term



Executive Vice-President
Cohesion & Reforms
Raffaele Fitto



Commissioner
Agriculture & Food
Christophe Hansen



European Commission Communication: A long-term Vision for the EU's Rural Areas - Towards stronger, connected, resilient and prosperous rural areas by 2040 (June 2021)

A new vision for agriculture and food, support for rural areas (Feb 2025)

Working in synergies with the rural vision 2040

Four priority areas



Attractive
agri-food
sector



Competitive
and resilient
sector



Future-proof
sector



**Vibrant & well-
connected rural areas**



**Commissioner
Agriculture & Food
Christophe Hansen**

Actions for vibrant and well-connected rural areas

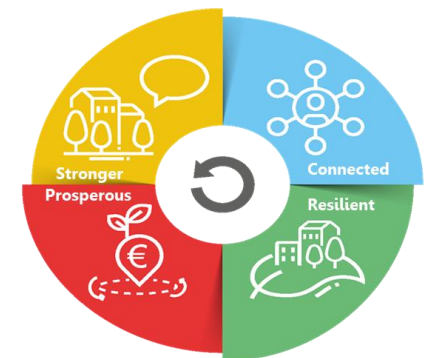
- > Enhance **synergies and complementarities**
- > **EU Rural Action Plan update in 2026**
- > Strengthen the **Rural Pact**
- > Further operationalise the **rural proofing** principle
- > Strengthen **participatory, local development tools**, such as **LEADER/CLLD** and **Smart Villages**
- > Further develop the concept of **functional rural areas**
- > Address the targeted spread of **disinformation in rural areas**



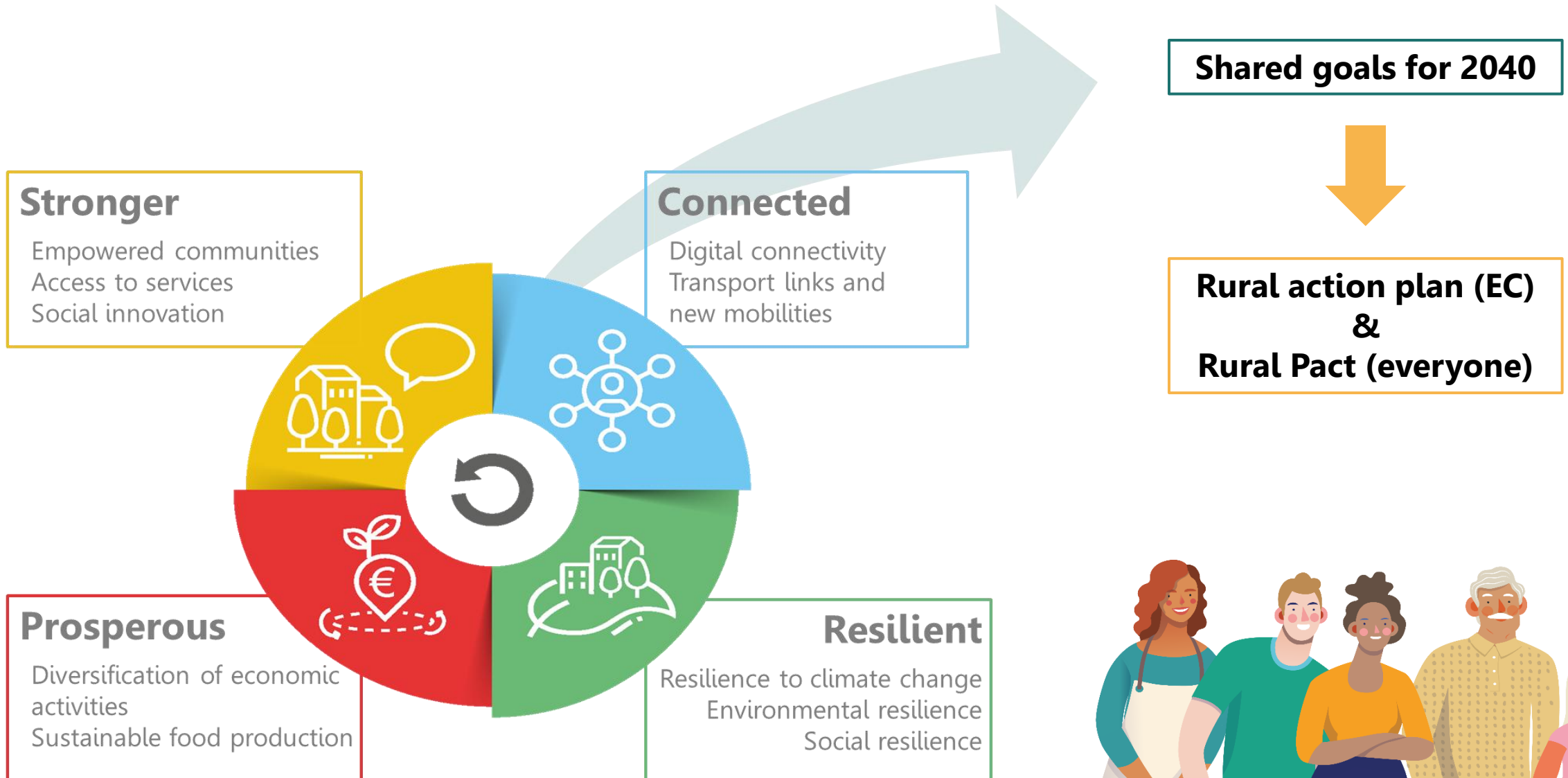
The rural vision shared goals

10 SHARED GOALS FOR 2040

1. **Attractive spaces**, developed in harmonious **territorial development**
2. Engaged in **multi-level** and **place-based governance**
3. Providers of **food security**, economic **opportunities**, goods and **services** for wider society
4. Dynamic communities focusing on **well-being**
5. **Inclusive communities**
6. Flourishing sources of **nature**
7. Fully benefiting from **digital innovation**
8. **Entrepreneurial, innovative** and **skilled** people
9. Lively places equipped with efficient, accessible and affordable **public and private services**
10. Places of **diversity**



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



The rural action plan: flagship initiatives

EU RURAL ACTION PLAN

9 Flagship initiatives

-  1. **Rural revitalisation platform**
-  2. **Research and innovation** for rural communities
-  3. Sustainable multimodal **mobility** best practices for rural areas
-  4. Rural **digital futures**
-  5. Support rural municipalities in **energy transition** and fighting climate change
-  6. Climate action in peatland through **carbon farming**
-  7. **EU mission**: a soil deal for Europe
-  8. **Social resilience** and **women** in rural areas
-  9. **Entrepreneurship** and **social economy** in rural areas



The rural action plan: 24 thematic actions



- ▶ **Rural revitalisation platform launched**
- ▶ **Research and innovation for rural communities**
 - **60 multi-actor** research projects under Horizon EU
 - European **Start-up village forum** launched
- ▶ **Networking for LEADER** (EU CAP Network) **and Smart villages** (SmartRural 21 & 27)
- ▶ **Study on land-use for sustainable agriculture** working on recommendations for local planning and zoning
- ▶ **Youth:**
 - Getting more rural young people in **ERASMUS**



- ▶ **Networking on mobility** for rural communities under SMARTA-NET
- ▶ Urban mobility plans being updated with **more focus on rural-urban linkages**
- ▶ **Rural Digital Futures**
 - **€23.5 billion** invested in **connectivity** in market failure areas
 - Pilot on digital education in remote areas "Learning from the extremes"
- ▶ **Broadband competency office network** acting for improved connectivity in market failure areas
 - Capacity building/+advice



- ▶ **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)
 - Funding for local/regional **living labs** and **lighthouses**
- ▶ **Social resilience and Women in rural areas**
 - Raising awareness on the importance of care in rural areas (**European care strategy 2022**)



- ▶ **Entrepreneurship and social economy (SE)**
 - Providing **good practices for social economy in rural areas** under "Transition pathway for proximity and social economy"
 - Funding for **consortia in SE in rural areas**
- ▶ **Education for youth**
 - Dedicated **content for rural schools** under school education platform & online teacher community
- ▶ **Toolkit for producer groups in Geographical Indications**
- ▶ **Networking for forest-dominant municipalities**

Stronger



The rural revitalisation platform

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

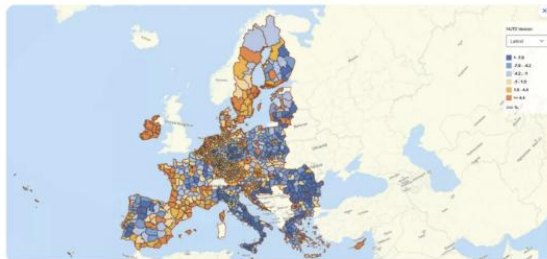
1. [LEADER/CLLD](#)
2. [Supporting smart villages strategies](#)
3. [Small places matter – Territorial agenda](#)
4. [Smart rural 21 – final report](#)
5. [Smart rural 27- final report](#)



Rural revitalisation platform

The rural revitalisation platform assembles, in one place, information and resources useful for rural communities facing population loss, ageing and demographic decline.

What is the rural revitalisation platform?

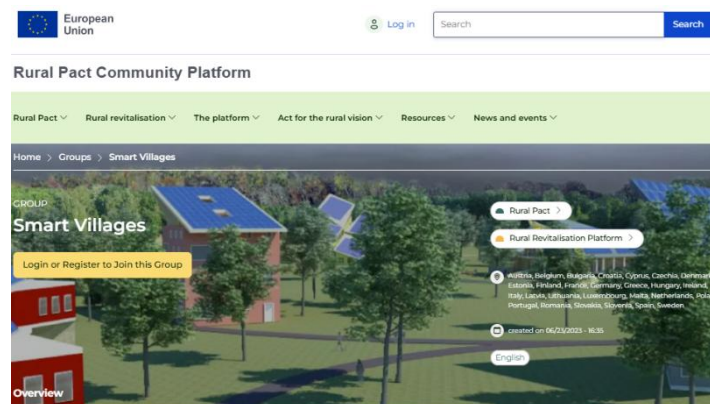


Total crude rate of population change (2000-2020) - NUTS3 level - Source: Rural observatory

It targets stakeholders working for the development of these areas at national, regional and local levels, including local actions groups, national rural and CAP networks, and stakeholder organisations, who play a key role in sharing, translating and adapting knowledge available at European level and in other countries, regions and villages to make them useful to local actors.

In practice, rural revitalisation is one of the two "focuses" of the [Rural Pact community platform](#), that provides a collaborative space for all members of the Rural Pact community, irrespective of the type of rural areas they are acting for.

[Discover the platform](#)



204 Members | 18 Discussions

Resilient



Flagship: Support rural municipalities in energy transition and fighting climate change

1. The creation of the Rural Energy Communities Advisory Hub (New)
2. The creation of synergies on rural areas in the Covenant of Mayors
3. Address rural areas in the New European Bauhaus
4. **The use of structural funding to finance the renovation wave**



The rural action plan: horizontal actions

EU RURAL ACTION PLAN

6 Horizontal actions

1. The EU Rural Observatory ([more](#))
2. Improved Statistics on rural areas
3. Functional Rural Areas
4. Rural Proofing at EU level
5. Rural toolkit on EU funding ([more](#))
6. Rural Pact

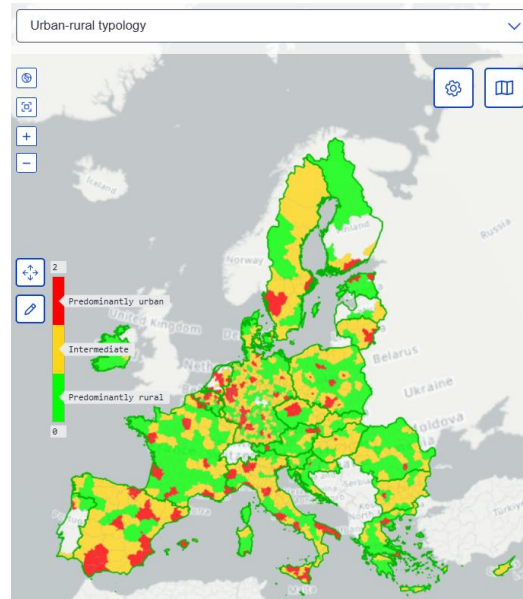


The rural action plan: horizontal actions

EU Rural Observatory



- > Offers relevant statistics, indicators and analyses
- > Supports knowledge production - important source of information for rural proofing
- > Improves collection and dissemination of data related to EU rural areas - provides evidence for policymaking
- > The data covers economic, social and environmental dimensions



<https://observatory.rural-vision.europa.eu/?lng=en&ctx=RUROBS>

Rural Toolkit on EU funding



- > Comprehensive guide to EU funding and support opportunities for rural areas
- > Intended for local authorities, institutions and stakeholders, businesses and individuals
- > Collects existing EU funds, programmes and other support initiatives
- > Features practical examples and case studies, as well as practical guidance and knowledge

Financing opportunities (29)

EU initiatives – direct application		
EIT	SMP - SME Pillar	CERV
LIFE	SMP - EUROCLUSTERS	Horizon Europe Cluster 2
5GSC	b-solutions	Just Transition Platform
CREA	EEN	Horizon Europe Cluster 5
Horizon Europe Cluster 6	JRC/DG REGIO Peer-Reviews	NEB Facility
C4T Groundwork	CBE JU	



<https://funding.rural-vision.europa.eu/?lng=en>
[Strat-board](#)
[Handbook on territorial development strategies](#)

The rural action plan: horizontal actions

EU RURAL ACTION PLAN

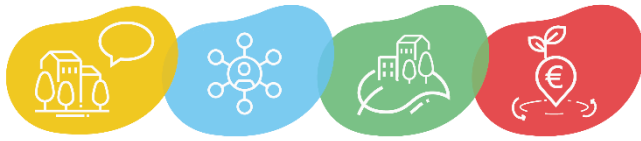
6 Horizontal actions

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[The long-term vision for the EU's rural areas: key achievements and ways forward](#)

[Rural vision website](#)



Join the Rural Pact Community and online platform

https://ruralpact.rural-vision.europa.eu/become-member_en



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

