



Annual Work Plan 2026

Rural Pact Support Office

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Team leader, Rural Pact Support Office (RPSO)

RPCG Meeting 07

5 May 2026



The Rural Pact – a space to work together

RURAL PACT

More **4 000** members

27 EU Member States & other

7 Governments committed

13 Community Groups

Rural Pact

Rural Pact Coordination Group

Rural Pact Support Office

Community Groups

Youth

Energy

Tourism

Culture & creativity

Depopulation

Innovating rural policy

Mobility

Social Economy

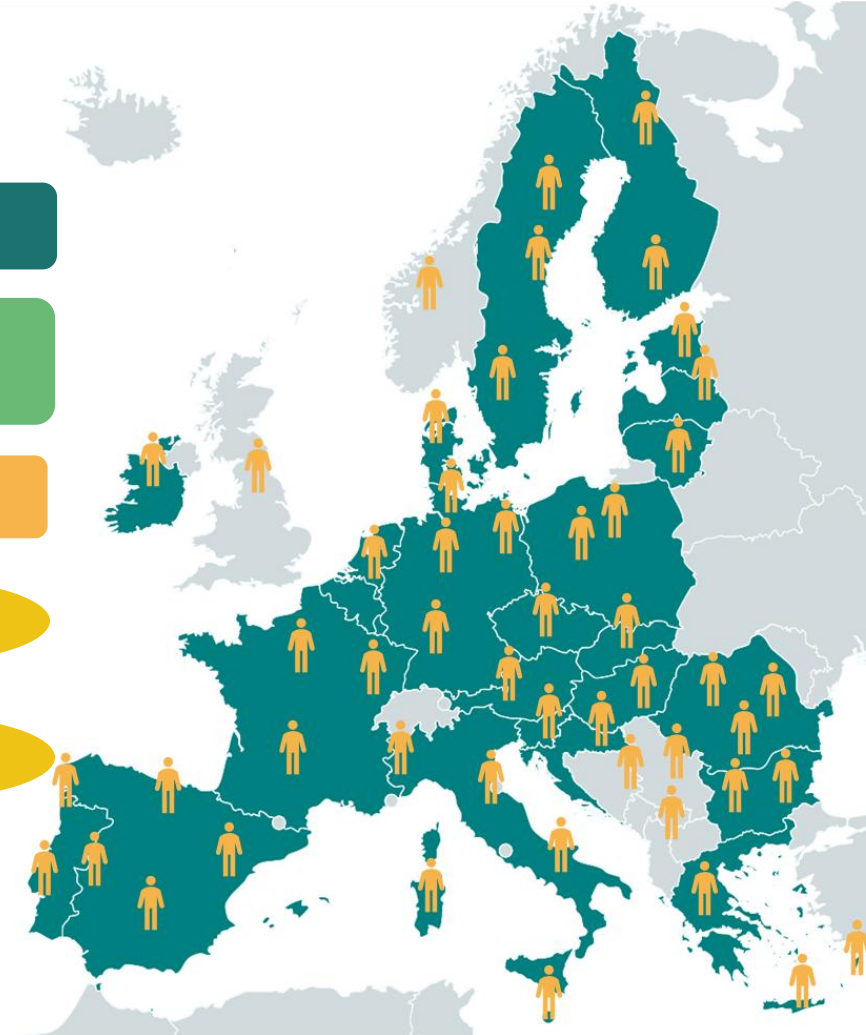
Migrants

Mountains

Women

Smart Villages

RPCG

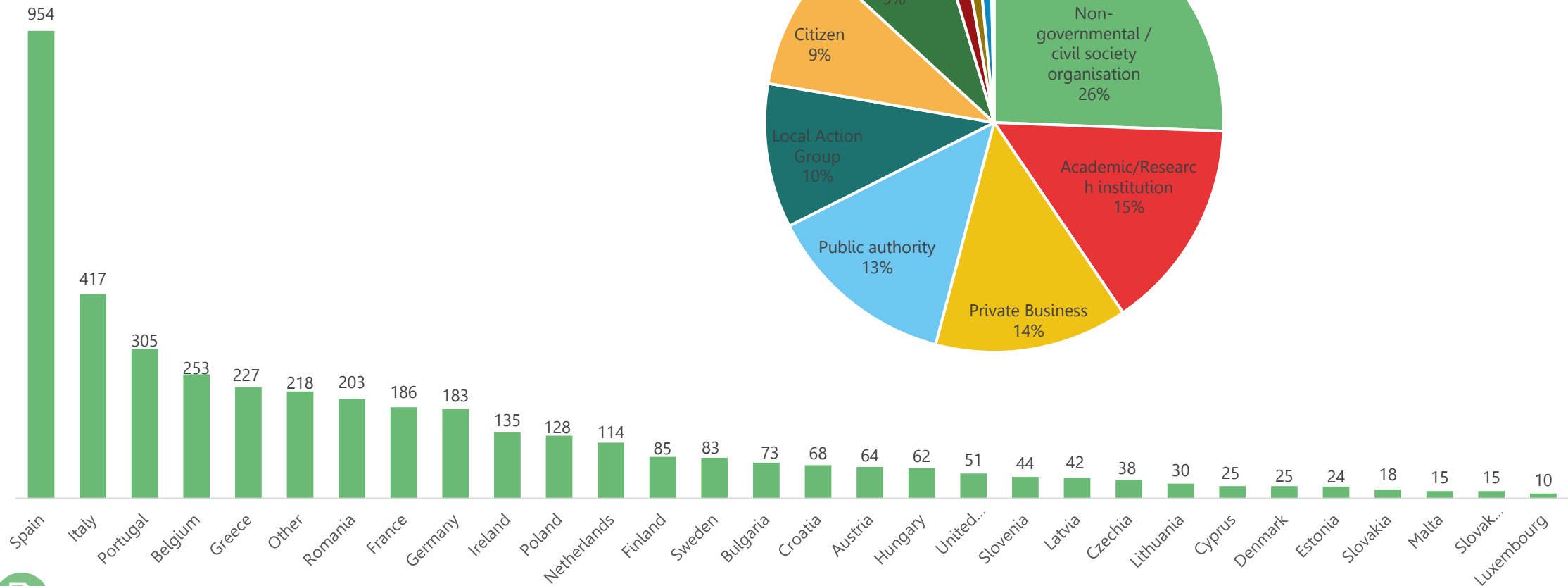


Rural Pact: https://ruralpact.rural-vision.europa.eu/index_en

The Rural Pact – a space to work together

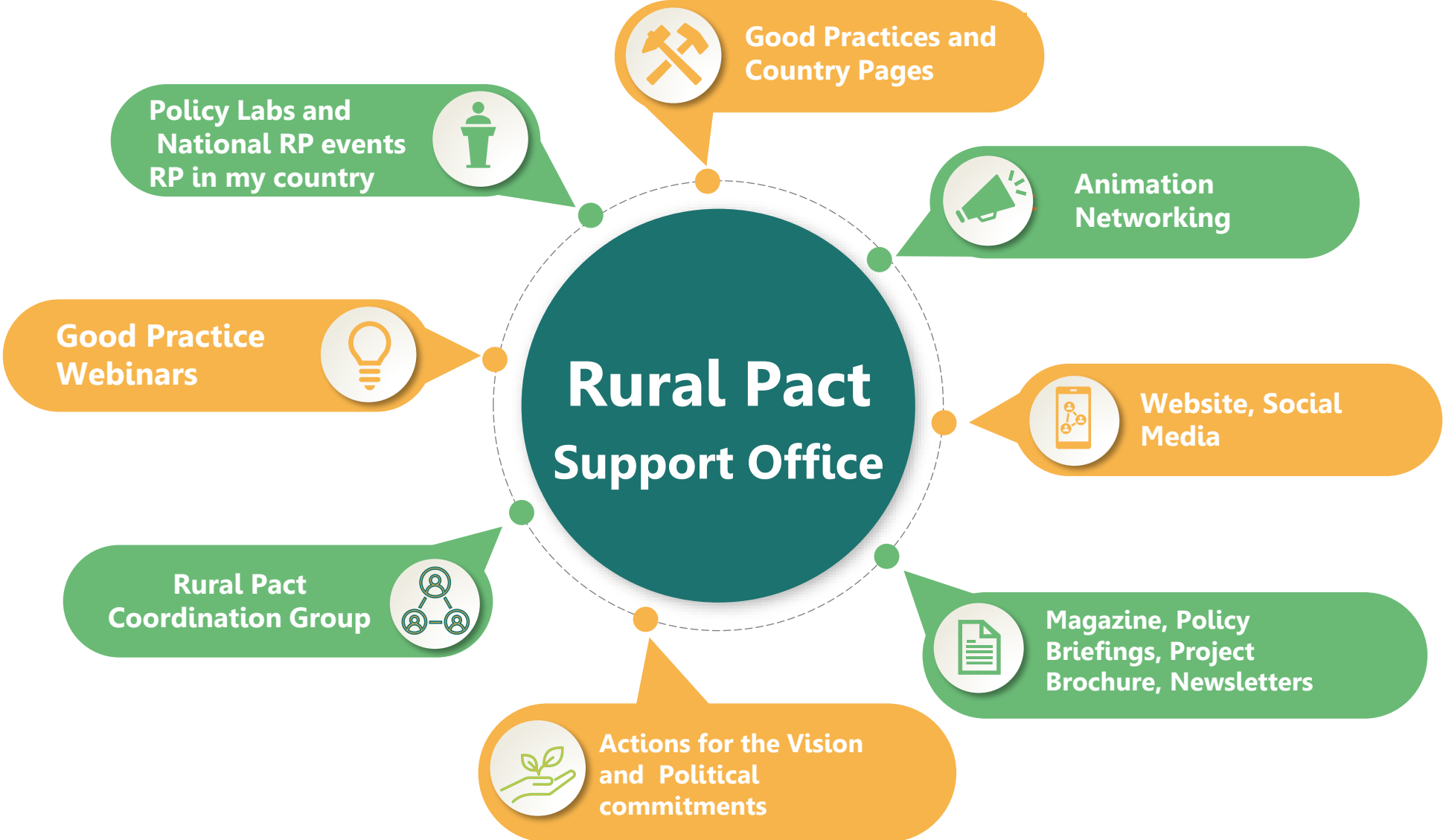
By 15 April 2026
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**RURAL
PACT**



Rural Pact: https://ruralpact.rural-vision.europa.eu/index_en

The Rural Pact Support Office



Activities in 2026 (Focus)



Providing a space to **exchange about how to respond comprehensively to rural needs**, promoting the development of **integrated strategies for rural areas**, and inspiring the **future NRPPs**, with good practices of innovative interventions in various domains;



Build capacities of Rural Pact community members to take a proactive role in the partnership to be created on the development of the NRPP in their countries, to favour a comprehensive response to rural community needs.

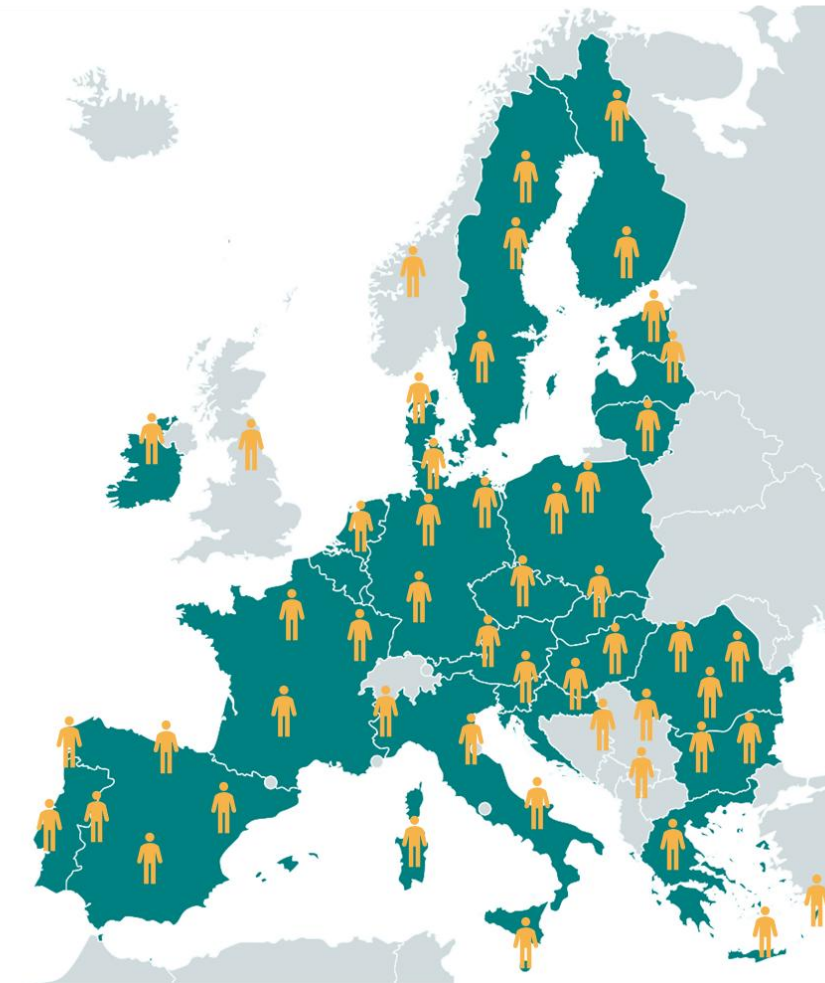
Activities in 2026 (National level work)

Advance with Rural Pact in Member States

A network of 26 RPSO national partners

- ▶ Raise awareness of the Rural Pact (mapping, meetings, missions)
- ▶ Help strengthen participation of rural actors in the Rural Pact
- ▶ RP in my country

National partners		
Austria Austrian LEADER Forum >	Belgium, Flanders LEADER Network Flanders >	Belgium, Wallonia Walloon LAG Network >
Bulgaria Bulgarian Network of Local Action Groups >	Croatia LEADER Network Croatia >	Cyprus Union of Cyprus Communities >
Czechia National Network of Local Action Groups of the Czech Republic >	Denmark National Council for Rural Affairs >	Estonia Estonian LEADER Union >
Finland Finnish Village Movement Association >	France Association LEADER France >	Germany Association LEADER Germany >
Hungary Rural Workshop Foundation >	Italy CREA - Council for Agricultural Research and Economics (National Rural Network) >	Latvia Latvian Rural Forum >
Lithuania Lithuanian Rural Communities Union >	Poland Polish Network of Local Action Groups >	Portugal Minha Terra Network >
Romania LEADER Federation Romania >	Slovakia National Network of Local Action Groups of the Slovak Republic >	Slovenia Slovenian Rural Development Network >
Spain Spanish Network for Rural Development >		



Created with mapchart.net

Rural Pact events

Good Practice Webinars (online)

- > Territorial instruments - (LEADER/CLLD, Integrated Territorial Investments, and Smart Villages): lessons for the future: 22 Apr 2026 ([more info](#))
- > **Generational renewal beyond farming: Empowering youth, supporting elders:** 10 Jun 2026 ([EoI open until 22 May](#))
- > **Unlocking rural competitiveness** (17 September – **tbc**)
- > **Rural resilience in a changing world** (26 November – **tbc**)



Rural Pact events

High-level Rural Policy Forum

- > Focus on Integrated national and regional rural strategies and LEADER (Ireland) – 3&4 November 2026



Policy Lab (in person – 100 pax)

- > Anchoring rural areas in the National and Regional Partnership Plans (Brussels): 03 June 2026 ([more info](#))
- > Tentative: Boosting the rural economy with the NRPPs (Finland): 29 Sept – 01 Oct (tbc)



Rural Pact events

National Rural Pact Events



FRANCE: Under discussion with national stakeholders. **End of the year - tbc**

Rural Pact in my country (webinar)



LATVIA: Integrated national rural strategies in Latvia **11 June 2026 (hybrid) - tbc**



POLAND: Engaging stakeholders in the NRPP process in Poland. **19 June 2026**



Flanders- BE: Under discussion with national stakeholders **date tbc (2nd half of year)**



HUNGARY: Under discussion with national stakeholders **date tbc (2nd half of year)**



Rural Pact publications



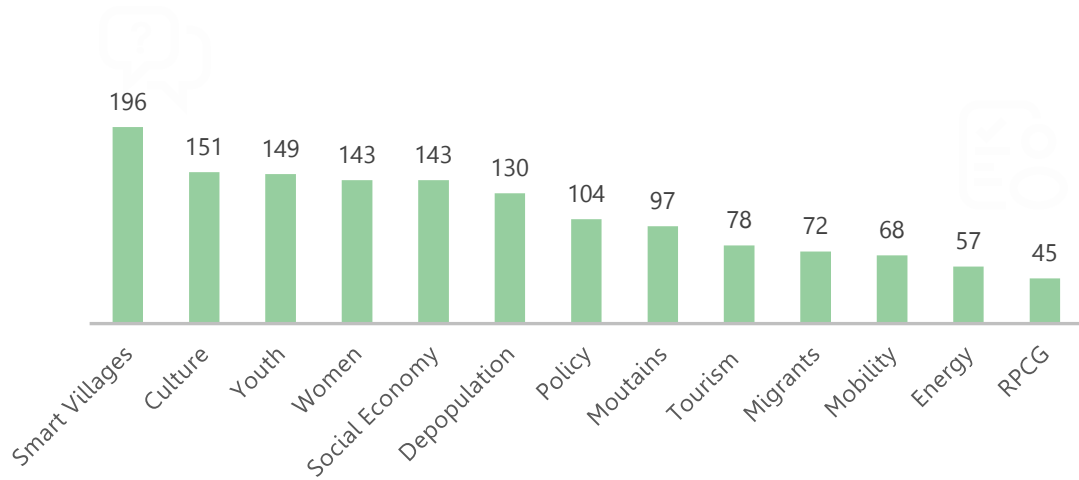
- **Newsletter**
 - > 11 editions per year
- **Rural Vision Magazine**
 - Available in all official EU languages
 - > Edition #4 (in 2026)
- **Policy Briefing**
 - Available in all official EU languages
 - > **How to foster integrated approaches for rural areas in NRPPs**
- **Project Brochure (quarterly) NEW!**
 - > Place-based innovation in rural areas (March 2026)
 - > Housing (June 2026)
 - > Integrated rural development (September 2026)
 - > Generational renewal beyond farming (December 2026)

Community Groups

13 Community Groups in the platform

Energy, Culture, tourism, smart villages, depopulation, innovating rural policy, mobility, social economy, youth, migrants, mountain, women, smart villages

- > **692 members** joined community groups until 15 March
- > **43 discussions** were posted across all CGs in Q1



Good Practices & News

Good Practices

- > **40 GPs per year**
- > **Types:** projects; methodologies; case studies; policy; tools

News

- > **News items** (funding, events, policy developments, etc)
- > **In-depth articles** (RPSO or other Authors on publications, event outcome, etc)

Home > Good practices > Good Practice database

Filter results

Free text search

Enter keyword

Apply

Focus ▾

Topics ▾

Practice type ▾

Country ▾

Good Practice database

78 results


POLICY | 14 MAR 2025

Structured governance and information-sharing mechanisms improve Bratislava-Austria regional cooperation

A cross-border initiative – including a joint coordination office, regular mayors’ meetings and thematic working groups – strengthens urban-rural cooperation between Bratislava and Austrian rural regions.


Rural Pact Rural Revitalisation Platform

Connected rural areas, Stronger Rural Areas (+4) Austria, Slovakia



CASE STUDY | 14 MAR 2025

Volunteer-driven transport service enhances mobility options in rural Belgium



Hungarian Rural Pact initiated by civil society organisations

Twenty-one national organisations called for the launch of a joint effort – involving representatives from the institutional, academic, and civil sectors – to develop an integrated, long-term rural and agricultural strategy based on the broadest possible consensus. The call to action was adopted at a consultation meeting on 17 April 2026 in Budapest.

Participating organisations included rural and regional development, environmental and nature conservation, and agriculture actors.

A **Hungarian Rural Pact**, modelled after the European Rural Pact, could provide an **appropriate framework for the development of a long-term rural and agricultural strategy**. Therefore, the participating organisations are also initiating the launch of the Hungarian Rural Pact.

The agenda of the meeting reflected this objective: following opening remarks and introductions, Edina Ocsko, Vice-Chair of the **Rural Pact Coordination Group (RPSO)**, was invited to present the **European Rural Pact** process, its objectives, and operational model, providing inspiration for the Hungarian initiative. This was followed by the presentation, discussion, and **formal adoption of a Declaration**, as well as agreement on next steps and further communication.

As a next step, the **call to action will be sent directly to representatives of the government, institutional, and academic sectors** by the initiating



Image by Bianca Constantinescu

Castilla-La Mancha reverses demographic decline in depopulated rural areas through long-term policy commitment and territorial investment

The Spanish region Castilla-La Mancha had faced long-standing demographic challenges in its rural interior. Around three-quarters of its municipalities had lost population over recent decades, and many small towns’ population densities are far below the national average, reflecting sustained out-migration and population ageing.

In response to these challenges, the regional government implemented targeted policy responses establishing a comprehensive framework to reverse these trends. Read from the region’s Commissioner for Demographic Change about how long-term legislation, investment and integrated policies improved services, connectivity and opportunities.

A pioneering legislative commitment to addressing rural depopulation

Castilla-La Mancha was the first region in Europe to adopt a **comprehensive law** addressing rural depopulation through economic, social and tax measures. Approved unanimously by the regional Parliament in 2021, following broad citizen participation, the law takes a cross-cutting approach to ensuring that people living in sparsely populated areas can access opportunities and essential services. It takes a cross-cutting approach to ensuring that people living in sparsely populated areas can access opportunities and essential services.

The law includes measures to improve mobility and digital connectivity, facilitate access to housing, prioritise business creation, and introduce tax



© European Union, 2025
The region’s initiative from part of Castilla-La Mancha’s Minister



https://ruralpact.rural-vision.europa.eu/good-practice/search_en



News: https://ruralpact.rural-vision.europa.eu/news/search_en

Rural Pact Community Platform tools

Country pages

- > Examples, initiatives, and actions that realise the Pact at national and regional levels
- > **Austria, Portugal, Greece, Italy, and Lithuania**



Country list

Enter a keyword

Czechia	Finland	France	Germany
Ireland	Latvia	Poland	Spain
Sweden	The Netherlands		

Knowledge Hub

- > One-stop-shop for relevant resources to the EU rural vision, developed by key rural stakeholders
- > **100+ resources**
- > **Types:** tools; studies; guides; databases; research

Home > Knowledge hub

Knowledge hub

Rural Pact >
Rural Revitalisation Platform >
Stronger Rural Areas >
...

The knowledge hub is a one-stop-shop to access relevant tools, studies, guides, case studies, databases and research developed by key rural stakeholders and which are relevant to the long-term vision for rural areas. All publications developed in the context of the Rural Pact can be found [here](#).

Stronger rural areas

- > [Entrepreneurial and innovation ecosystems in rural areas: start-up village examples](#) (JRC, August 2024)
- > [Evaluation of the impact of LEADER towards the general objective 'balanced territorial development'](#) (European



Actions for the vision

Stakeholder actions

Voluntary stakeholder actions towards the shared goals of the rural vision

Types: policies & advocacy; capacity building & knowledge; events & networking; local projects; other

Who can submit an action: everyone, either in individual or organisational capacity; need to be/become member of the platform

Why submit an action?

- > Gain pan-European visibility for your action
- > Inspire others to act
- > Bring up key rural needs, demonstrate power of rural action, and influence political agendas

The screenshot displays the 'Rural Pact Community Platform' interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the European Union logo and a search bar. Below the navigation bar, the main content area is titled 'Rural Pact Community Platform' and includes a breadcrumb trail: 'Home > Actions for the rural vision > Commitments'. The main heading is 'Commitments', and there are 93 results displayed. On the left, a 'Filter results' section allows users to search by free text, submitted by, country, Rural Pact Objectives, status, stakeholder type, type of activity, and topics. The search results are listed in a grid format, showing the name of the organization, the title of the commitment, its status (e.g., Ongoing, Completed), and the submitter's name. Two examples are visible: 'Comunidade Intermunicipal do Alto Minho' with the title 'Collective Efficiency Strategy to Develop and Promote Rural Tourism' (Ongoing, Submitted by Jose Paulo Quatros) and 'ECOCLUB SA' with the title 'Eurocluster Rural Tourism Support Methodology' (Completed, Submitted by Frosso Dimitrakopoulou).



Expert work

RPSO expert support for

- > Rural Pact events organised by third parties;
- > scoping papers;
- > background papers;
- > reports and studies;
- > factsheets;
- > introducing the rural pact to third parties;
- > etc.



Mapping on the implementation of Smart Villages: Interview with key stakeholders



Expert support to the Conference The future of rural development policy after 2027

NEWS | 22 APR 2026

Celebrating LEADER/CLLD and looking to contribute to the Croatian NRPP

Rural Pact > Rural Revitalisation Platform > Stronger Rural Areas > ...

The LEADER community acting for rural areas in Croatia came together on 23-25 March in Terme Tuhelj to discuss how Local Action Groups (LAGs) and Fisheries LAGs could participate in the planning for the country's National and Regional Partnership Plan (NRPP). Speakers from around the EU explained the benefits of stakeholder involvement in developing rural areas.

Milan Medić, President of the LEADER Thematic Working Group under the CAP Network Croatia, opened the event. He expressed a hope that it would 'open a dialogue and facilitate a positive outcome of the negotiations for the development of rural areas and highlight the importance of the LEADER/CLLD [Community-Led Local Development] methodology for the development of rural and coastal communities'.

Three political leaders involved in negotiations on the EU's future funding framework and the NRPPs addressed conference participants via video messages:

- > MEP Karlo Ressler said 'the next budget period must confirm that **cohesion, agriculture, rural development** and **strong local communities** remain among its key priorities';
- > MEP Marko Vešligaj strongly **endorsed the LEADER approach**, stating that 'if Europe wants a resilient and fair future, it must build it where trust is hardest to create – in small communities. And LEADER/CLLD is exactly that: trust turned into development';
- > Raffaele Fitto, Executive Vice-President of the European Commission, **affirmed** that **rural areas continue to be a priority**. He announced the beginning of a broad **consultation exercise** on the **'right to stay'** as of May 2026.



@LEADER Network Croatia, 2026



Join the Rural Pact Community and online platform

www.ruralpact.rural-vision.europa.eu/become-member_en



www.ruralpact.rural-vision.europa.eu

