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

European Commission report on the long-term vision for rural areas

Silvia Nanni

MOVING webinar 'Towards a Policy Roadmap for Vibrant Mountain Economies' – 8 May 2024

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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

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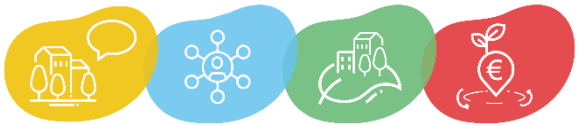
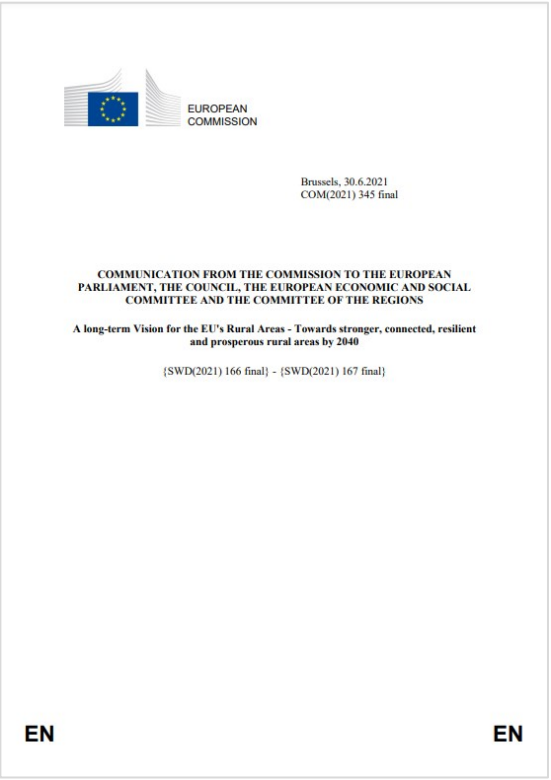
The long-term vision for EU's rural areas



Communication from the EC

(June 2021)



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Brussels, 30.6.2021
COM(2021) 345 final

COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS

A long-term Vision for the EU's Rural Areas - Towards stronger, connected, resilient and prosperous rural areas by 2040

{SWD(2021) 166 final} - {SWD(2021) 167 final}

EN EN

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.

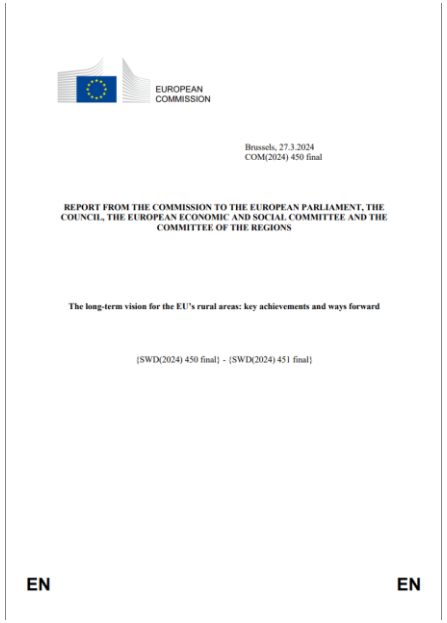
Communication on the LTVRA, "Next steps".

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**

Report from the EC

(March 2024)


EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Brussels, 27.3.2024
COM(2024) 450 final

REPORT FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS

The long-term vision for the EU's rural areas: key achievements and ways forward

{SWD(2024) 450 final} - {SWD(2024) 451 final}

EN EN

Staff working documents: 'Taking stock of rural action plan implementation' & 'Reviewed EU rural action plan'

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European Commission

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]

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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**

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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

European Commission

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**

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)

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**

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Looking forward – EU policies

European Parliament

Council of the European Union

European Economic and Social Committee

European Committee of the Regions

European Rural Parliament

Contributions from EU institutions & stakeholders

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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

- **9th Cohesion forum (11-12 April 2024)**
- **Technical workshop on Solidarity and rural communities (16-17 May 2024)**
- **Rural Pact coordination group (16 April and November 2024)**
- **Rural Pact policy labs (May, September and November/December 2024)**
- **Rural Pact Community Platform and good practices**
- Rural Pact Conference
- Activities under the EU CAP Network

The ongoing **strategic dialogue on the future of EU agriculture** also reflects on the future of rural areas.

European Commission

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