

## RURALITE-ENVIRONNEMENT-DEVELOPPEMENT RURALITY-ENVIRONMENT-DEVELOPMENT

Association internationale – international association

Rue des Potiers, 304, B-6717 Attert

Tel : +32/63230490 – [red@ruraleurope.org](mailto:red@ruraleurope.org) - [www.ruraleurope.org](http://www.ruraleurope.org)



### A CAP post 2020

#### inspiring and reinforcing an European ambition in favor of rural territories in their diversity

« A European Rural Agenda expected by rural stakeholders and citizens »

#### Reply to the Communication of the European Commission about «The Future of Agriculture and Food»

Focusing on the integrated sustainable development strategies of rural areas  
to meet the challenges of the CAP post 2020 :  
an optimal response to the challenges of family farming and territorial cohesion

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#### The Communication emphasizes:

- the need to **focus on greater subsidiarity** and to reinforce the relations based on **shared objectives of results**.
- the challenges and direction of the “future of food and farming”, the **main justification of the Common Agricultural Policy** (vitality of the family farming model, environment and climate issues, food, generational renewal, training and education, innovation...). However, the proposal is **not explicit enough on the issues of rural non-agricultural development and on the practical modalities to achieve these objectives in the territories**.
- the need to consolidate - in the rural territories - the socio-economic dynamic, the employment, the service offer, the innovation ...
- the importance of maintaining **the role of the first crucial pillar “rural development” of the CAP. On the other hand, it insists on the need for complementarity with other EU policies such as cohesion policy ...**
- the **proven efficiency and the role of the LEADER approach as a challenge**. However, the proposal underlines the importance of a **greater synergy between municipal authorities and local agencies**.

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#### Nevertheless we also observe certain realities:

- The success of the CAP post-2020 depends on the definition of the sharing objectives for rural territories in a mobilization of all the potentials and resources of each territory, of all stakeholders and, more generally, of all active citizens.

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*This contribution of the international association Rurality-Environment-Development (R.E.D.) is part of a prospective reflection launched since 2015 on the future of the European policy for rural areas. It draws on the regular contributions that its Board of Directors has made to this proactive dialogue with the European institutions.*

- The proposal refers essentially to the agriculture challenges. It makes the references to rural non-agricultural development and its practical support methods (LEADER/CLLD ...) less readable. **The European Commission's intentions to support rural areas with the CAP are therefore not obvious.**
- **The subsidiarity, which is already implemented in the FEADER and in the structural Funds, has generated national and even regional dissonances that are globally unfavorable for the development of rural territories.** In some regions, they have even had a negative impact on agri-environmental measures (fields, etc ...). Preserving a fine-tuned approach to ICHN zonings, while insuring that they take into account the profiles of the territories' farms, is one of the expressed worries.

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### **We share, with reserve, the aimed goals of:**

- simplification of the CAP **but** we are advocating for a « smart » simplification involving local stakeholders (consultation method)
- mobilization of all the European Union policies for the **development of rural territories** if they are **combined with a shared strategic framework in order to predetermine the European challenges and objectives.**
- **reinforcing of relationship between the European Commission and the States Members based on shared objectives of results for the implementation of the CAP.** In order to achieve this goal, the European Commission recommends referring to a **strategic plan**. This option - although interesting - seems insufficient to us. Moreover, it seems essential to be able to refer to a **strategic framework connected to the territorial challenges of sustainable development.** **The search of a greater added value of the CAP** expresses itself the need for it. **The major societal, landed and environmental issues are planned at the level of the territories, especially of the rural areas :** *quality food, job creation, growth and investment, preservation of agricultural lands, circular economy and bio economy, in view of contributing to the objectives of the COP 21, of research and innovation, and of digital economy.*
- contributing to the **European Agenda for Migration**, but, encouraging cooperation and sharing good practices and knowledge. To achieve this objective, **the concerned states have to encourage the use of European instruments (and their imperatives) in the implementation of the allocated support Funds :** LEADER / CLLD approach, PEI, gender equality ...

## R.E.D. - PROPOSAL

*R.E.D. is committed to two major convergent support strategies:  
sustainable agriculture and integrated sustainable development of rural territories :  
**the implementation of a European Rural Agenda**  
**and the creation of a European Interfund Rural Territories.***

**R.E.D. expects its request for a European Rural Agenda to be launched<sup>1</sup>. This agenda thus becomes the essential strategic framework for the development of rural territories, including peri-urban areas and for the territorial challenges of the CAP.**

This agenda will particularly meet the objectives in terms of **rural proofing<sup>2</sup>, smart villages, training and innovation, optimal valorization of the LEADER/CLLD approach, mobilization of all the rural stakeholders, reinforcing smart cooperation between rural and urban poles in order to rebalance the rural-urban relationship** (see the Urban Agenda and the Rurban experience)...

**R.E.D. proposes the implementation of a European Interfund rural territories<sup>3</sup>, as a financial framework and as a method of financial management.**

The proposal of Interfund is an operational response to the actual budgetary context and to the objectives set out in the Communication on the “Future of Food and Farming”, as well as the mobilization of other policies (Cohesion...).

The Interfund would also be a **vector of coherence and efficiency** in a new budgetary context. It will require an optimal mobilization of financing, with reference to ambitious objectives of results and creators of public goods : recognition and valorization of the added value of rural territories, motivation of LEADER/CLLD ... It could inspire within the State Members a similar financial programming and thus facilitate the mobilization of a national public co-financing: **generalization of global grants** to finance multi-annual programs such as CLLD.

This recommendation is to be included in the agreements between the EU and the Member States, in particular in the definition of the shared objectives of results.

**The relevance of these two structuring proposals can be measured according to the objectives of the CAP post-2020. It is also related to the essential role of municipalities in the territorial planning of societal, land and environmental objectives.**

**These two proposals are based on the recognition of rural territories as development and innovation poles. They allow the smart mobilization of all potentials and meet the requirements of Article 174 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union.**

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<sup>1</sup>**The European Rural Agenda** expresses the ambition of the European Union for the development of its rural territories. It provides the policy framework and operational guidelines for a future specific policy for the development of rural territories, responding to their diversity and the multidimensional dimension of their economic realities. **In a complementarity with the Urban Agenda**, it will facilitate smart cooperation between rural and urban poles. A proposal made by R.E.D. with the **active support of the E.C.M.** and of European organizations (European Committee of the Regions, Intergroup at the European Parliament, RUMRA, European Economic and Social Council ...) and of many national organizations .

<sup>2</sup>See the Cork 2.0 declaration and the seminar's conclusions of 4 May 2017 co-organized by the European Committee of the Regions and R.E.D.

<sup>3</sup>**The European Interfund Rural Territories (EIFRT)** is the financial instrument that makes the multidimensional ambition of the European Rural Agenda concrete. It is financed by the different sectorial policies of the EU. A part of the budget reserved for the agriculture could contribute to the EIFRT. It's essential. The EIFRT implementation will also clarify FEDER contributions for rural territories.