



A European Rural Agenda, in addition to the Urban Agenda, to capitalize on the added value of rural territories

Rural areas have a lot to offer. However, they are facing economic, social and environmental challenges. Without a strategy targeted to these areas, the risk of territorial imbalance remains. As a response the EU has set mechanisms and funding, such as the Cohesion Policy. However, there is a tendency to concentrate these policies in urban areas, at the expense of peri-urban and rural areas.

In order to rebalance the focus, the European Countryside Movement call for a European Rural Agenda. This comprehensive strategic framework will provide, in addition to the Urban Agenda, a real development policy for rural areas with a reinforced vision of territorial cohesion and smart inter-territorial cooperation.

The ECM recalls the added value of rural areas for the European project. They carry innovative solutions and meet essential European health and food safety needs. The European Parliament Resolution (3/10/20), based on a proposal from the RUMRA Intergroup, already expresses the need for recognition and potential of rural areas:

The ECM organizations recommend:

Highlighting the multifunctional dimension of the integrated development of rural areas in the post-2020 CAP, and its anchoring in the cohesion policy. The aim is to promote economic recovery, plural agriculture, and the legitimate mobilization of rural and peri-urban areas.

Reintegrating the EAFRD into the CSF, at least for LEADER/CLLD, and the strengthening of this approach, for a greater interrelation between the funds to finance local strategies.

Changing in social, economic and territorial paradigm: rural areas showcase innovation, resilience and solidarity. This added value has to be at the center of European rural policies, placing the human at the heart of concerns, in a constructive relationship with the urban centers.

Therefore the ECM calls for a European Rural Agenda. It would express ambitious political guidelines for better territorial cohesion as well as for the crucial involvement of the citizens.