

# Europe in 2020 will also be rural

## Rural territories partners of the Europe 2020 Strategy

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*The Europe 2020 Strategy is the framework within which Member States and the European Commission have committed their first negotiations to conclude the Partnerships Contracts that largely determine the implementation of the future 2014-2020 programming.*

*Attentive to this process, which must be accompanied by a consultation of rural actors, the signatory organisations provide in this context the following recommendations.*

### **Territorial cohesion**

- With a view to territorial cohesion and in connection with the RURBAN programme, the signatory organisations call for full recognition of rural areas as poles of development and innovation contributing to the Europe 2020 Strategy, on an equal footing with urban poles.
- Rural and peri-urban areas can also generate jobs, wealth and added value, and such growth helps relieve some urban pressure. Vitality of rural areas, through their assets and multifunctional products, is essential to the well-being of both rural and urban populations, to sustainable growth and a harmonious and balanced territorial development.<sup>i</sup>
- The signatory organisations emphasize the special role of peri-urban areas, spaces of innovation in the balanced dialogue between urban and rural poles, and draw attention to their importance in terms of agriculture and food production, open space, environmental management, health, culture and social cohesion.

### **Territorial and integrated approach**

- The signatory organisations strongly support the territorial and integrated approach proposed by the Commission, because it strengthens the cooperation within the territories and between them. Such an approach is more likely to foster all sectors and to bring out added-values;
- Local development policy must be fully supported by the EU: the Member States must integrate it in an ambitious way into the Partnership Contracts. The implementation of the multifund approach, which is fully in line with the spirit of the Common Strategic Framework, should be simplified in order to respond more easily to the multisectoral nature of development in rural territories, including periurban areas.
- In the framework of the Community Led Local Development (CLLD), Leader must be reinforced as an approach and an instrument of support for the strategies of integrated development of territories by its opening to the multifund approach. All stakeholders, including small farmers and other micro-enterprises, should be involved in territorial approaches.

## Training

- The signatory organisations recall the importance of training and territorial capacity-building in developing all sectors. Innovation is not limited to the agricultural sector, but is also expressed in the territorial approaches and in the various other sectors.
- The signatory organisations emphasise the importance of establishing training centres in rural areas, in order to improve their attractiveness for young people, promote the emergence of local entrepreneurs, the transmission of rural enterprises and the creation of jobs.

## Financial and administrative framework

- Concerning the European budget, the signatory organisations call for greater attention to the necessary adequacy of the financial resources allocated to rural territories, with a view to equity for their contribution to European society and the needs of their populations.<sup>ii</sup>
- Special attention must be given to a real integration of funds at the level of local implementation. Historically diverse focus and approach of the funds may pose difficulties and resistance in administrative structures, and need to be monitored specifically in order to fulfil the potential of local initiatives.

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<sup>i</sup> Article 174 of the Treaty

<sup>ii</sup> 59,1% of the population, 91% of the territory and 56,1% of employment of the E.U. in predominantly or intermediate rural areas (Report 2011 – Rural development in the EU – Statistical and economic information – DG Agri)