

# EU-Rural 2030

## A European political strategy by 2030

# MAKING EUROPE GROW WITH ITS RURAL TERRITORIES

## Contribution to a European Rural Agenda post 2020

RURALITE-ENVIRONNEMENT-DEVELOPPEMENT

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# EU-Rural 2030

## MAKING EUROPE GROW WITH ITS RURAL TERRITORIES

### Contribution to a European Rural Agenda post 2020

Europe is at the heart of a rapid worldwide change marked by global economic changes and environmental challenges. Many States choose to face these challenges by strengthening their urban policies, considering that economic dynamics are mainly based on the competitiveness of urban poles. On the other hand, rural territories are seeking an innovative direction that will allow them to enhance the value of their potential while overcoming the disadvantages resulting from their low population density or geographic characteristics.

**It's not about creating an opposition between rural territories and urban poles, but rather it's about associating and mobilising them, promoting smart, non-condescending cooperation between them. Rural territories are part of the solution, because they have the energy and the spirit for promoting this development.**

R.E.D's proposal for a European political strategy for rural territories by 2030 is the result of the debates started within the R.E.D. network in 2014 and led by its Board of Directors. This document is an important step in R.E.D's proactive contribution with respect to European authorities and their first reflections on the post-2020 programme.

#### **Background**

In 2000, R.E.D. had launched a shared reflection that had led to a "Proposal for a European rural policy" in 2003. This proposal has guided R.E.D's actions throughout the preparatory stage of the 2014-2020 programme.

In particular, it has allowed the promotion of the concept of rural development pole, which has been widely applied in several public policies, and included in the glossary of the European Conference of Ministers responsible for Regional/Spatial Planning. However, this concept has become less readable today following its alienation in various public policies.

Moreover, the economic, social, and environmental setting has changed significantly over the past few years. What mattered was not to update our previous proposal, but rather to open a new focus area in the continuity of our political orientations. R.E.D's goal was to co-create a new Rurality-Environment-Development proposal concerning the development of rural territories by 2030 in order to provide a framework that could inspire the next European programme beyond 2020.

## 1. **What's at stake: the vitality of rural territories, essential for ensuring a good life to Europeans and providing a voice to Europe in the world**

**Rural territories, with their diversity, are true development and innovation poles. A space of hope and solutions that metropolisation can neither enlighten nor enhance.**

Recognising and mobilising this potential is not only essential, but urgent too to tackle the challenges of employment (in particular youth employment), social, economic, and territorial cohesion, and sustainable development. **Social, economic, and climate agendas (both in the present and future), as well as extremism-related unrest are urging us to do so, now!**

Rural territories have always known how to find innovative solutions to the social and economic problems they had to face. Therefore, the approaches to local development, which today inspire European territorial policies echo policies invented in French rural areas during the '80s.

Enhancing the value of this resilience and innovation potential is essential for tackling change and crises (whether economic, social, climatic, or financial) that shake Member States and not only them.

Recognising rural territories and turning them into active partners of the European project and its challenges: **this is the meaning of the call for white papers on rurality launched by the European Countryside Movement and this contribution of RED's to a European Rural Agenda in the EU's programme after 2020.** Now is the time for rural territories to submit their expectations and solutions, while the European Commission is opening new projects to define post-2020 strategic guidelines.

**It's not about creating an opposition between rural territories and urban poles, but rather it's about associating and mobilising them, promoting smart, non-condescending cooperation between them. Rural territories are part of the solution, because they have the energy and the spirit for promoting this development...**



<sup>1</sup> An untapped recurrent finding: *"In an economic system that no longer ensures continuous growth, rural areas have the ability to adapt to change and the new forms of social and economic life that will appear in the future"* – European Conference of Ministers responsible for Regional/Spatial Planning

## **What's at stake: the vitality of rural territories, essential for ensuring a good life to Europeans and providing a voice to Europe in the world**

### **Prerequisites**

- ◆ Defining a rural territory based on the agriculture as its constituent part is no longer a good definition. Rural territories are proud of their agriculture and support it, but “reducing” them to mere agricultural spaces can be detrimental. This criterion certainly simplifies political steering due to the backing for rural development (the 2<sup>nd</sup> pillar of the Common Agricultural Policy); however, it overshadows any other potential that rural players develop and share through co-operation in their territorial development strategies.
- ◆ Diversifying the classification of rural areas is not satisfactory, because it divides up and weakens a strong and efficient response to the rural challenge. We should avoid compartmentalising rural differences in policies. Mountain areas are first of all rural areas... In this spirit, peri-urban areas are formerly rural areas that want to regain their autonomy to organise a fair ex-change with the nearby urban pole and have the “authority” and means to position themselves, where appropriate, as a social and economic innovation pole, at the interface between the urban core and rural territories.
- ◆ We must demand a single rural policy that integrates different rural realities. Diversity is part of the definition and even the richness of rural territories. It enhances the value of contributions but it shouldn't generate an array of definition. Creating a network of rural territories with their diversity is what makes rurality readable and understood.
- ◆ We must urgently drop these rural-agricultural and rural-urban confrontations, which tend to marginalise rural territories and overshadow the importance of their contribution. Furthermore, these confrontations hinder territorial and social cohesion. We should replace them with a constructive approach that allows the consolidation of the specific strengths of rural territories and lead all players in the dynamic co-construction of territorial development.
- ◆ It is important to reaffirm the creative usefulness of rural territories by associating it with a balanced relationship with urban areas. But to organise this balance, we need to recognise the contributions of rural territories to society as a whole.

**This is the meaning and also the challenge of RED's legitimate demand for the recognition of rural territories' diversity in potential development and innovation poles.**

## **What's at stake: the vitality of rural territories, essential for ensuring a good life to Europeans and providing a voice to Europe in the world**

### **→ Diversity**

Rural territories are characterised by a lower population density and a lower density of urban spaces. However, these are not their distinctive features. They include varied entities as very sparsely populated areas and peri-urban areas, which are rural territories that are subject to the pressure of urban expansion. This territorial diversity, which expresses itself in different, multifaceted cultural landscapes, is a key asset for the EU, being a source of attractiveness and economic added value.

### **→ Attractiveness**

Rural territories have a high percentage of entrepreneurs who explain their ability to innovate and address social, economic, and climatic challenges they encounter. These territories have the genes to take action within them.

When addressing the human challenges in the pursuit of the quality of life, they benefit from a natural attractiveness. This aspect should be enhanced and accompanied by proactive strategies for the deployment of local services (children, youth, health, etc.), cultural offerings and high-speed internet to include rural territories in networks of knowledge and exchange, and customised support for project stakeholders. All this will turn the diversity of rural territories into destination territories for young people and resident entrepreneurs. These will find places of existence and identification where it is easier to be recognized as an actor to conduct a personal project that will be part of a stronger, more collective solidarity than in the city.

### **→ Culture and heritage**

Rural territories cover 80% of the EU's surface; therefore, they are also the soil in which cultural diversity and a large part of the natural and architectural heritage, which make up the European identity, are rooted.

The diversity of cultures and heritage immersed in the heart of natural resources (fossil fuels or renewable energy) and the climates that have founded them create an active repository of know-how, creativity, and innovation to be unleashed and revealed to open new sources of job creation and wealth and of control over resources and energy.

### **→ Economy and added value**

Rural and peri-urban territories are areas of activity, culture, and production of goods and services. They generate employment, wealth, and added value, and their growth allows the reduction in urban congestion. Moreover, over the past ten years, there has been higher GDP per capita growth in rural areas than in urban regions.

Jobs are no longer concentrated exclusively in the forestry and agri-food sectors, but also in the tertiary sector and in the fields of new technology development, alternative energy, and services. What's more, the quality of life that rural territories offer has become an important asset to attract a qualified productive workforce, which is often the source of competitiveness.

### **→ Quality of life and health**

The vitality of rural territories, ensured by their amenities and multiform productions, is essential for the quality of life of both rural and urban populations, but also for allowing sustainable growth and harmonious, balanced development. It also contributes to the wellbeing of society as a whole, thanks to the response that rural territories can provide to meet societal demands with reference to nature, health, reception, and landscape diversity.

Cohesion between generations is a key factor, even in terms of social cohesion. It's important to enhance it to promote the integration of new populations. Mobilising rural territories to address the challenges of the European project would turn it into a vector for openness and integration.

**All these aspects make rural territories essential for the resilience capacity and dynamics of the European project.**

## 2. Assessment: a fast changing global and European context

### An evolution of the relationship between urban poles and rural territories that overshadows the high-potential contribution of the diversity of rural territories to growth and employment challenges

- a strong tendency towards polarisation and urban concentration that does not seem it will be reversed any time soon: a “city tropism”, which tends to empty rural territories of its active young people and investors and opposes the principle of territorial cohesion set out in the Lisbon Treaty!
- an intensification of the peri- and sub-urbanisation processes resulting in an increase in daily commuting and social and economic cohesion issues, which question the goals of sustainable development,
- an accentuated urban sprawl and scattered settlement pattern, which generates land pressure leading to a waste of farmland at the expense of agricultural production,
- a stronger city-region approach as a functional development territorial unit,
- a reduction in services (health, education, security, etc.) in rural areas,
- urban land prices on the rise.

### Another economy in another geography

- European economy in crisis with the emergence of new growth poles,
- development of boosting sectors, such as bioeconomy, e-economy, circular economy, and collaborative economy,
- increasingly selective and strategic aid specialisation,
- globalisation as a factor of concentration, European deindustrialisation, destruction of territorial jobs, and high unemployment,
- financial crisis yet to be completely under control,
- changes in employment that has yet to take stock of digitisation,
- agriculture in search of a middle way between meeting the global food demand by intensifying production chains and a mixed approach to meet a societal demand resulting in increased territorialisation, environmentally-friendly production methods, increased innovation in European territorial practices and cooperation across the Southern-Northern Mediterranean area.

### Increasingly complex governance

- multi-level governance that accompanies regionalisation processes,
- strong demand for citizen participation but growing phenomenon of NIMBY,
- a new attitude of citizens towards volunteer work and the structure of town and local associations,
- local players’ confirmed desire for civic engagement and volunteering in the completion and implementation of concrete projects, although often for a limited period.

## Assessment: a fast changing global and European context

### Other energy

- increasingly expensive energy and mobility with, by necessity, greater control over the global demand for energy and commuter traffic,
- evolution towards smart energy networks with the notion of territorial energy mix with growing management costs,
- evolution towards innovative mobility networks (soft mobility, on-demand mobility) adapted to the scale and specific requirements of rural spaces,
- the contested use of new fossil fuel deposits (shale gas, etc.),
- an increasing share of renewable energy to be handled during production.

### Another climate

- rural territories among the most vulnerable to the impact of climate change (flood and storm-induced risks, increasing the variability of crop output, increasingly severe and frequent droughts, etc.),
- climate disruptions to be attenuated and greenhouse gas to be reduced,
- territorially and socially unbalanced effects of climate disruptions with a considerable social, economic, and budgetary impact,
- intensified pressure on natural resources (water, biodiversity, sun, etc.),
- increased climate migrations with no mitigation prospects or announcements of global investments or territorial cooperation up to addressing the challenges.

### Another society

- towards a dual society characterised by the use of the internet and digital technologies and their accessibility,
- strengthening of non-regionalised cultural values,
- breakdown of family structures and intergenerational support,
- a growing individualism that is affecting solidarity,
- emergence of over-concentrated and insecure areas,
- an increasingly ageing and intercultural society,
- a society lacking spontaneous social cohesion.

### A European ambition affecting Member States

- a European budget always under pressure due to the lack of resources of its own,
- resistance at several levels of the administrative and political chain against a true policy integration: (e.g. CLLD held up because of its complexity),
- subsidiarity and flexibility that reduce the strength of European governance,
- environmental policies whose territorial impact have not been taken entirely into account,
- a European policy that casts a basic doubt by placing rural development policy as the 2nd pillar of the CAP, without recognising rural territories as players of the 2020 strategy.

### 3.

## Our guidelines for rural territories

### ◆ Ensuring territorial cohesion between and at the heart of Europe's regions

- The EU must fit in the globalised economy in a “smart” way, enhancing the specific features of both urban and rural territories. The EU should focus on network dynamics and cooperation between territories rather than on the notions of critical mass and urban concentration. The 2020 Strategy, which can still be improved, is already providing an opportunity to do so.
- Europe's dual rural and urban specificity makes it richer. Maintaining a complementary rural reality differentiated from urban spaces is one of the conditions for the continent's cohesive and sustainable development.
- The logic of giving priority to density is no longer appropriate, because today the creativity potential depends, first of all, on the quality of the networks and partnerships mobilised around the projects.
- Rural territories have a cultural dimension and cannot be defined by a density logic, which is weakening per se. It's this cultural dimension that safeguards rural specificity. Another two characteristics are the easier practice of local democracy and a better appropriation of the territory they live in.
- Just as urban areas, rural territories must be recognised as areas of development vectors of innovation and, as such, as essential partners for Europe and its social, economic, and territorial cohesion. This political recognition is crucial for mobilising every potential and partner.
- Peri-urban areas play a special role as innovation spaces in the balanced dialogue between urban and rural poles. They are also important in terms of local agriculture, landscape clearing, environmental, health, and cultural management, and social cohesion.
- Rural territories are the source of most of the resilience capacity of Europe's economy and society, i.e. food independence, production of renewable energy and bio-sourced raw materials, biodiversity maintenance, climate change prevention and attenuation, and revitalisation of people. All this deserves a place that lives up to these challenges and their contributions to European policies.





## Our guidelines for rural territories

### ◆ Renewing and rebalancing the rural - urban relationship

- An equal relationship between cities and countryside is necessary for human society to thrive and Europe's regions to develop harmoniously. This partnership between city and country must be expressed in the respect for their complementary interests. The challenge for any rural territory is to build positive relations with cities based on a dialogue without condescension from strategy to strategy.

The concept of rural development pole <sup>2</sup>, which can include one or more small towns, hints at project areas. It prevents rural reality from being subjected to a spatial hierarchy and includes it in a project approach associated with the recognition of its importance in the construction of Europe. It also gives a balanced perspective to the city-country relationship and urban pole-rural pole partnership.

The contribution of rural territories to regional development must be expressed through their own strategies to be recognised by all those who partake in regional development.

- The regional policy has evolved towards a vision that is increasingly focused on networks of large and medium cities and rely on the extension of functional urban and metropolitan areas <sup>3</sup>. The expansion of these areas implies the increasing integration of rural or predominantly rural areas in their perimeter, not to mention urban expansion whittling away agricultural land. It's important to control this land consumption better to preserve their primary purpose.

This trend marginalises rural territories and presents them as peripheral areas <sup>4</sup> and secondary players with regards to dynamics and governance. It generates a centralisation of power, which promotes ownership of development initiatives by the dense core. Rurality is no more than the landscape close to the dominant urban core. Rurality risks being erased if we remain stuck in this logic of spatial expansion. We need to respond to this threat with a process of proposals and projects and not remain stuck in a position of resistance. The challenge is to make rural territories and their contributions visible within metropolitan dynamics and keep them visible.

- The search for the critical mass by cities also contributes to the growing absorption of rural territories in urban areas. Rural territories need to mobilise themselves around their own strategies within these functional urban areas to be included in the network and start a dialogue with the urban core strategy. By relying on such a collaborative strategy, the functional metropolitan space is politically driven by relations made mandatory by differentiated strategic references. As elements of the functional urban area, the urban core and rural spaces are driven by collaborative project dynamics rather than needs to be satisfied. This functional proximity – and not spatial proximity – allows them to become places of innovation and cooperation rather than places of confrontation.
- In terms of governance, it is important to reduce the distance between the urban core and rural areas by creating spaces for dialogue and cooperation based on their respective strategies. It's up to the rural territories to propose the type of relationship they want to have with the urban core. Including peripheral rural territories in a network or with external rural territories is also a rebalancing factor.

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<sup>2</sup> « A rural development pole is an inhabited, significantly rural area where the social, economic and territorial evolutions are led within the framework of an integrated and prospective development plan. A rural pole is not an agglomeration, but a rural territory as a whole, which may include one or more small towns. The territorial development plan determines the objectives of results in short, medium and long terms. It specifies the guidelines for development, the human and material means to achieve the results targeted. The civil society, public and private actors must be partner for its development and its assessment.» – CEMAT Glossary

<sup>3</sup> Vision supported by the EU Urban Agenda

<sup>4</sup> The current terminology (peri-urban or peripheral areas, urban ring, etc., which can be continuously extended) no longer corresponds to the situation created by the growing extension of metropolises, where the spatial context of rural territories is very variable (inclusion among urban spaces).

## Our guidelines for rural territories

### ◆ Supporting an integrated approach to territorial development

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- European rural areas must build their future relying on strategic territorial development projects that can mobilise all players equally, making them recognise each other as partners and enhancing their potential. This is the notion of “rural development pole”<sup>2</sup>, which has been R.E.D’s core concept for many years.
- This strategic approach strengthens cooperation not only within the territories but also with neighbouring ones. Moreover, it also promotes all activity sectors, making added value emerge. All players, including small farmers and other micro enterprises, must be involved in these territorial approaches.
- The multi-fund local development approach (also known as CLLD) falls within this logic and its implementation must be simplified to respond more promptly to the multi-sectorial aspects of the development of rural territories, including peri-urban spaces. This approach leads to an economy of means, thanks to the better integration of goals and energy.
- The low population density of rural territories implies a reduced number of players able to oversee development projects and, more importantly, give them a suitable human focus. Moreover, it is important to provide rural territories with territorial engineering means to ensure an effective interface with European, national, and regional policies.

### ◆ Supporting and developing a multi-sectoral rural economy

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- Rural territories are hosting multisectoral jobs today covering a wide range of activities concerning the fields of the productive, social, solidarity, residential, services economy... They also offer many activities based on their heritage, illustrating the power of culture as a rallying point inspiring development.
- Rural territories have a diversified economy based on their human and natural resources but it is essential that the new communications technologies bring their necessary gains. Each territory must be able to incorporate into its future potential the advantages offered by digital technology, which is not only an accelerator of information but also a key to new economic opportunities and new ways of living everyday life. Very high speed infrastructures and support services are therefore essential responses to economic cohesion of the territories.
- They are business basins built on local production systems and on living networks, to be reinforced by research and training. Their development requires a policy that supports and strengthens these dynamic networks of businesses by bringing a spirit of «making together».

### ◆ Promoting a bottom-up, participatory, and inclusive approach

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- The preparation of a development strategy is the result of a bottom-up participatory strategy that involves public authorities (elected representatives, administrations, etc.), private players (associations, enterprises, etc.), and citizens alike. The dialogue between the different levels of political and administrative power must occur through a two-way flow, meeting the expectations and obligations of each level.
- The territory development project is based on a participatory analysis and an interdisciplinary reflection that leads to a common representation of the future of the territory. This bottom-up approach requires the creation of technical rural territory organisation teams. New technologies are useful in this strategic framework, especially through local laboratories (local labs, living labs, etc.).
- The implementation of the territory projects relies on measures that promote the initiative and decision-making abilities of rural territory players, as well as the cooperation between public and private institution within this collective dynamics.
- This strategic approach provides an inclusive framework which can welcome new arrivals, citizens or enterprises. It turns the territory in question into a chosen destination and not just an anonymous reception or displacement area. This way, rural territories can help integrate new populations, such as migrants, not just as an emergency solution but rather as a planned medium-term response. In other words, rural territories are spaces that can create new forms of citizenship initiating a dialogue between cultures and a renewed concept of living together.

## Our guidelines for rural territories

### ◆ Investing in education, training and innovation

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- Education is key to the development of rural territories. Establishing education centres, especially higher education, in rural territories is important as it boosts their attraction for young people, the emergence of resident entrepreneurs, the transfer of rural businesses, and job creation.
- There is a development paradigm shift, which goes beyond the usual concepts of training and education, creating new pathways to meet new needs of emerging jobs. To support this emerging reality effectively, it is important to focus on even the smallest signs of innovative development.
- Young people living in rural territories are a major element of the future social and economic potential. The creation of interconnected training programmes on a European scale will allow these young people to become active players in further cross-cutting development and in the construction of a European vision. It is important to create this shared wealth of European training programmes dedicated to rural territories and cross-cutting approaches, where players can share their knowledge and enrich each other, reinvesting what they learn in their territories.
- Rural territories are spaces of innovation. All this is not limited to the agricultural sector but is also expressed in territorial project approaches and other sectors of society. This implies an increased effort by scientific players to organise stronger relations with rural players and develop research to improve the knowledge of the European rural capital and potential. These partnerships must rely on high-quality communication networks.

It is essential to provide strong, continuous support to concrete forms of innovation (fab labs), as well as social and organisational innovation (social, circular economy, etc.).

- The learning of a culture of evaluation by rural territory players must also allow for the effectiveness and efficiency of territorial development projects, as well as the sustainability of the processes under way.

### ◆ Experiencing and sharing culture

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- Rural areas have changed radically over half a century. Today, they are ever-changing multi-purpose spaces, where new lifestyles, new ways of working, living, trading, producing, dreaming, and planning are invented. They reinvent their future in relation to digital technology, changing economies, changing practices, and deep social changes. The cultural dimension is an important resource for Europe's future, because it involves a diversity of identities, capabilities, and lifestyles to support the development of pluralistic and open democracy.
- Private and public cultural players provide different types of innovation and experimentation:
  - new involvement frameworks to go beyond demand and supply policies and place free and equal people and territories at the centre of development, in compliance with the Charter of Fundamental Rights;
  - new collective, cross-cutting local organisation methods, especially in terms of territorial equality, with players involved in solidarity activities open to other sectors and territories;
  - new solidarity economy models based on new citizens, local economy, and the development of new businesses linked to changes, such as the shift to digital technology (e-culture and, more in general, e-commerce and e-education);
  - new cultural practices, which are experienced, reinvented, and combined with a score of different players (environmental, social, economic, etc.). And innovation stems from their diversity, exchange, and sharing. This cultural dimension brings this resilience, creation, and sharing among people to improve coexistence, especially in rural territories;
  - social innovations that combine pluralistic economy and democracy to reinvent the democratic challenge and allow the co-construction of the public interest and new forms of territorial governance.

## Our guidelines for rural territories

### ◆ Consolidating the role of rural territories as major players in tackling climate change

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- Rural spaces hold most renewable resources, which makes them the main players at the fore-front of energy transition. They can shine in the planning and implementation of decentralised energy production and distribution to meet the specific needs of rural regions and communities. Rational and integrated processes to enhance the value of local and renewable energy, such as biomass, solar power (both thermal and photovoltaic), wind power, and hydroelectric power, should be developed in various regions based on their type and territorial characteristics.
- The implementation of an integrated, cross-cutting, and innovative European policy that promotes a stable, long-term framework for investments is crucial for rural territories. This policy must integrate communication and conflict resolution tools, as well as citizen participation models. It must also develop research to support energy neutrality.
- An energy strategy is leverage for development if accompanied or preceded by a true cultural change of decision-makers, entrepreneurs, and citizens.
- In an integrated and sustainable energy approach focusing on intrinsic and territorial added value, any waste of primary resources, food, or precious farmland (e.g. corn or wheat cultivations in favour of a weak production of biogas and biofuel) must be avoided. The production of renewable energy is an environmental and economic opportunity (diversification of farmers' sources of income), as waste, roofs, space, wood are all available resources.
- Rural territories develop innovative mobility networks (soft mobility, on-demand mobility) adapted to the scale and specific requirements of rural spaces to improve energy efficiency and protect the environment. To go even further, it is important to work on mobility in rural environments in the post-petroleum era. This will help prevent social fractures due to rising oil prices.
- Short circuits and circular economy develop within rural territories to tackle the challenges of integrated local mobility and the growing trade requirements. The development of strong agricultural and forestry sectors relies on a circular economy that aims at meeting food, energy, and bio-sourced material requirements. Circular economy is a means to relocate added value and employment in these territories.

### ◆ Promoting sustainable family farming

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- The future of European agriculture must allow for a diversified, multifunctional family-run agricultural model. Based on this model, families control the capital and manage farmers in a farming system that protects natural resources and respects the environment as well as the specific setting that embraces the diversity of their activities.
- This type of agriculture is rooted in the territories, especially in terms of employment and added value, with the full-scale exclusion of forms concentration and grabbing of land and production tools.
- This type of agriculture promotes social and economic dynamics and helps face the challenges in terms of innovation, territory planning, social expectations, especially with reference to changes in the supply chain, circular and collaborative economy, food security and traceability. It also contributes to bringing agriculture closer to other business sectors.
- There is a need for these innovative models that support diversification and aim at the creation of added territorial value as well as the notion of territorial anchoring and traceability of producers.
- Agriculture and forestry, as well as their related industries, structure rural development and, as such, farmers and forestry workers should be sought as partners of other rural players in territorial and socio-economic development. Reducing the rural world to its functions as an agricultural or recreational space would lead to the impoverishment of society as a whole.

## 4. Europe's future policy for rural territories after 2020

The European Union and Member States must believe in and implement the framework, which will allow the following:

- ◆ consolidating the ability of rural territories to choose the best-suited guidelines;
- ◆ strengthening the power of initiative and mobilisation of rural players;
- ◆ discovering and enhancing all the potential repositories of economic development and social, territorial, and economic added value that may exist in rural areas.

### Europe's future post-2020 policies must:

- + be compatible with the sustainability of rural areas;
- + recognise rural territories as areas of development that provide an essential contribution to Europe's challenges;
- + recognise the diversity of Europe's rural territories as a necessary factor to address the future's challenges;
- + enhance the potential of rural territory diversity to serve a common dynamic for the EU without neglecting the territories;
- + be transparent and readable to improve their acceptability;
- + effectively support local initiatives and provide simple and accessible procedures to do so, facilitating the link between poles and strategies at different levels;
- + support networks in line with systems based on critical masses.

### A cross-cutting strategic approach

**R.E.D promotes an innovative approach, which demands a rural dimension in all policies, as with gender equality, to ensure a cross-cutting approach to rurality in European policies and an equal share to rural territories and players.**



## Europe's future policy for rural territories after 2020

### The fundamental principles: the “3 Es”

In the spirit of territorial cohesion, not observed in current choices, and city-country equilibrium, it is important **for all European policies and resources** to ensure that the principles known as the 3 Es are complied with. :

#### The “3 Es”

- ◆ **Rural-urban Equilibrium**, to be included as a principle at the base of all European policies in the same way as gender equality;
- ◆ **Equality of rights for all citizens**, whether they live in cities or rural territories (ref. Charter of Fundamental Rights);
- ◆ **Equity in means and practices** among all players and territories, especially exploiting ex-changes and mutual competencies to compensate the specificities of rural territories.

### Two key European commitments

**In this context, European policies for rural territories must be based on two strong and explicit political statements:**

- ◆ **recognition of rural territories in their contributions to European goals (growth, society, environment, 2020 Strategy, sustainable development, etc.), enriched by their diversity;**  
**All this includes and implies an increased effort by scientific players to improve the knowledge of the EU's rural capital and potential. This is why it is important to go beyond the current statistical approach, which does not allow the proper integration of rural initiatives and adapt current indicators and units of measurements.**
- ◆ **obligation to comply with the “3 Es” in all EU policies.**

## 5. The implementation of rural territory development and its funding

The goal is to mobilise rural territories in development and innovation poles, creating a strong and balanced relationship with urban poles to enhance the strengths of these territories and their inhabitants and achieve the expected cohesion on a European and regional scale.

A rural development pole is an inhabited, significantly rural area where the social, economic and territorial evolutions are led within the framework of an integrated and prospective development plan. A rural pole is not an agglomeration, but a rural territory as a whole, which may include one or more small towns.

The territorial development plan determines the objectives of results in short, medium and long terms. It specifies the guidelines for development, the human and material means to achieve the results targeted. The civil society, public and private actors must be partners for its development and its assessment.

### ◆ A development strategy pole (DPS)

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At a sub-regional level (which is the level of the development pole), the consistency of the measures taken by the EU must be ensured by their justification in relation to the goals outlined in a development pole strategy (DPS).

Its implementation through the different EU funds that can apply to rural territories must be inspired by a common strategic framework, whose general guidelines must be the common reference that will ensure the consistency of the various programmes. Special attention must be paid to a true integration of financial aid during their implementation at a local level. The historical diversity of guidelines and approaches for managing EU funds can generate difficulties and resistance in administrative bodies. This is why it is important to work specifically to ensure the initiative potential of local players.

### ◆ Collaborative governance

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To facilitate their implementation in a territory and consistency with multiple EU Funds, R.E.D is asking the Commission to introduce a new territorial cohesion tool, i.e. the European Grouping of Territorial Development (EGTD). This would allow us to go beyond the CLLD and Leader LAG experiences and facilitate the actions to be taken to strengthen social, economic, and territorial cohesion across a specific project territory, which can even be a cross-border territory.

It would also allow the coexistence of Leader LAGs and other CLLDs in favour of the integrated development of all territories. This tool that would facilitate policy consistency would be especially used to implement territorial programmes and projects co-financed by the EU, regardless of which funds. It would also be the key interface in a rural-urban dialogue.

## The implementation of rural territory development and its funding

### ◆ Cross-funding and territorial engineering

Preliminary findings: in the current funding structure, there is a permanent misunderstanding due to the wrongly named “rural development policy”, whose specific means are predominantly used for agriculture. It is important to find a way out of the impasse of the content of the 2<sup>nd</sup> pillar of the CAP created by the previous calls for a specific rural development policy. The Common Agricultural Policy, which has never been streamlined since its creation, cannot be the only tool for the development of rural territories. Despite contributing effectively to rural development, agriculture’s multifunctionality is not enough. Other social and professional sectors must be mobilised for the diversified, balanced, and sustainable development of rural society.

Therefore we propose :

- maintaining an agricultural policy which has the mission to support agriculture in all its productive and territorial dimensions. In this spirit, agriculture is an element of rural territory development and its activity must be supported by an agricultural Fund, which will ensure the farmers’ ability to provide the contributions that society expects and make investments;
- changing the name of the 2<sup>nd</sup> pillar of the CAP, if the structure of the CAP is maintained after 2020, to bring out its objective of agricultural diversification. It must no longer be called “rural development”. This name change is indispensable to make more intelligible the EU policy;
- innovating by setting up a specific European policy for rural territories, to allow enhancement of all the potential of rural areas. Its funding should be provided by a **European Fund for the Rural Territories Development** of whose resources have to be worthy of respect of the principles of urban-rural balance, equal rights for all and equity of the means and practices among all actors and territories.

This implies that rural players must be able to be actors of this multi-sectoral policy and to have access to the financial resource allocation processes. All this leads to an increased recourse to **territorial engineering** which will also improve their effectiveness in the field.

### EU-Rural 2030

## MAKING EUROPE GROW WITH ITS RURAL TERRITORIES

### A European political strategy by 2030

### A contribution to the European Rural Agenda

R.E.D.’s proposal confirms the fundamental guidelines of its action plan :

- ◆ the political recognition of rural territories as poles of development and innovation, which must be translated in the implementation of European policies;
- ◆ positioning rural territories on the same level as urban poles;
- ◆ an approach driven by an integrated territorial development strategy.

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