



SOCIAL DIMENSION OF RURAL AREAS

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CO-CREATING RURAL FUTURES

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Importance of rural areas

The results of EUROBAROMETER 2020 revealed **rural areas** are **important** for the future of the EU and one of the main objectives of EU policy is to maintain **vibrant rural areas**.

The European Commission has proposed **a number of actions** to make **rural areas stronger, more connected, resilient and prosperous** by 2040: **'A long-term vision for the EU's rural areas'**, including rural pact, rural action plan, rural observatory and rural proofing' mechanism.

European Parliament recognises the need for **dedicated funding for these territories**, and the importance of **policy tools** such as local community-based actions and the rural proofing mechanism.



Challenges identified by Multi-Actor Platforms

- **Rural communities are losing their sociability** - interest in social relationships is declining due to changes in social structures of rural communities;
- **Low participation of people in the activities and projects** - lack of volunteers and local leaders, low commitment of local councils, insufficient capacity of administrative staff, inadequate legislation – criteria;
- **Rural areas face social exclusion and poor quality of life** - hidden poverty, gender inequality, family violence, mental health problems, lack of information and direct support services, culture of shame and stigma;
- **Tensions and conflicts** in the use of rural spaces (land and natural resources) and in intergenerational relations;
- **Social (non)inclusion of immigrants** - lack of knowledge of local culture and customs, low level of engagement with the native population.



Suggestions for future rural policies

The local level:

- creating friendly public spaces; providing reconciliation/caregiving services; two-way communication between local authorities and community members; sharing experiences/disseminating information; strengthening the community's ability to coordinate and collaborate with citizen groups; education/training/adult learning

The national level:

- specifically tailored social policy for rural areas; cross-sectoral rural authority that integrates agricultural policy and funding with other ministries; support for local communities (municipalities) and NGOs; positive discrimination against rural areas, e.g., in project applications

The EU level:

- the social pillar of EU agricultural policy should be strengthened; inclusion of the rural perspective as a cross-cutting issue in all European policies; improvement of the role of LAGs and more flexibility of EU legislation

Thank you

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