

18th EUROPEAN WEEK of REGIONS and CITIES

05>09 OCTOBER 2020 | 12>16 OCTOBER 2020 | 19>22 OCTOBER 2020

**Vision
for rural
areas**

13 October 2020
María Gafo - AGRI E4



Background

Origin of the vision and overview



Rural areas are the fabric of our society and the heartbeat of our economy. The diversity of landscape, culture and heritage is one of Europe's most defining and remarkable features.

They are a core part of our identity and our economic potential.

We will cherish and preserve our rural areas and invest in their future.

President Von der Leyen - EC Political Guidelines

EU RURAL AREAS

76% of EU
territory

13% of the EU
**GROSS VALUE
ADDED**



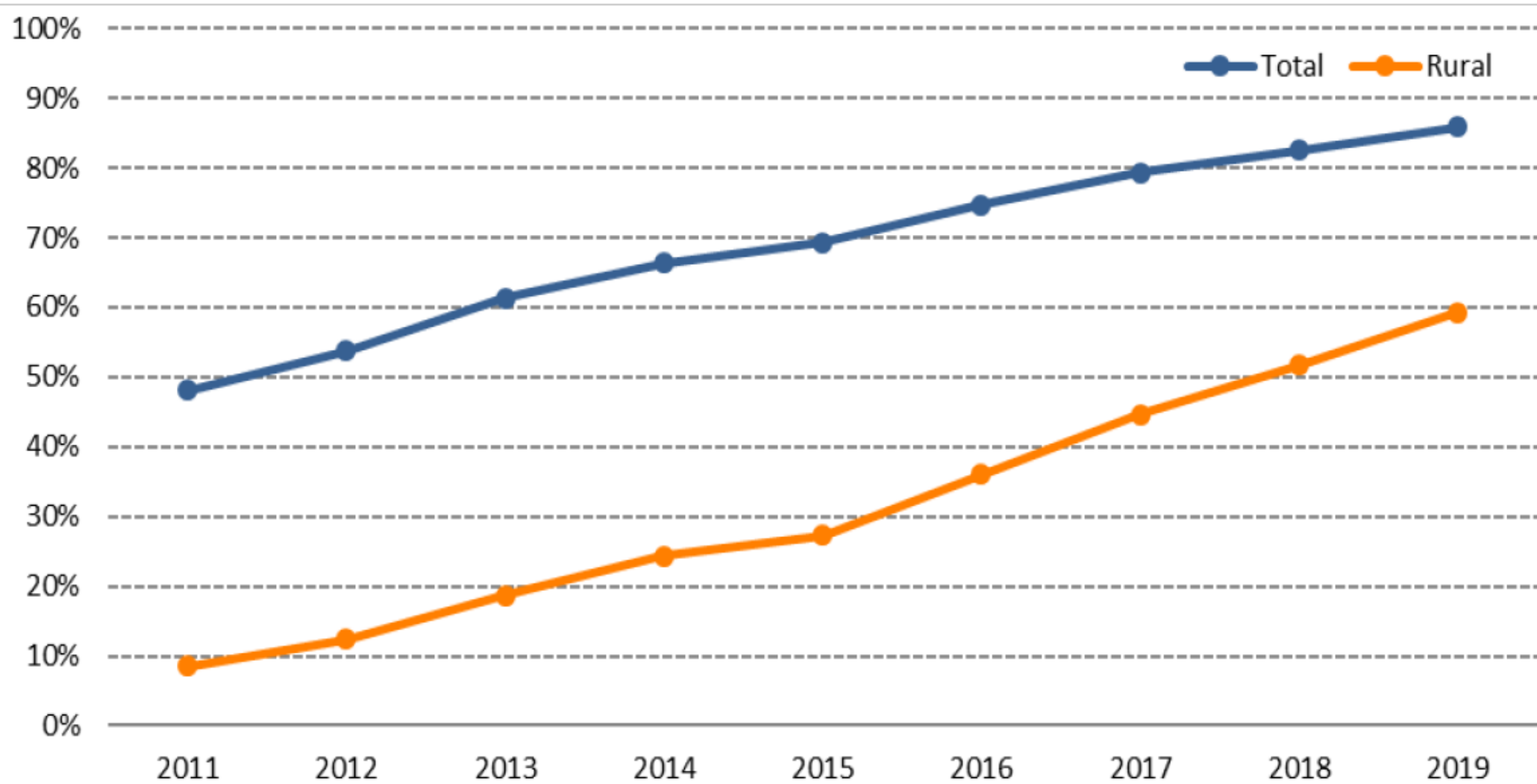
26% of EU
population
(116 million
people)

15% of EU
jobs

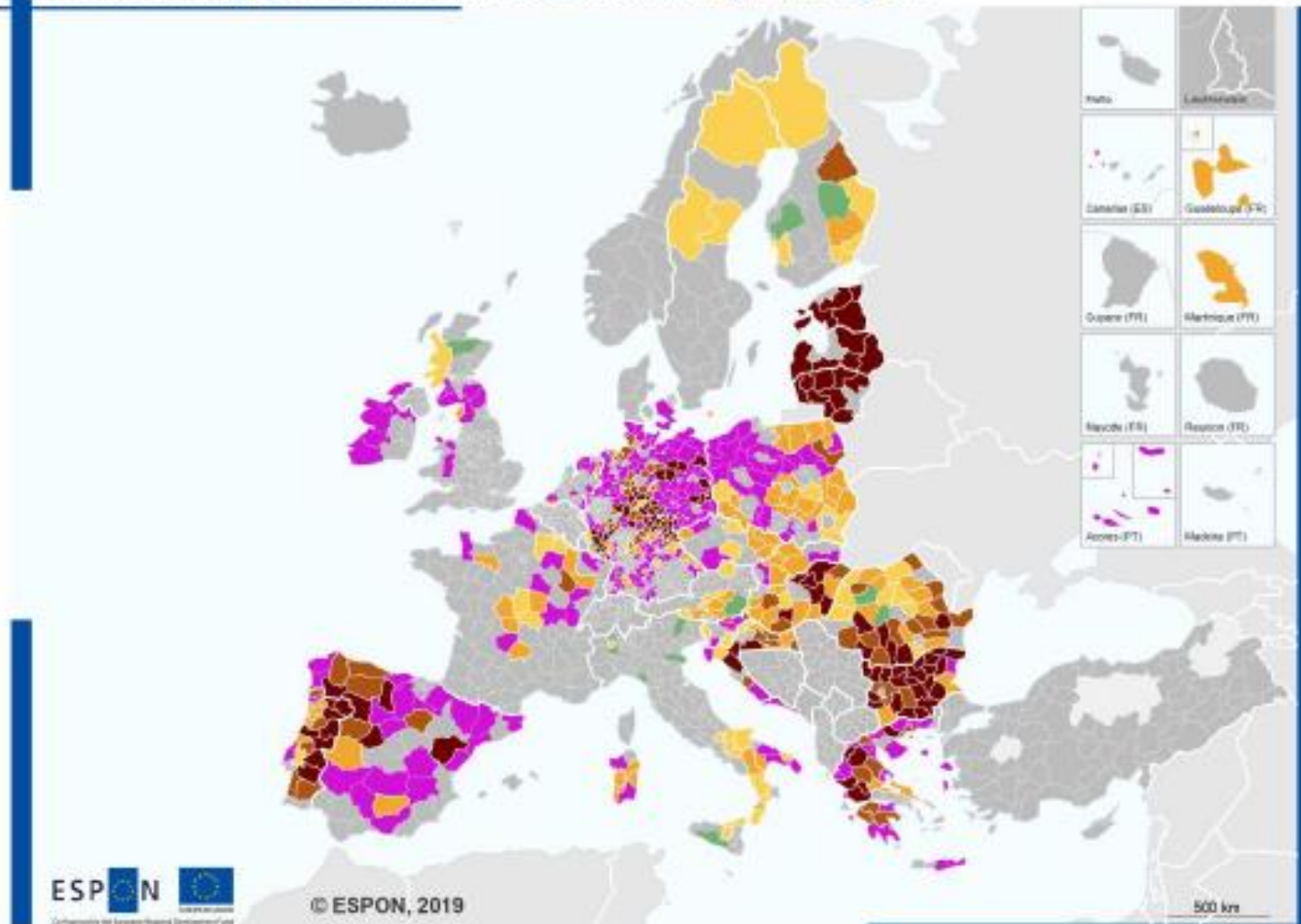
CHALLENGES OF OUR RURAL AREAS

- ▶ Access to public and private services - 40% lack access to high speed internet
- ▶ 59% of rural population in regions demographically shrinking
- ▶ A number of rural areas facing the twin-challenge of low income and rapidly declining population

Next Generation Access (NGA) broadband coverage in the EU (%households)



Future demographic trends 2017-2032 in shrinking rural regions



© ESPON, 2019

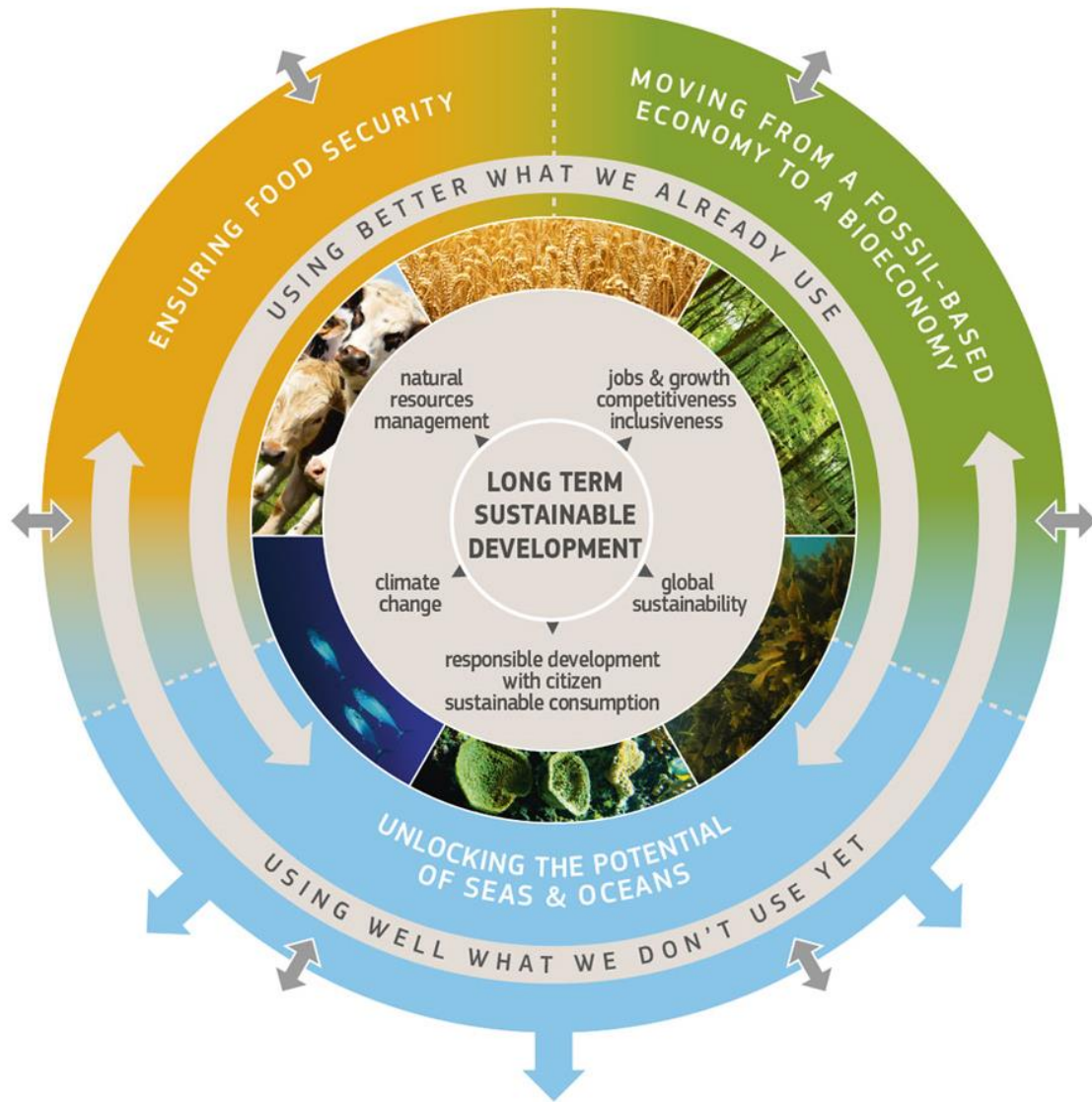
Future demographic trends in shrinking intermediate and rural regions (NUTS 3) in 2017-2032:



Regional level NUTS 3 (2013)
 Source: ESPON ESCAPE, 2019
 Origin of data: Eurostat, 2019
 © UMS RIATE for administrative boundaries

*Intermediate and rural regions (NUTS3) with population growth in 2001-2016 and expected population decrease in 2017-2032.

MANY OPPORTUNITIES AHEAD



- ▶ Circular and bio-based economy
- ▶ Ecological and digital transition
- ▶ Recovery from COVID 19 crisis and changes to society which rural areas could benefit from (i.e. increased teleworking, appreciation for green spaces...)
- ▶ ...



Vision for rural areas

Why now?

- ▶ Signaling that the Commission takes rural areas seriously
- ▶ Addressing pressing issues for rural areas from demographic change to connectivity, the risk of poverty and limited access to services.
- ▶ Highlighting new challenges and opportunities (including links to COVID 19 recovery)



How?

- ▶ AGRI and REGIO Commissioners work together under the coordination of VP Suica.
- ▶ Public Consultation with people living in rural areas, local and regional authorities.
- ▶ Ensuring specific needs of rural areas are duly taken into account both under the Cohesion policy programmes and under the CAP Strategic Plans for the period 2021-2027

State of play

Overview of the current situation and next steps

Public consultation

- ▶ **Roadmap** (feedback open from 22/7 to 9/9)
- ▶ **Online questionnaire** published on 07/09 til 30/11
- ▶ **Eurobarometer** (27,237 interviews in all Member States)
- ▶ **3 events at European Week of Regions and Cities**, one with 3 Commissioners (13/10/2020)
- ▶ **Foresight Thematic group** ongoing
- ▶ **Final conference** organised by the ENRD (March 2021)
- ▶ **Own initiative opinion** prepared by EESC and ongoing by CoR on rural issues

Online Public consultation (until 30 November 2020)

<https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/have-your-say/initiatives/12525-Long-term-vision-for-rural-areas/public-consultation>

Comments / questions:
EC-VISION-RURAL-AREAS@ec.europa.eu



Vision for rural areas

Package to download

- ▶ Toolkit under preparation
- ▶ Enables any rural group to:
 - ▶ Assess their area
 - ▶ Contribute to RV
- ▶ Complements on-line questionnaire and foresight
- ▶ Highlights local examples/stories

Rural Development Fund

EU Rural Development Fund (EAFRD)



Examples of measures:

M10 Agri-environment and climate

M07 Basic services and village renewal in rural areas

M16 Cooperation

M19 Support for LEADER local development (CLLD)

Examples of projects financed by EAFRD



Digital exclusion - Workshops to combat digital exclusion in rural areas

EAFRD-funded projects

A LAG organised a series of tailored workshops to combat digital exclusion among people over 50 years old.

Summary

A local action group organised a series of three-day workshops in nine municipalities for residents over 50 years old with limited computer skills. The workshops were conducted by a professional trainer. After passing a competency test and committing to 100% attendance at the workshops the participants received tablets and keyboards to continue practising their skills.



These workshops were organised in response to the identified need to develop computer skills among inhabitants aged over 50 in the LAG area. The project promoter is the LAG Northern Jura Partnership Association.

Examples of projects financed by EAFRD

Work training and placements in rural Italy
The 'Terre e Comuni' (Land and Municipalities) project provided training and work placements to young unemployed immigrants and local people in Frosinone, central Italy. It has resulted in a new association working in close cooperation with the local asylum centre to provide new opportunities to young immigrants.



© Silvia Di Passio, European Union, 2016



© Silvia Di Passio, European Union, 2016

Young Italians and Immigrants followed a course of agricultural training together.

Examples of projects financed by EAFRD

Cost-effective mobile healthcare services in rural Finland - The "*Mallu does the rounds*" project provided an easy-to-access medical service to people in rural areas of Finland using the Mallu bus. The bus met important needs amongst rural populations as well as providing the social and health care authorities with vital information about rural healthcare needs.



More projects at the European Network for Rural Development Website
<http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/>

Vision for rural areas



Thank you for your attention!

#RuralVisionEU