

14th Rural Networks Steering Group

**Vision
for rural
areas**

8 October 2020
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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



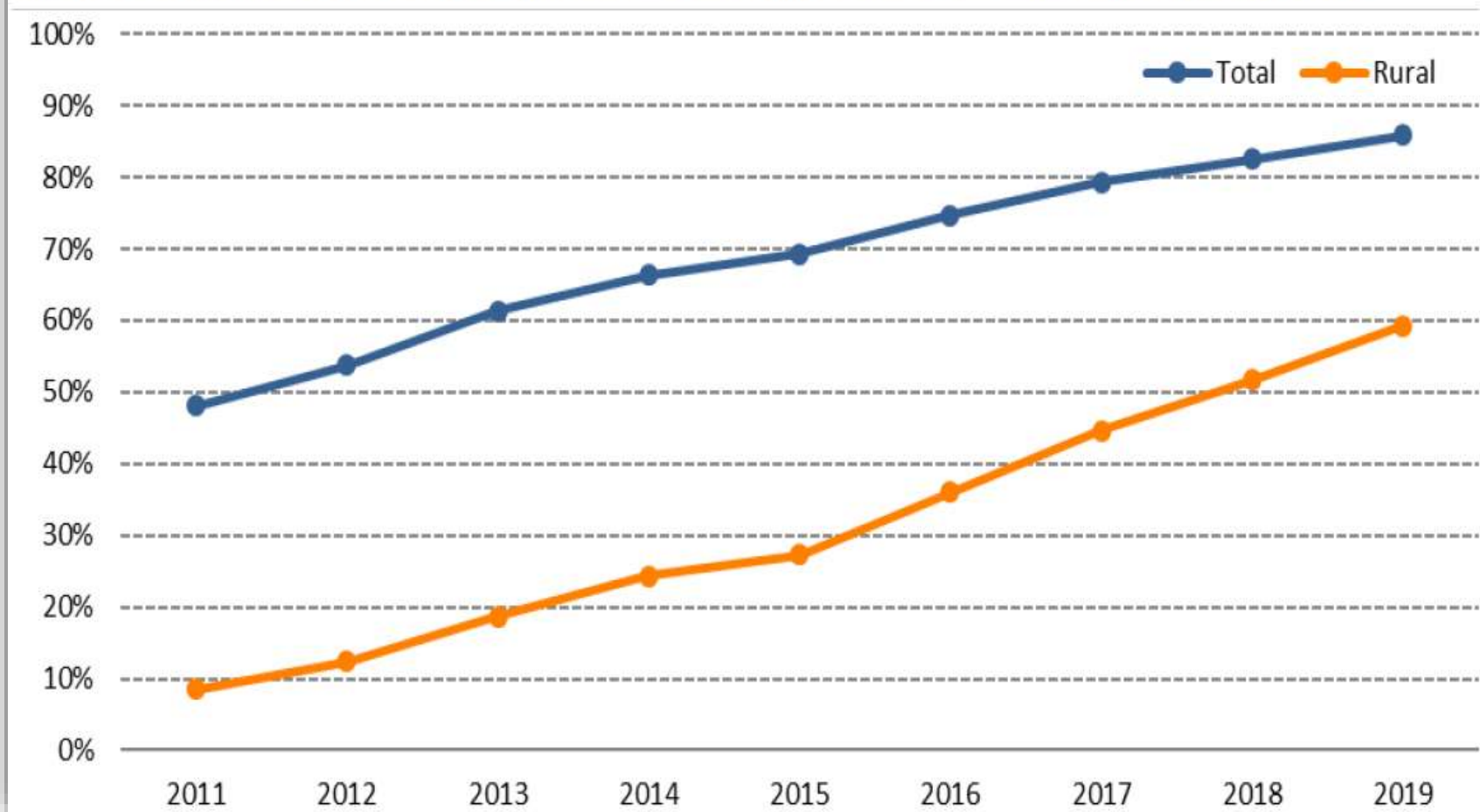
EU RURAL AREAS

- ▶ 96 million people
- ▶ 45% of the EU's territory predominantly rural
- ▶ 17% of EU Jobs
- ▶ 13% of EU value added

With a number of challenges...

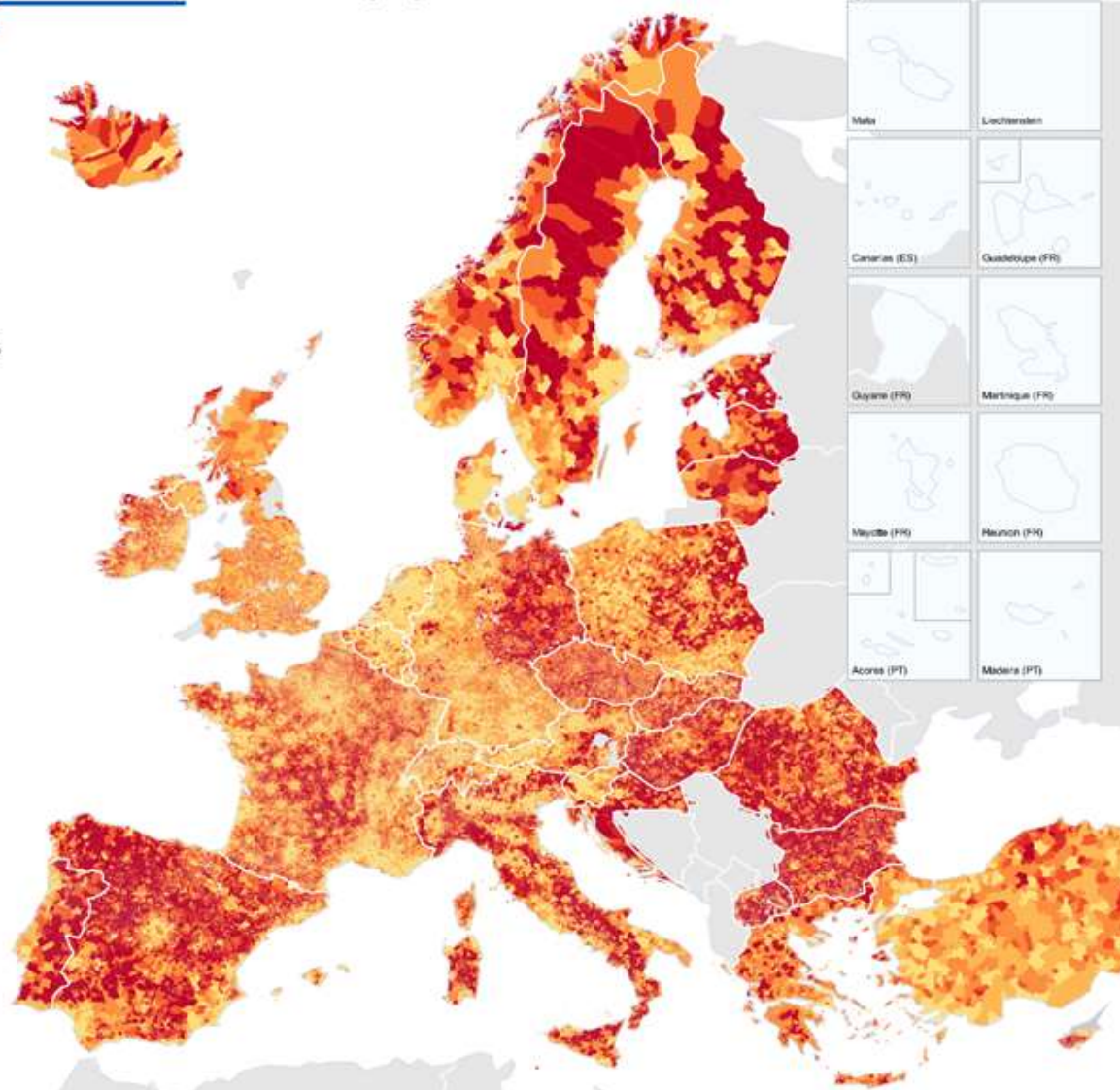
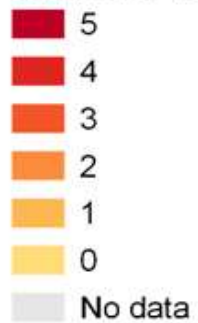
- ▶ 40% lack access to high speed internet
- ▶ 59% of rural population in regions demographically shrinking
- ▶ ...

Figure 6 Next generation access (NGA) broadband coverage in the EU (% of households), 2011-2019



Number of consecutive decades with population decrease in European LAU2 units, 1961-2011

Number of decades



© ESPON, 2019

Data for Denmark, Greece, Lithuania, Malta, Portugal, Slovenia and Turkey is represented at LAU1 level

Regional level: LAU1-2 (2012)
Source: ESPON ESCAPE, 2019
Origin of data: Eurostat, 2019

© USM RIATE and GISCO for administrative boundaries



European Commission



EU RURAL AREAS

And 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)

Vision for rural areas



#RuralVisionEU

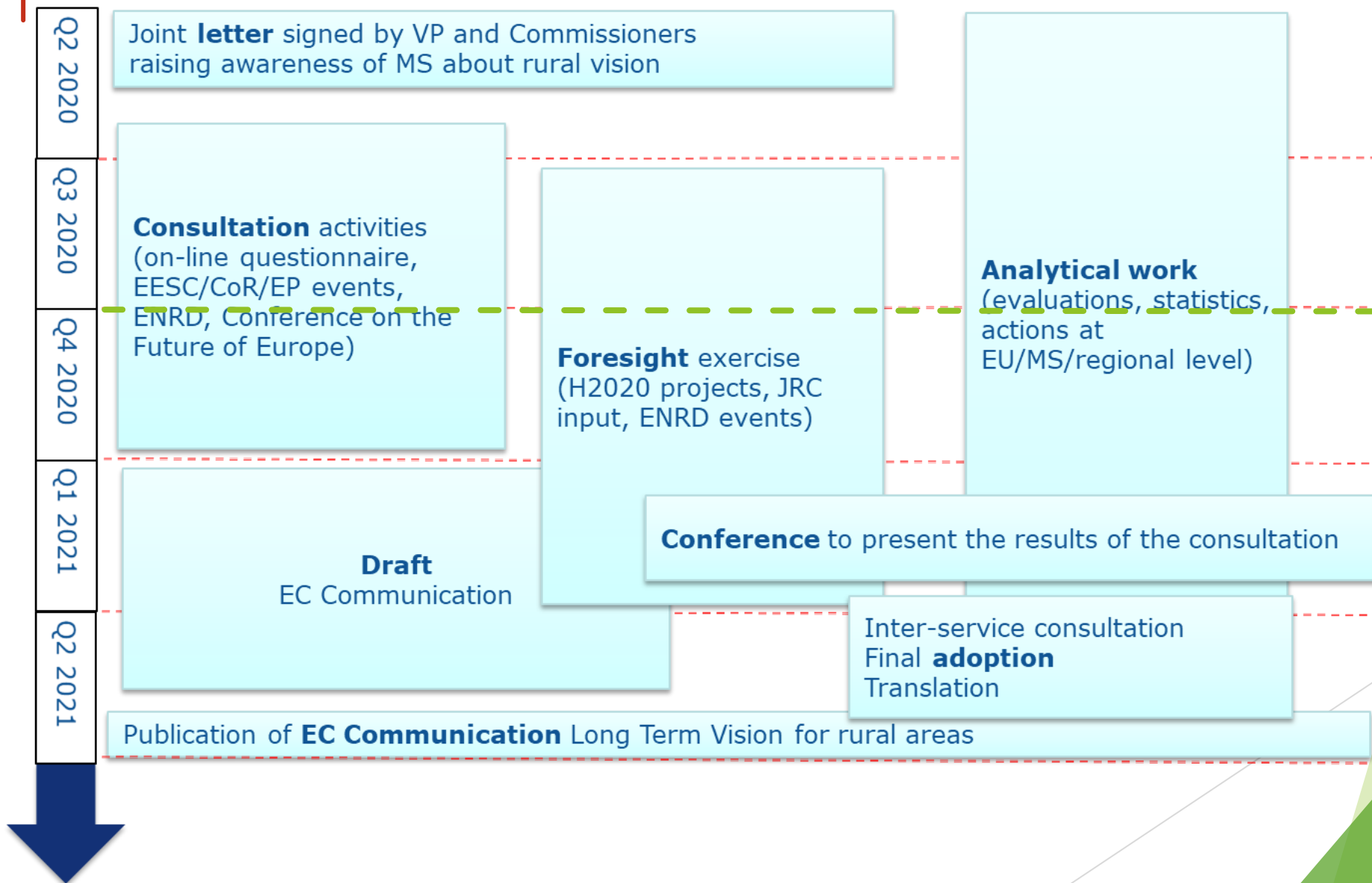
How?

- ▶ 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

Overview of the process



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)
- ▶ Thematic groups organised by ENRD
- ▶ Final conference organised by the ENRD (March 2021)
- ▶ Own initiative opinions being prepared by EESC and 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



Vision for rural areas



Thank you for your attention!

#RuralVisionEU