

## Addressing Basic Social Needs in Rural Areas

*Presentation by Franz Wolfmayr (EASPD)*

- Policies and funding streams often work in **silos**. We have to **bridge the gaps between policies** to better address real social needs.
- The needs of people with disabilities and of elderly people are often forgotten. Looking to figures we can see, this is not a minor, it is a major challenge: **17,6% of the population aged over 15 in the EU member states are living with a disability.**
- It is a legal obligation by the **UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities** to create conditions to include and ensure participation of disabled people. The EU and all the EU Member States signed this convention, and it applies to the local level as well. All these levels **have to develop strategies on how to realise these rights** according to their responsibilities.
- If we create appropriate conditions for people with disabilities and elderly people, this will have an **impact also on other groups**.
- In the development of the strategies and the action plans, and the creation of activities we have to **involve the target groups directly**, because they know best what their specific needs are. Individual needs are different and the approach to address these should reflect this. Focused and targeted interventions can be cheaper and more effective.
- The **local level has to take the responsibility to implement the strategies**, and at this level you see whether it is effective or not. **All sectors (not only social) have responsibility** for implementation and mainstreaming of these approaches.