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## Project of the month

### Global Eco – InnoEco Circular Economy in the Countryside

Discover Global Eco – InnoEco, a LEADER transnational cooperation project (Estonia, Finland, Italy, Latvia, Portugal) aiming at boosting the green economy and sustainable businesses in rural areas! Relevant topics and issues being covered through the exchange of best practices between the project partners include: innovation in agriculture, waste management, biodynamic farming, renewable energy, green economy, forestry and the agri-food sector.

Find out more about this project [here](#).

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## News

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### European Commission launches debate on responding to the impact of an ageing population

The European Commission has presented a [green paper](#) to launch a **broad policy debate on the challenges and opportunities of Europe's ageing society**. It sets out the impact of this pronounced demographic trend across our economy and society and invites the public to express their views on how to respond to this in a [public consultation](#) which will run until **21 April 2021**. The Green Paper on Ageing also signals some territorial dimensions of the issue, including for rural areas. It is the first outcome from the Commission's June 2020 [report on the impact of demographic change](#), and will be followed by the long-term vision for rural areas, that will also look into the question of demography.

More information is available in the [press release](#), as well as on the dedicated [EC Demography webpage](#).

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### Rural Vision Week: Imagining the future of Europe's rural areas

**The ENRD, in close cooperation with the European Commission, is organising a virtual event - 'Rural Vision Week: Imagining the future of Europe's rural areas' between 22 and 26 March 2021.**

This interactive event will include high level presentations and discussions, a marketplace, workshops and 'fringe' activities. These will involve European stakeholder participants working together to contribute to the preparation of a long-term vision for the future of EU rural areas in relation to which the Commission is scheduled to adopt a Communication later this summer. The registration for the Rural Vision Week will open on 26 February 2021 and more information, such as the full agenda and the programme of activities, will follow soon! Check our [event page](#) and social media channels regularly to stay up-to-date!

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### New edition of Rural Connections magazine

Download the latest [Rural Connections](#) magazine in English to read news and views from rural development stakeholders, updates on recent EU policy developments and the latest ENRD activities.

This edition focuses on the link between the environment, the new CAP and the European Green Deal and brings the finalists of the Rural Inspiration Awards 2020 – ENRD’s competition recognising EAFRD-supported projects from across the EU - back into the spotlight. The publication will soon be available in French, German, Italian, Spanish and Polish.

Don't miss the next editions - [subscribe to ENRD publications!](#)

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### Help us evaluate LEADER!

A new [EU-wide Leader Evaluation](#), commissioned by DG AGRI and targeting Managing Authorities and Local Action Group (LAG) Managers, is currently underway. The aim is to explore the impact of LEADER on the CAP strategic goal of Balanced Territorial Development across Europe, and at the same time to find out what makes LEADER work in different contexts and how effectively it meets local needs. The study is being undertaken by a partnership of the Countryside and Community Research Institute (CCRI, UK), the Austrian Institute for Regional Studies (ÖIR) and Analysis for Economic Decisions (ADE, Belgium), with additional support from research organisations across Europe. The survey will be open for feedback until **23 March 2021**. There are two different questionnaires: [one for LAG Managers](#) and [one for Management Authority personnel](#).

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### Rural Innovation: Developing real solutions for smart and resilient rural areas in Europe

Almost one third of Europeans live in rural areas that make up over three quarters of the EU’s total land area. These areas contribute an enormous amount to European societies and culture and are also a key arena in the fight against climate change and for better resource management. **The European Commission published a [Results Pack](#) featuring 9 EU-funded research projects that have been working hard to nurture rural innovation potential and positively contribute to the EU’s long-term vision for rural areas.** Rural innovation potential is actually high and powered by a strong natural resource-base and community spirit, a smart utilisation of tacit knowledge and the use of cooperation and social innovation to overcome barriers, such as weaker infrastructures and services.

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### OECD report: Making better policies for food systems

The OECD reports that there is increasing recognition of the crucial role played by food systems in achieving Sustainable Development Goals and its new publication titled [‘Making better policies for food systems’](#) explores this role. The report focuses on three sets of questions: What has been the actual performance of food systems around the world, and what has been the role of policies? How should policy makers go about designing policies that are coherent across different dimensions such as food security and nutrition, livelihoods, and environmental sustainability? What are common factors complicating the task of achieving better policies, and what can be done about them?

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### Rural Inspiration Awards 2021: Shortlisted entries and on-line public voting

The ENRD CP will soon announce the shortlisted finalists for the [Rural Inspiration Awards 2021](#) and open the on-line public voting for the Popular Vote category. Our experts selected 20 out of 125 entries based on criteria such as projects’ direct benefits, replicability, and networking value. Don’t miss your chance to vote for your choice to be winner of the Popular Vote category from amongst the 20 shortlisted projects! The online voting will start in March and will remain open until shortly before the Award ceremony which will take place during the ENRD [‘Rural Vision Week’](#) end of March 2021.

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## Experiences of rural areas with EU's COVID-19 response measures

This [report](#), commissioned by the European Committee of the Regions, provides a 'policy fitness check' on the specific measures introduced by the European Union to alleviate the socio-economic consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic in rural areas.

The report analyses the use of these measures by regional authorities and identifies some of the challenges linked to their implementation on the ground.

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## Networking goes digital!

The ENRD CP office in Brussels remains closed until further notice due to the COVID-19 outbreak but ENRD activities are all going ahead using digital approaches adapted to the new context. The team is as busy as ever networking, organising and delivering virtual events, producing publications and keeping you abreast of the latest news. We invite you to keep an eye on the [Upcoming Events](#) section of our website, where we list relevant forthcoming events. Feel free to contact us at any time!

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## Past Events

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### 3rd meeting of the ENRD Thematic Group on the Long Term Rural Vision

The 3rd meeting of the [ENRD Thematic Group #Rural2040](#) aimed to start a discussion about the common strands and the step changes needed to ensure the future Long Term Rural Vision becomes a reality for rural communities across Europe. The discussion drew on the preliminary JRC foresight scenarios and on the main messages that have been coming out of the work around the Vision carried out so far (e.g. in Member States, related research projects, other organisations).

Presentations from the day are available on the [event page](#).

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### Preparing the CAP Strategic Plans: programming regional-level interventions

This ENRD workshop, targeting representatives of Member States and regions, aimed to further encourage the exchange on the practical aspects of addressing regional and/or territorial specificities through the future CAP Strategic Plans, with a particular focus on identifying key obstacles, possible solutions and needs for additional support.

Presentations from the day are available on the [event page](#).

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### 19th National Rural Network (NRN) Meeting

The 19th NRN meeting was organised by the ENRD Contact Point jointly with the Luxembourg Rural Network. The main objectives of the meeting were to discuss the role of NRNs in supporting and promoting transnational cooperation under LEADER and in future also for EIP-AGRI Operational Groups, to provide space to exchange on forthcoming rural networking activities and to consider how NRNs have so far contributed to stakeholder engagement activities around the development of the Long Term Vision for Rural Areas.

Presentations from the day are available on the [event page](#).

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### The Transition Regulation, European Union Recovery Instrument (EURI) and the Extension of the RDPs

Participants in this ENRD workshop discussed the recently adopted [transitional provisions](#) extending the legal framework of the current CAP to the years 2021 and 2022 as well as information on the integration of the [European Union Recovery Instrument \(EURI\)](#) funds in the RDPs. MS exchanged on practical aspects of the related RDP amendments and how to best use the additional resources made available for rural development by the EURI.

Presentations from the day are available on the [event page](#).

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## Publications

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### **Vibrant rural areas: EAFRD Projects Brochure in seven languages**

This edition of the [EAFRD Projects Brochure](#) presents EAFRD-supported projects from the 2014-2020 RDPs that have successfully improved services, jobs or social inclusion in rural areas and is available in seven languages.

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### **Developing local strategic approaches to address green issues**

This [highlights report](#) presents the findings from the [LEADER Thematic Lab on 'Developing local strategic approaches to address green issues'](#). Participants exchanged views and practical experiences related to the potential contribution of LEADER and Local Action Groups (LAGs) to 'greening' and European Green Deal objectives locally. They also discussed key factors in local strategic approaches, including re-localisation, resources, capacities, setting local objectives and networking methods.

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### **Valorising and communicating successful projects**

This report presents the [highlights](#) of the [Workshop for National Rural Networks on Valorising and Communicating Successful Projects](#). Participants exchanged experiences on how to identify and demonstrate the key success factors and the added value of a project, and lessons shared on the communication of these.

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### **The Common Network Statistics (CNS) Y6 Summary Report**

The Common Network Statistics (CNS) [report](#) provides an insight into the quantitative outputs of National Rural Networks (NRNs) in 2019 and highlights the various activities of the NRNs.

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## Events

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#### **25 February 2021**

[Preparing the CAP Strategic Plans: Designing Eco-Schemes](#), ENRD Contact Point, Webinar

#### **25 February 2021**

[Trends affecting regeneration of rural areas in Europe](#), RURALIZATION project, Webinar

#### **26 February 2021**

[3rd meeting of the Thematic Group on the European Green Deal and rural areas](#), ENRD Contact Point, Webinar

#### **03 - 05 March 2021**

[Bioeconomy innovation week](#), POWER4BIO, Webinar

#### **03 - 04 March 2021**

[Regional climate weeks](#), UNFCCC, Webinar

#### **03 March 2021**

[Regenerative and biodiversity enriching agriculture](#), Euroacademy Association, Webinar

#### **04 March 2021**

[Biodiversity and Farm to Fork strategies](#), EURACTIV, Webinar

#### **05 March 2021**

[Preparing regions for demographic change](#), OECD, Webinar

#### **09 March 2021**

[Soil, carbon sequestration and water protection](#), Baltic Sea Action Group (BSAG), Webinar

#### **09 - 10 March 2021**

[Copernicus and the CAP](#), Copernicus, Webinar

#### **10 March 2021**

[Ceremony for the innovation award for women farmers](#), Copa Cogeca, Webinar

**11 March 2021**

[Future soil management](#), BonaRes project, Webinar

**15 March 2021**

[Public policies supporting Demo Farms](#), NEFERTITI project, Webinar

**16 - 17 March 2021**

[Improving data-management and information systems for the purpose of evaluation](#), ENRD Evaluation Helpdesk, Webinar

**16 - 18 March 2021**

[Internet of Food and Farm](#), Internet of Food and Farm 2020 project, Webinar

**18 - 19 March 2021**

[Sustainability of EU farming systems](#), UNISECO project, Webinar

**22 - 26 March 2021**

[Rural Vision Week: Imagining the future of Europe's rural areas](#), ENRD Contact Point, Webinar

**23 March 2021**

[Forum for the future of agriculture](#), Annual conference, Webinar

**24 - 25 March 2021**

[Towards carbon neutral agriculture](#), EIP-AGRI, Webinar

**25 - 26 March 2021**

[Territorial approaches to innovation: spotlight on rural areas](#), AER, Webinar

**13 - 14 April 2021**

[Healthy soils for Europe: sustainable management through knowledge and practice](#), EIP-AGRI, Webinar

**19 - 22 April 2021**

[Global symposium on soil biodiversity](#), FAO and GSP, Webinar

**21 April 2021**

[Challenges and solutions to cope with ageing in rural Europe](#), SILVER SMEs, Webinar

**29 April 2021**

[How could your rural community become smart?](#), SMARTVillages project Final conference, Webinar

**25 May 2021**

[15th Rural Networks Steering Group Meeting](#), ENRD Contact Point, Webinar

**31 May - 04 June 2021**

[EU Green Week 2021](#), the European Commission, Webinar

**23 - 24 June 2021**

[European Research and Innovation Days](#), DG RTD, Webinar

**20 - 23 July 2021**

[Raising the impact of agricultural economics](#), The European Association of Agricultural Economists - EAAE, Webinar

**06 - 10 September 2021**

[Organic world congress](#), Webinar

**11 - 14 October 2021**

[European Week of Regions and Cities](#), The European Commission

**10 - 14 April 2022**

[European farming systems conference](#), The Mediterranean Institute for Agriculture, Environment and Development (MED)

**ENRD Contact Point**

Rue de la Loi, 38 (bte 4)

B-1040 Bruxelles

[info@enrd.eu](mailto:info@enrd.eu)

Tel. +32 2 801 38 00

<https://enrd.ec.europa.eu>

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