

**19<sup>th</sup>** EUROPEAN WEEK of  
REGIONS and CITIES

11 - 14 OCT  
2021

*Together for Recovery*

*Long Term Vision  
for EU's  
Rural Areas*

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#EURegionsWeek







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# Vision for rural areas

## What is the Vision?

- A comprehensive view on rural areas  
Bottom-up preparation
- **All EU policies – not only the CAP**
- Green Deal and COVID 19 recovery context
- Analysis, Vision 2040, **Action Plan**
- All governance levels + **stakeholders** in implementation



# Long Term Vision for EU's Rural Areas



- **Communication**
- **Staff Working Document with analysis, EU policies and foresight (3 parts)**
- **Synopsis Report of the public consultation**
- **Factsheet**

[https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/new-push-european-democracy/long-term-vision-rural-areas\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/new-push-european-democracy/long-term-vision-rural-areas_en)

# Vision for rural areas



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## Challenges in rural areas

- Demographic change
- Low income levels
- Limited access to services
- Low connectivity
- Feeling of being overlooked
- Limited resilience



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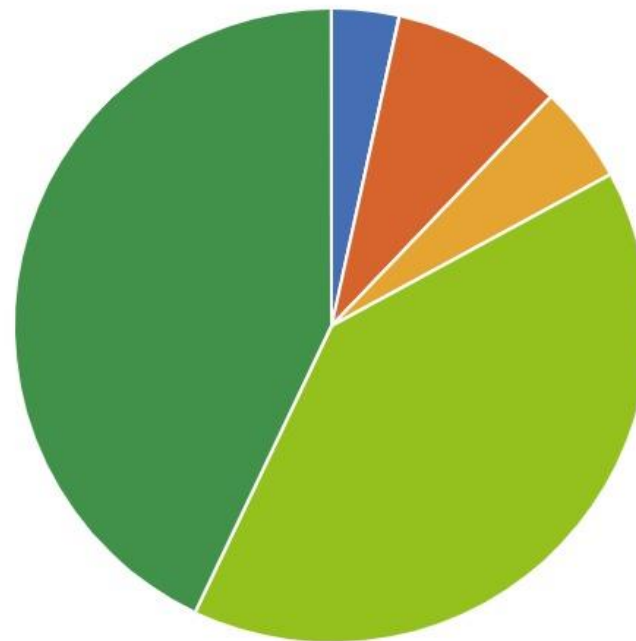


# EU rural areas

- 83% of land
- 30% of population

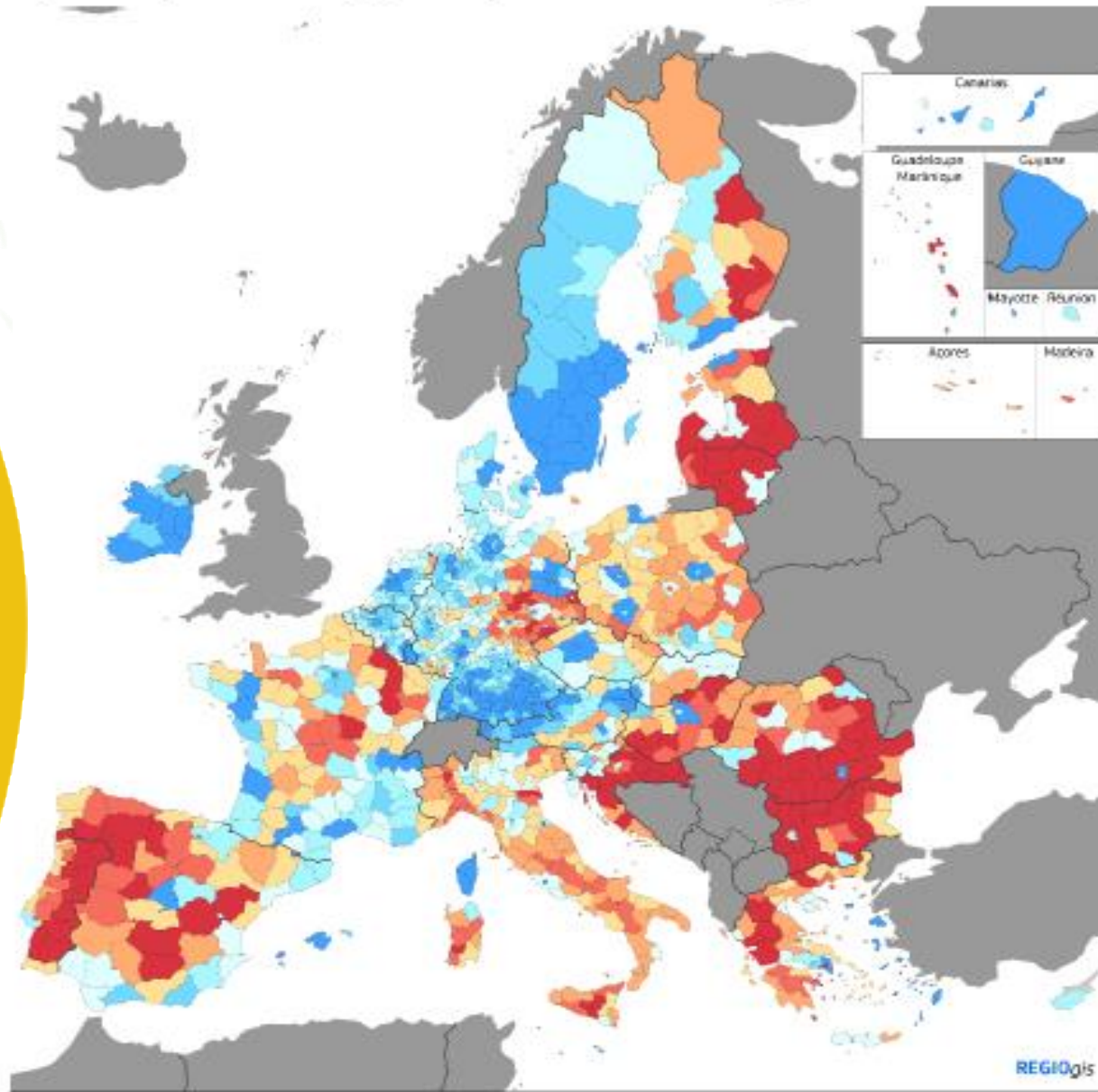
EU land area, 2018 (in million hectares and percentage)

Source: LUISA Base Map 2018 (EC-JRC)

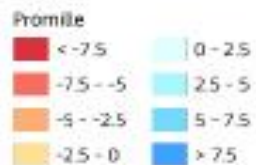


- City
- Town and Suburb, close to a city
- Town and Suburb, remote
- Rural area, close to a city
- Rural area, remote

# Population growth (2014-2019)



Average annual crude population growth rate in NUTS3 regions, 2014-2019



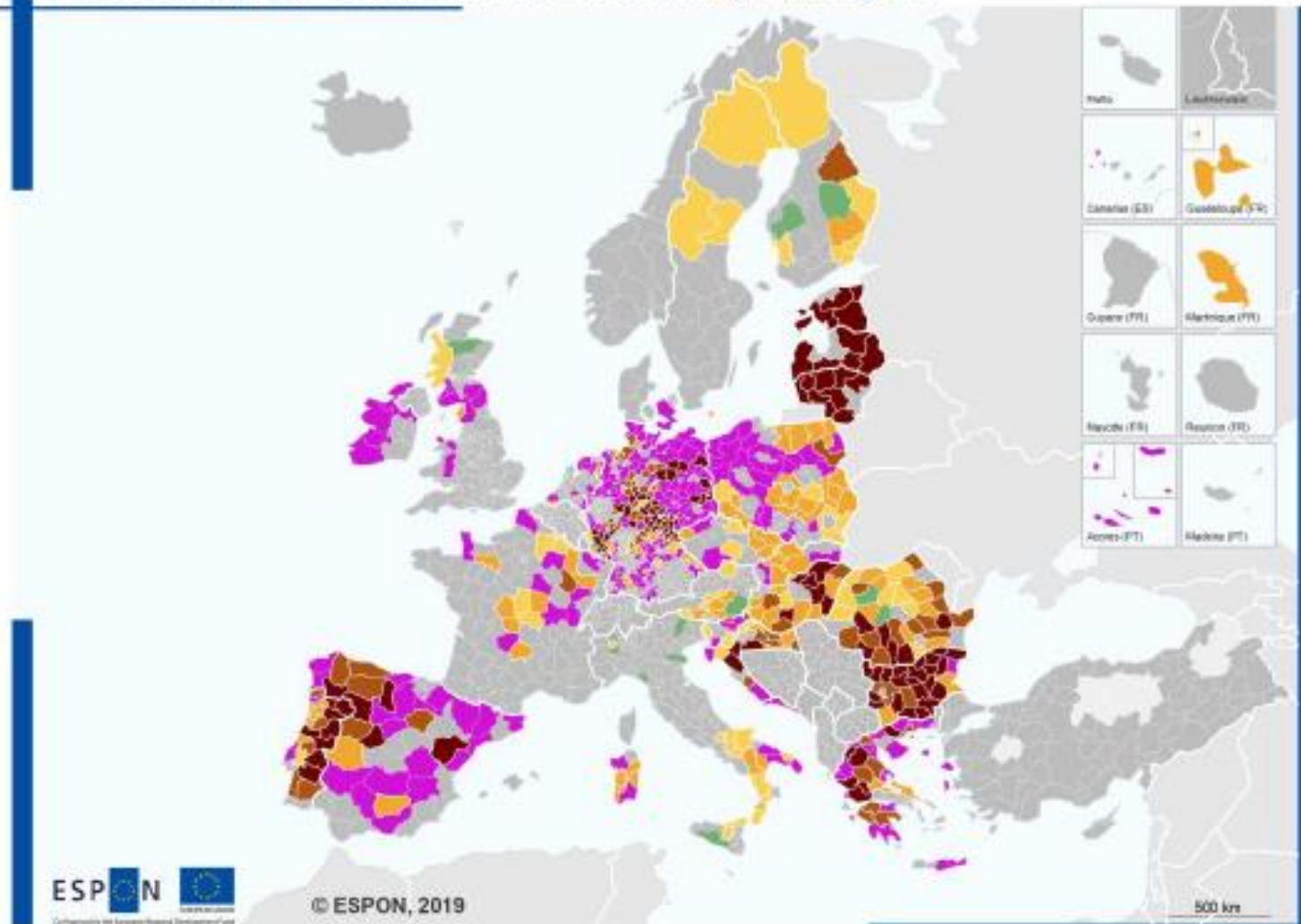
Source: DG REGIO based on Eurostat data



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# Demographic trends

## Future demographic trends 2017-2032 in shrinking rural regions



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.



# Digital gap

## 2020 Goals Digital Agenda for Europe

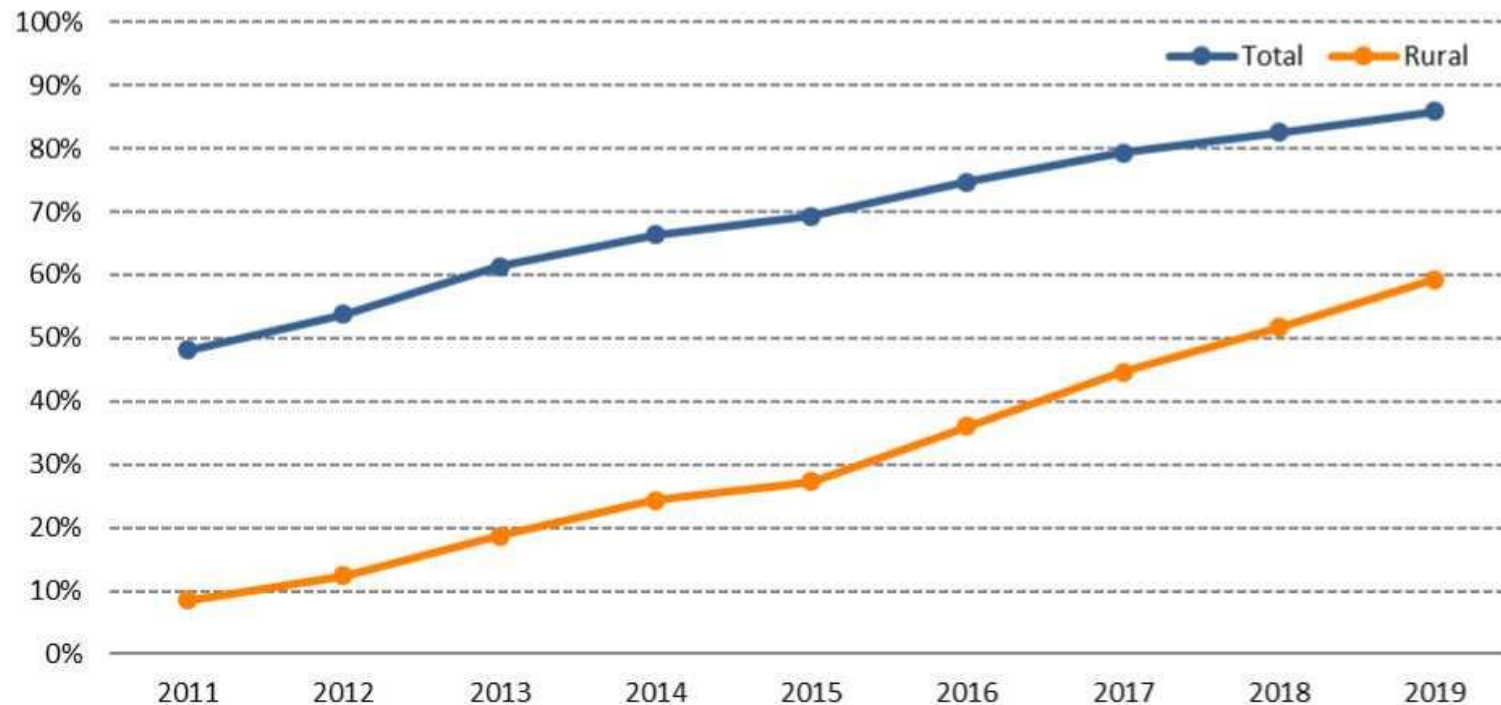
- Universal 30 Mbps coverage (NGA)
- 50% of households BB subscription  $\geq 100$ Mbps
- VHCN huge coverage increase (10% 2011; 44% in 2019), but growth slower in rural areas (from 2% to 20% same period)

## 2025 EU triple connectivity objectives

- Gigabit connectivity for all socio-economic drivers (schools, providers of public services, etc.)
- All urban areas & major terrestrial transport paths 5G coverage
- All European households (rural/urban), Internet connectivity  $\geq 100$  Mbps upgradable to Gigabit

Source : DESI report 2020 (based on 2019 data)

NGA broadband coverage in the EU (% of households), 2011-2019



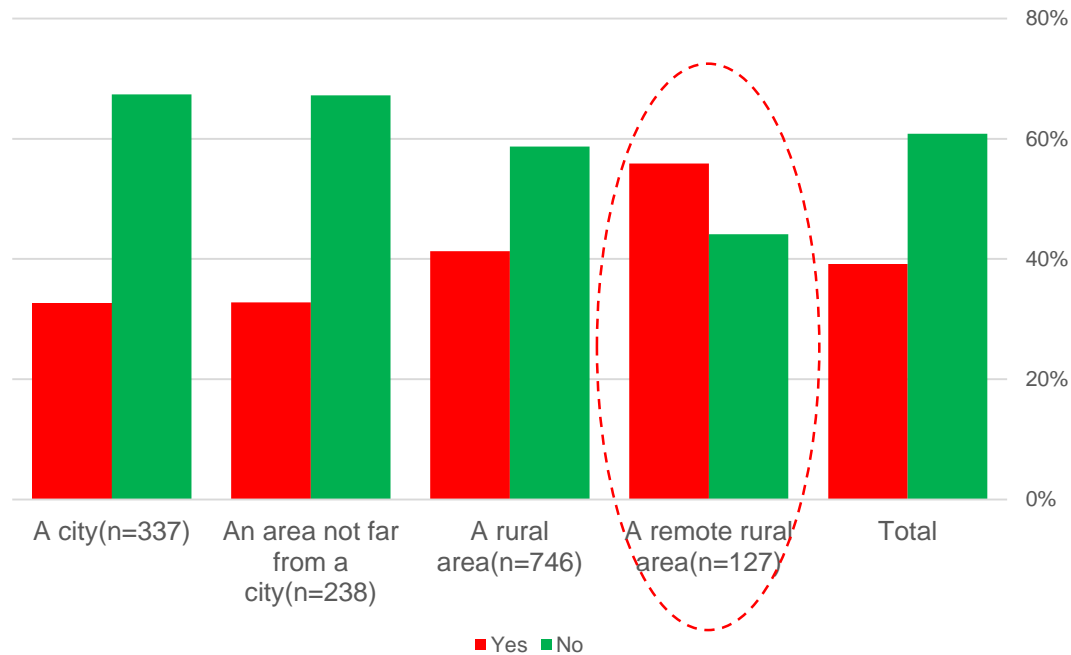
Source: IHS Markit, Omdia, Point Topic and VVA, Broadband coverage in Europe studies.

# Governance in rural areas

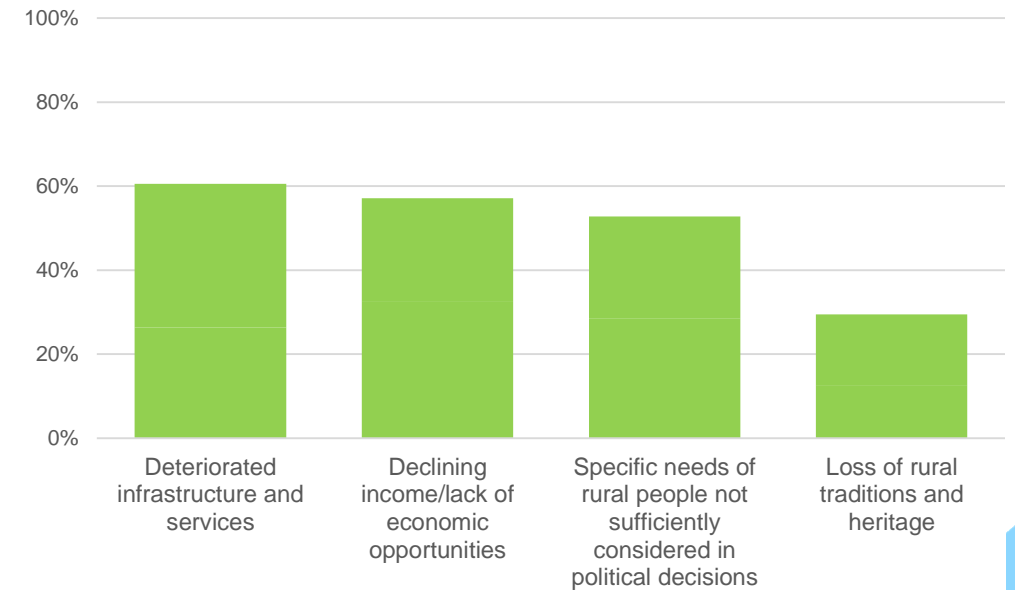
## Q13 Do you feel left behind by society?

Two out of five respondents feel left behind by society

- 39 % yes
- 61 % no



- **Reasons** seen as most important by those who do:
  - Deteriorated infrastructure and services
  - Lack of economic opportunities
  - No consideration of specific needs in political decision-making





# Vision for rural areas

## Opportunities in rural areas

- Key for ecosystem services
- Bio- and circular economy
- Ecological and digital transitions
- Increasing demands from society
- Recovery from COVID 19 crisis

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# The vision and its shared goals

## Stronger

Empowered communities  
Access to services  
Social innovation

## Connected

Digital connectivity  
Transport links and  
new mobilities

## Prosperous

Diversification of  
economic activities  
Sustainable food production

## Resilient

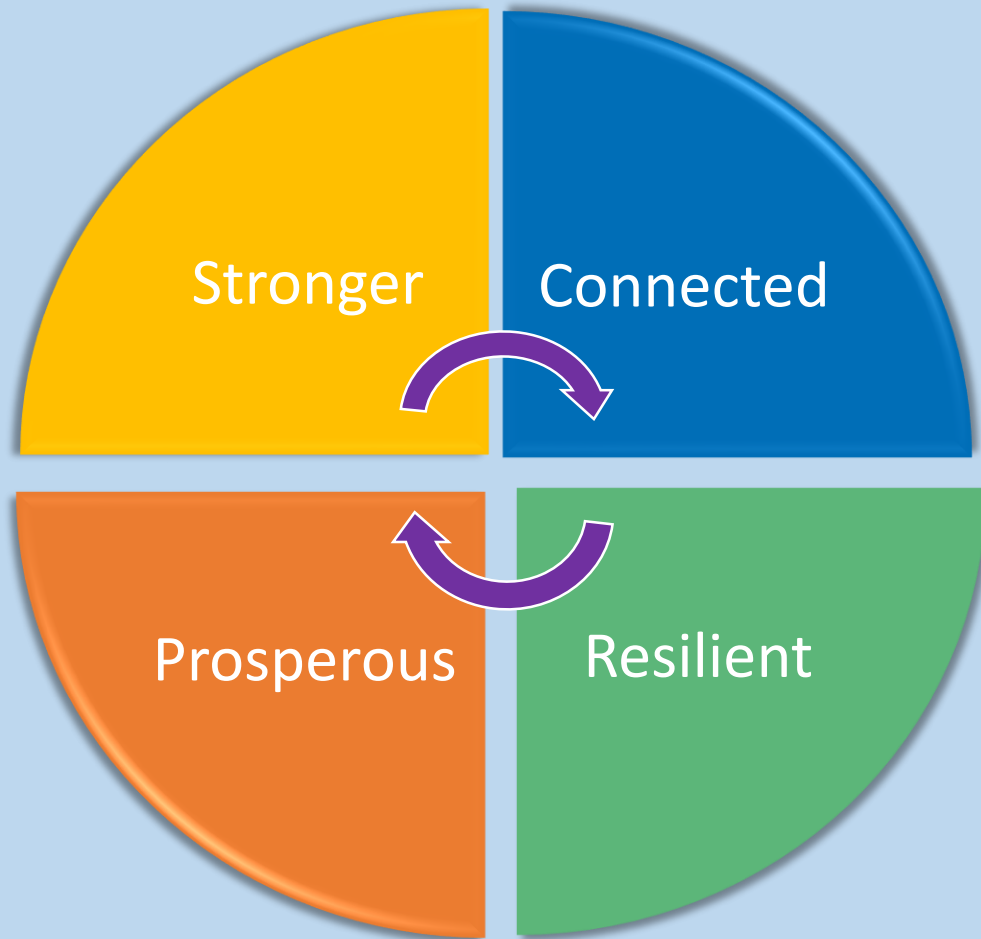
Resilience to climate change  
Environmental resilience  
Social resilience

# Shared goals for 2040





# The Rural Action Plan (RAP) - EC



## 9 flagships : (short titles from the Communication)

- ✓ Rural revitalisation platform
- ✓ Research and innovation for rural communities
- ✓ Sustainable multimodal mobility best practices for rural areas
- ✓ Rural Digital Futures
- ✓ Support rural municipalities in energy transition and fighting climate change
- ✓ Climate action in peatland through carbon farming
- ✓ A soil deal for Europe
- ✓ Social resilience and Women in rural areas
- ✓ Entrepreneurship and social economy in rural areas.

and  
15 accompanying  
actions

# Implementation of the Action Plan and Rural Pact

## Rural proofing

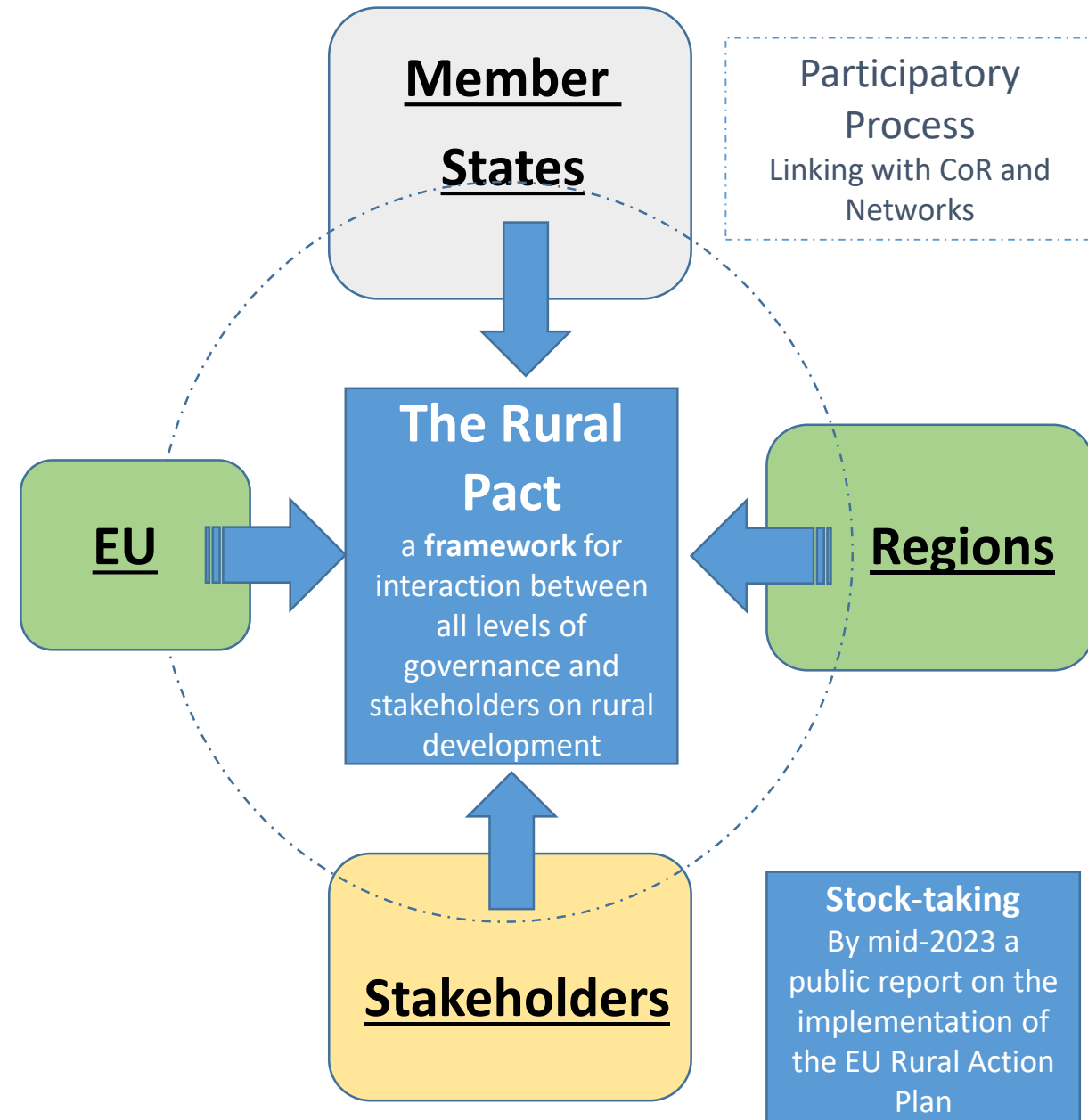
- Review of policies through rural lens
- Cork 2.0 declaration
- Commission Communication 2017

## EU Rural observatory

- Centralise data collection on rural areas
- Inform on the relevant initiatives
- Analyse the developments

## Combination of EU funds

- Toolkit to access to EU Funds for rural areas
- Linking with territorial handbook







## Key findings from the SWD on rural economy

- Economic under-performance at 75% of urban areas
- Youth unemployment and employment gap for women over urban levels
- Loss of agricultural employment
- **basic digital skills** the gap rural vs. cities 14 % points
- Ca 45% of respondents in public consultation find **economy and lack of services** a problem
- 92% of respondents found **social innovation** important for rural attractiveness



# RAP – enabling rural areas and service economy



- Rural Digital Futures + rural broadband roll-out
- Sustainable mobility + urban-rural linkages
- Research and innovation for rural communities “Horizon Europe”
- Promote the development of a sustainable bioeconomy
- Rural revitalisation platform “one stop-shop”
- ”New European Bauhaus”



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## Entrepreneurship in rural areas

- **Develop SMEs in rural areas through the Single Market Programme, COSME and European Enterprise Network**
- **Promote social economy business models in rural areas**
- **Boost retail and local supply chains in rural areas**
- **Educate and empower future entrepreneurs**
- **Synergy LEADER, CAP (PO8) + Cohesion policy (PO5) funding**

**Vision for rural areas**



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# Vision for rural areas

- **Coordinated EU funding**
- **CAP contribution**
  - Cohesion policy –territorial dimension
  - Other EU funding (social, health, mobility etc.)
  - Key role of agriculture and the primary sector
  - Focussed, territorial approach with integrated CAP Strategic Plans
  - Strong focus on green, (European Green Deal), social aspects and digitalization
  - Toolkit for EU funding 2022 (TBC)



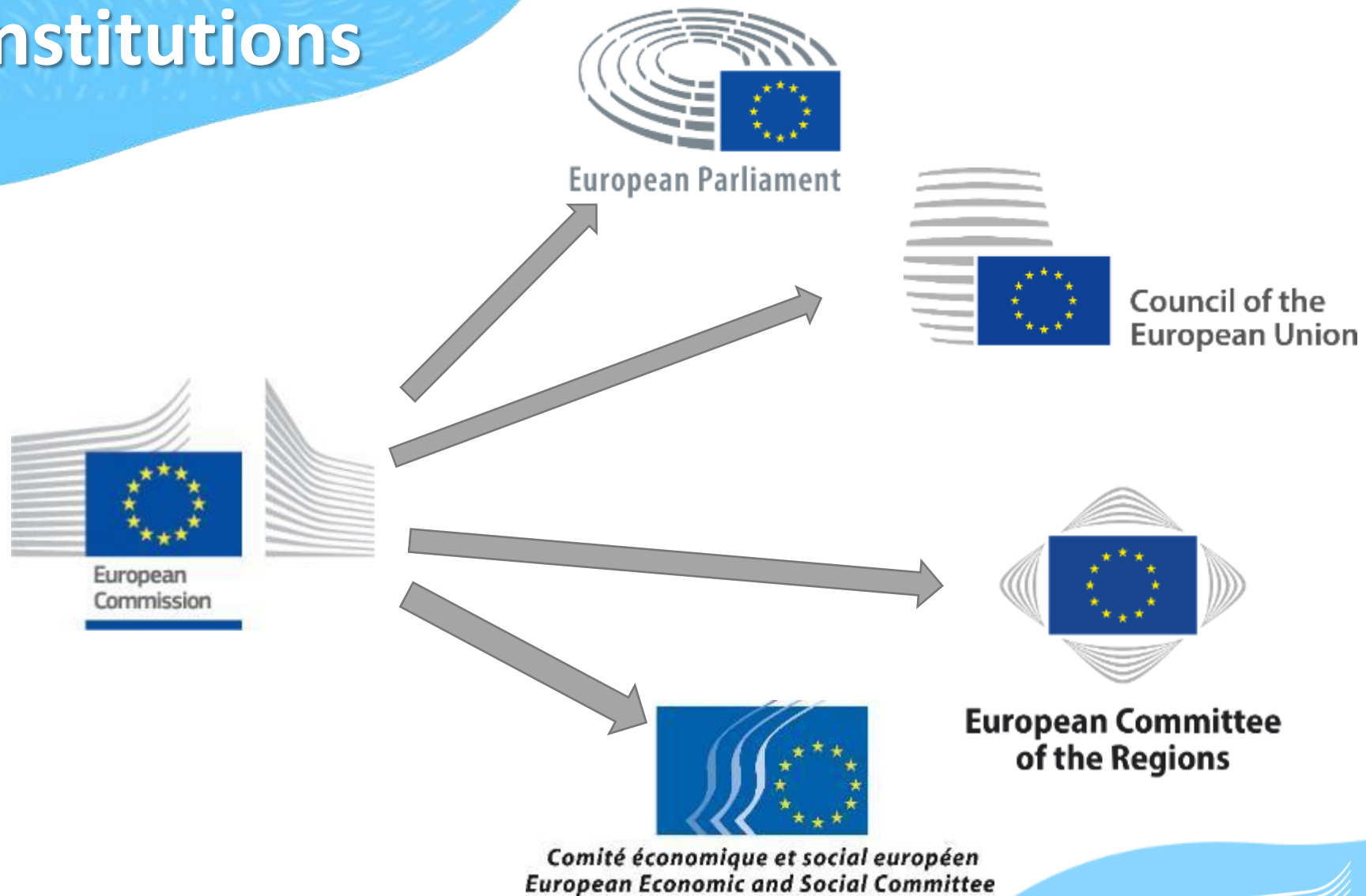
# What now?



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# Working with the EU institutions



# Action plan in action



2022:

Rural pact – action with governance and stakeholders  
Handbook on EU funding prepared  
CAP Plans negotiated and approved – synergies Vision  
Flagships and actions started

2023:

Looking at of 2021-2027 programming period  
Rural Observatory planned to start

2024: Reflections on 2028-2034



# Vision for rural areas



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**Thank you for  
your attention!**

