



INVITATION

to

"A European Rural Agenda is urgently needed for rural areas after COVID crisis"

27 November 2020

(9:30 a.m. – 1 p.m.)

Online webinar - [REGISTER](#)

An event co-organised by the **European Committee of the Regions' NAT commission** and the **RUMRA and Smart villages intergroup**, with the support of **RED** and **Euromontana**

Rural and intermediate areas account for 88% of the EU's territory, are home to 55% of its population, generate 43% of its gross value added and host 56% of its jobs. Rural development is therefore extremely important and a vital tool for achieving the territorial cohesion objective enshrined in the Lisbon Treaty.

The current pandemic crisis has exposed and exacerbated the consequences of a number of long-standing threats faced by rural areas, and has added to the urgency for rural revival in regions across the European Union. On the other side, the pandemic can encourage more local consumption and production patterns, remote working habits, increase the importance of quality of life and develop new forms of mobility, which may open new opportunities for sustainable jobs and growth in rural regions.

Following the European Parliament resolution on addressing the specific needs of rural, mountainous and remote areas, the new Commission has been asked to develop a new long-term vision for rural areas. This webinar co-organised by the NAT commission of the European Committee of the Regions and the RUMRA and Smart Villages intergroup of the European Parliament, with the support of RED and Euromontana, will explore lessons learned by rural areas during the COVID-19 crisis and how the new long-term vision for rural areas should be translated into a concrete policy framework – the European rural agenda – that would enable and empower rural communities to turn challenges into opportunities.

Interpretation will be available in EN/FR and ES.

Agenda

9.30 a.m. Introduction

- Dubravka Šuica Vice-President for Democracy and Demography at the European Commission
- Franc Bogovič (SL/EPP), Member of the European Parliament and Co-President of the Parliament's RUMRA and smart villages Intergroup

10.00 am Experiences and lessons learned by rural areas during the COVID-19 crisis.

Moderator: Juan Andrés Gutierrez, President of Euromontana

Policy Implications of Coronavirus Crisis for Rural Development: Jose Enrique Garcilazo, Head of Regional and Rural Policy Unit, OECD

Examples of projects and initiatives primarily launched by rural communities in coping with the COVID-19 emergency: Paul Soto, European Network for Rural Development, European Union

Joke Schauvliege (EPP/BE), Member of the of the Flemish Parliament and rapporteur for the European Committee of the Regions opinion on Experiences and lessons learned by rural areas during the COVID-19 crisis

Lessons learned by regions and cities during the COVID-19 crisis: Gianluca Lentini, Researcher and Project Manager – Climate Change and Environmental Projects at Poliedra – Politecnico di Milano

Discussion

11.00 a.m. break

11.30 am A new long-term vision for rural areas

Moderator: Gérard Peltre, President of the Rurality-Environment-Development network (RED) and the European Countryside Movement (ECM)

Enda Stenson (IE/AE), Member of the Leitrim County Council and rapporteur for the European Committee of the Regions opinion on the EU strategy for a Rural Revival

Joël Giraud, Secretary of State for Rural Affairs, French Minister of Territorial Cohesion and Relations with Local Authorities: Presentation of the French rural agenda

Carne Ferrer, Vice-chair of the Association of Microvillages of Catalunya, Mayor of Senan: Presentation of the Catalan rural agenda

Representative of the European Rural Youth Parliament

Discussion

12.30 a.m. Conclusions

- Ulrika Landergren (SE/renew E.), Chair of the NAT commission of the European Committee of the Regions
- Clara Aguilera (ES, S&D) Member of the European Parliament and Co-President of the Parliament's RUMRA and smart villages Intergroup