

European Rural Parliament and European Rural Youth Parliament *Call to Action!*

We, the people of rural areas, hold the keys to the solutions Europe needs. We come from all generations and all corners of rural Europe: young and old, women and men, those born here and those newly arrived, from mainland and islands, coasts, valleys, and mountains alike. To conclude the 6th European Rural Parliament and European Rural Youth Parliament in Inverurie-Scotland, the 400 participants adopted the Declaration of Inverurie. In this Declaration we ask for real partnership. We need you, European, national and regional authorities, to provide the resources that empower us to act.

In view of the preparations for the Rural Action Plan and the proposals for the new Multi Annual Financial Framework, we call on governments at all levels to take action on our questions and offer our commitment in this regard.

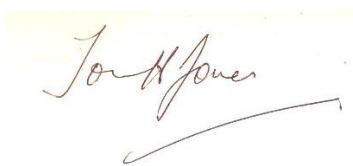
Our priority asks	What we need of governments	What we offer
1. Embed rural voices at every stage of policy making, design and implementation, from consultation to decision and evaluation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognise that rural areas are a central part of the solutions to Europe's competitiveness, sustainability and resilience challenges. Ensure that integrated, place-based, community-led policies for rural areas and territories remain at the core of EU's territorial, agricultural, maritime and social policies. Recognise rural actors as partners in rural security work (food, climate and military). 	ERCA, PREPARE, ELARD, RYE and ERP Partners are deeply embedded in rural live and affairs at local, regional and national level as civil society organisations. No other European network matches this level of connectivity that has been built up over many years. This rural networking will become even more important in an integrated policy approach as proposed in the Multi-annual Financial Framework.
2. Guarantee accessible, flexible and transparent long-term funding programmes that reach communities and support social impact.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ring-fence and expand funding for rural areas, including territorial tools such as LEADER-CLLD and Smart Villages mandatory in future policy frameworks, beyond CAP. The actual impact of the proposal of President von der Leyen, that at least 10% of relevant envelopes be dedicated to rural areas, is unclear and uncertain. More than 30% of Europeans live in rural areas, often under less favourable conditions. To respect the cohesion objective in Article 174 TFEU and uphold the Right to Stay, no less than 30% of funds should support 30% of rural citizens. EU Funds should be tagged by sector and territory. Territorial tagging should also consider the specificities of rural areas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The capacity of communities to solve social, economic, and spatial issues themselves is impressively strong throughout Europe. We multiply every euro four or more times by our volunteer efforts, thus solving essential challenges. As ERP partners, we will continue to submit concrete project proposals at local, regional and European level for financing necessary initiatives. To broaden the scope of funding we will as much as possible enhance synergies for instance for education and skills and for infrastructure and connectivity. We want to investigate how we can make a stronger connection to

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employ a rural development tandem for cohesion combined with competitiveness (Rural areas as centres for European resilience). • Invest in local, regional and national organisations that create spaces to empower communities and strengthen local action. These actors are essential for building capacity, enabling participation, and ensuring that funding translates into real impacts on the ground. • Encourage participation of local stakeholders in European projects and consortia with additional funding dedicated to that purpose 	<p>Horizon Europe Cluster 6 funds for a healthy planet for all.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Through our networks, we help local and national organisations access, manage and deploy funding effectively, enabling them to create participatory spaces, empower communities and strengthen local action. We can evolve to rural Development and innovation Centres.
<p>3. Apply Rural Proofing systematically to all policies and regulation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embed Rural Proofing systematically at both EU and national level to advance territorial development. • Create a permanent, up-to-date overview of the state of affairs regarding Rural Proofing. • Member States must apply rural proofing to the design, selection and revision of measures under the Partnership Plan, including an ex-ante territorial impact assessment distinguishing rural, remote, mountain, coastal, island, border and outermost areas, and shall set out mitigation measures where adverse rural impacts are identified. 	<p>We support our members in national and regional initiatives for Rural Proofing, exchanging knowledge and experiences of our members.</p> <p>Local communities should play an active role in Rural Proofing.</p>
<p>4. End the growth paradigm and prioritise sustainability and local needs and wealth-building in economic and investment models to ensure that prosperity is shared and lasting.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stop the discontinuation of services and the negative demographic trends of human resources from rural and sparsely populated areas. • Anchor the Right to Stay in the Longterm Vision for the Rural Areas. • Recognise not just the right to remain and return, but also the right to mobility, for the rural workforce, ensuring that economically active residents can access jobs, training and opportunities across regions. • Intergenerational renewal can only be successful if it takes a broad approach that integrates all aspects of rural life. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We support thousands of local initiatives to be actively involved in rural development and policy making. • We represent the rural voices at regional national and European level and are therefore a legitimate and organized point of contact for governments. • Through our networks, we implement projects that bring together multiple generations to address social, economic, and environmental challenges in rural areas, ensuring that all voices contribute to the long-term vision.
<p>5. Strengthen local capacity, leadership and entrepreneurialism through technical/digital skills, and lifelong learning opportunities, with a strong focus on empowering young</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National and regional authorities must invest in local capacity-building that enhances both soft and hard skills, empowering rural people to drive entrepreneurship and sustainable development. • Allow more flexible social entrepreneurship regulations, and innovation presence in rural areas (also the more remote). 	<p>Capacity building is core business of the ERP-partners. Through our members, we work on this every day at local, regional, national, and European levels. This work, however, requires adequate financial support at all levels.</p>

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people to build their future in rural communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Digital skills and capacities of rural citizens should be ensured 	
6. Facilitate collaboration across communities, sectors and institutions, enabling exchange, innovation and solidarity beyond administrative borders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Empower and recognise rural communities and businesses, youth and civil society as cocreators of solutions. Design and provide support for a community-led open innovation model in rural areas, enabling local actors to co-create, test, and refine practical solutions tailored to their specific needs and circumstances. The EU should establish a structural link and collaboration framework with the European Rural Parliament and European Rural Youth Parliament as a permanent mechanism for dialogue and consultation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementing the new Financial Framework and the new Rural Action Plan requires active involvement from all stakeholders. We, the ERP partners, offer to support this process within our constituencies. It will be helpful if these actions receive European and/or national financial support. We can mobilise our local-national-EU network and hands-on community-led expertise to help design and operationalise a EU Community-Led Innovation Framework (E-CLIF), enabling effective co-creation and delivery in rural areas.
7. Redesign rural innovation and research processes to ensure research and development is locally driven, community-shaped and directly beneficial to rural areas.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthen data availability and evidence on rural territories. EU Funds should be tagged by sector and territory. Territorial tagging should also consider the specificities of rural areas. Install an advisory board, including civil society, for the Rural Observatory 	We collaborate closely on research projects at local, regional, national, and European levels. We create research connections, formulate research assignments, provide data and ensure the implementation of research results.
8. Turn the Long-Term Vision for Rural Areas and the Rural Pact Action Plan into tangible action backed by adequate resources.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EU needs a vision for the future to guide its MFF and NRP-work. Let the LTVRA be the stepping stone and source of inspiration for that. National and regional authorities should in their National Regional Partnership Plans fully commit to the Long-Term Vision for Rural Areas with clear strategies and adequate budgets adapted to local realities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In over 20 countries we organize National Rural Parliaments to give rural a voice in connection to government. All this comes together in the European Rural Parliament. We connect National Rural Parliaments to National Rural Pacts.
9. Actively support all countries seeking ascension and work closely with neighbouring countries that seek strong ties.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rural communities must be recognised as the holders and custodians of critical assets and are key actors in resilience, crisis response and transition. That's why rural stakeholders should in partnerships be involved in designing NRPP's and decide over funding. Guarantee the effective application of the Partnership Principle to secure transparent, inclusive and multi-level governance in all initiatives with a rural dimension. All rural areas should have the capacity to take an active role in the designing of the NRPP's. NRPP's should promote a positive mindset about rural life and strengthen 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On the national level we, the ERP partners - in cooperation with our constituencies - will pursue rural support under the National and Regional Partnership Plans. We will take action at all levels to increase rural involvement in the development of National and Regional Partnership Plans.

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	community relations to attract and retain residents, talent and investment. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rural areas must have a proportional position in the NRPP's, for instance through Rural Chapters. • Rural Target should be expressed as a minimum percentage of the NRP Plans' envelope, outside of the earmarked accounts for the CAP and CFP. 	
10. Make clear agreements with all partners, record them in writing and implement them.	Rural development partners interact professionally. Outcomes of the dialogue are always laid down in clear agreements.	We commit ourselves to agreements that we make together.

The time to act is now. Together, across generations and nations, we hold the power to make and implement the decisions that will shape the future we want and deserve.



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The European Rural Parliament



The European Rural Parliament (ERP <https://europeanruralparliament.com/>) is a long-term campaign to express the voice of rural people in Europe; and to promote self-help and action by the rural people, in partnership with civil society and governments. The ERP brings together rural players – local, regional and national – to exchange experience and agree the rural policy agenda with which to lobby government. The ERP is a Partnership of 70 organisations in 40 European countries. The ERP was initiated by European Rural Community Alliance ([ERCA](#)), Partnership For Rural Europe ([PREPARE](#)) and European Leader Association for Rural development ([ELARD](#)), and is managed by these organisations together with Rural Youth Europe ([RYE](#)).

The 6th European Rural Parliament titled “*Strength from opportunity – rural community solutions to global challenges*”, took place in Aberdeenshire, Scotland from the 20-23 October 2025 and gave rise to the Declaration of Inverurie ([Declaration of Inverurie](#)).

ERCA - European Rural Community Alliance is a Pan-European movement, supporting strong rural communities to raise the voice of rural people and influence public opinion, to promote integrated, cross-sectoral, place-based rural development at European, National, regional and local levels. The 15 national and regional rural movements, brought together by ERCA, are an important and unique link to the local level that reaches into thousands of rural communities. This is where people live their daily lives and take initiatives to maintain or improve the quality of life. All ERCA members are committed to building strong, resilient, prosperous, and connected rural communities.

PREPARE - Partnership for Rural Europe is a Pan-European network of 23 national platforms of rural organisations. For more than 20 years, PREPARE has been actively fostering rural development and strengthening the voice of rural civil society across Europe. It plays a strong role in mobilising civil society, supporting rural movements, building trust, and developing new democratic rural development instruments in EU member states and candidate countries. Through its activities, thousands of rural NGOs and community groups, active rural inhabitants, and representatives of national, regional, and local authorities have been able to meet and discuss the key challenges of rural areas and the best ways to address them. PREPARE promotes cooperation between EU and non-EU countries and advocates for inclusive and participatory rural policies that respond to the evolving needs of rural communities.

ELARD - European Leader Association for Rural Development is a European association that represents nearly 2,600 Local Action Groups (LAGs) from 30 countries, including countries in the European Union's neighborhood, which have adopted and implemented the LEADER methodology for local development by local actors. We are actively working to make the LEADER approach better known among European decision-makers and to showcase it as the solution it can become to the many challenges rural areas face. We support actor-led local development and represent the interests of LAGs to national governments and European institutions. Since 1 January 2025, ELARD has been chaired by the Polish network of Local Action Groups, Polska Sieć LGD.

RYE - Rural Youth Europe is a platform dedicated to empowering young Europeans from rural backgrounds. Established in 1957, we have supported European rural youth for nearly seven decades. RYE unites rural youth groups from across Europe under one strong network. We provide international learning and training opportunities. Democratically led, our network is built and run by young people.