

European Union and its rural citizens: Rights and participation

What does EU give to me and my community?

General rights:

https://europa.eu/european-union/topics/eu-citizenship_en for all language versions

Moving & living in the EU

As an EU citizen, you have the right to live and move within the EU (residence rights as worker, student, pensioner, jobseeker) without being discriminated against on the grounds of your nationality.

Petitions & complaints

Any citizen of the European Union, or resident in a Member State, may, individually or in association with others, submit a petition to the European Parliament on a subject which comes within the European Union's fields of activity and which affects them directly.

The petition may present an individual request, a complaint or observation concerning the application of EU law or an appeal to the European Parliament to adopt a position on a specific matter. <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/at-your-service/en/be-heard/petitions>

If you are dissatisfied with an EU institution, body, office or agency, you should first give it a chance to put things right. If that fails, you can complain to the Ombudsman.

https://europa.eu/european-union/about-eu/institutions-bodies/european-ombudsman_en

You can also contact EU institutions and advisory bodies directly, and are entitled to a reply in any of the EU's 24 official languages

Consular protection

If you are in a non-EU country and need help, as an EU citizen you are entitled to consular protection from the embassy or consulate of any other EU country, if your own country does not have an embassy or consulate in the non-EU country.

You can ask for assistance in situations involving, for example, death, accident or illness, arrest or detention, being the victim of violent crime and repatriation.

Participating Rural Citizens in EU

I/ Participating in the political life of the EU

Every EU citizen has the right to vote and stand as a candidate in both local and European elections in the EU country they live in, under the same conditions as nationals of that country.

II/ Active participation in the democratic life together with EU

Citizens' Dialogues – Do you want to have your say about what is happening in the European Union, how it is tackling key challenges and how you benefit? The European Commissioners are listening. https://ec.europa.eu/info/events/citizens-dialogues_en



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Civil Dialogue This dialogue involves regular meetings between the Commission and approximately 50 key European organisations actively involved in the Europe for Citizens programme. In addition, specific meetings with stakeholders interested in specific actions or themes may take place as needed.

Public consultations: the Commission launches public consultations on initiatives it is planning, allowing every European to have their say on the issues.

Citizens' initiative: The European Citizens' Initiative allows you to ask the European Commission to prepare legislation. The petition must be signed by at least 1 million people from at least one quarter of the EU's countries (currently at least 7 countries).

To discuss EU Rural policy from people's perspective and to get your voice stronger you can participate in the activities of the European Rural Parliament through its national partners.
<http://www.europeanruralparliament.com/index.php/national-champions/european-and-national-partners>

Some European NGO's working with rural people's issues have seats in the EU commission's consultative bodies discussing about citizen's issues. The European Rural Communities Alliance ERCA and PREPARE Partnership for Rural Europe have many national NGO-partners and ELARD has an extensive network of LEADER-groups (see below) working with civil society issues.
www.elard.eu, www.preparenetwork.org, www.ruralcommunities.eu

Network and themework

The ERP is an informal network with partners in 40 countries and 5 Pan-European organisations working directly with people's issues at local level. To keep a network this size alive and living, it needs constant efforts of communication and animation.

Connections with research should be strengthened to get evidence-base to the ERP-advocacy activities. Connections with decision-making and EU-institutions are important to build to get our message and suggestions heard.

The ERP thematic platforms give an opportunity for networking, cooperating, learning and enabling partnerships around chosen themes. The platforms are coordinated and open for participation, respecting of course the guiding principle: giving a thematic voice for rural citizens for a good or better quality of life. If you are willing to join existing themes or even initiate another theme, contact the coordinators or the Steering Group.

Gathering:

A biennial gathering, the European Rural Parliament Gathering, concludes a 2-year cycle of work for advocacy and activities like projects, thematic work and animation. The results of the activities are presented and discussed resulting in an update of the ERP guiding documents: the Manifesto and the Action programme for the upcoming two years with a vision for the future. An output of the Gathering can also be a Declaration of the Assembly.

[Look for your national ERP-partner for more information](#)

[Co-initiating partners ELARD, ERCA and PREPARE forming the Steering Group](#)

[European NGO's: Forum Synergies and ECOVAST](#)

[ERP-coordination](#)

[ERP-youth \(theme related questions\)](#)

Participating in the activities of NGO's dealing with rural people's issues with your ideas, suggestions and comments is important. These platforms could be the channel to bring your voice to the Civil Dialogue Group or even to investigate/initiate a rural citizen's initiative.

[You can also read a recent report on citizenship from the European commission.](#) (download pdf-file)



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