



# European Rural Parliament

## European Union and its rural citizens: programmes and funding

### What does EU give to me and my community?

#### I/ European Rural development policy and funding 2014-2020

The European Rural policy budget is very much focused on agriculture, forestry (30%) and to it related environmental (50%) issues (pillar 1). A small part (15%) is dedicated to local rural development (pillar 2). The total EU budget for the European Agricultural fund is 99 billions.

The EU initiated LEADER in the early 90's. It is about rural multisectoral development by locals together with other stakeholders (public or private) on a well-defined territory and based on local strategies. Networking, cooperation and innovation are key features. Rural development groups (LEADER-groups or LAGs) and later fisheries development groups (FLAGs) were created to implement the strategies. Preparations are on-going in candidate countries both in Balkan and Black Sea areas to create LEADER-groups (IPARD).

LEADER: [https://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/sites/agriculture/files/publi/fact/leader/2006\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/sites/agriculture/files/publi/fact/leader/2006_en.pdf)

IPARD: [http://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/en/funding/ipa/](http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/funding/ipa/)

#### **If you want to participate in local development work of your area:**

Find your LAG: <https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/leader-clld/lag-database.en>

Find your FLAG: <https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/cms/farnet/tools/flags-2014-2020>

#### **Targets for non-agricultural job creation**

- 124 000 non-agricultural jobs of which
- 79 000 in relation to diversification actions and creation and development of small enterprises
- 45 000 through LEADER groups

#### **Targets for local development**

- 51 million rural citizens benefitting from improved services
- 153 million rural citizens coming under a local development strategy
- 18 million rural citizens benefitting from improved access to ICT services and infrastructure

#### **LEADER**

In 2014-2020, 153 million rural citizens are expected to be covered by one of the 2 513 local action groups that will be supported by 6.9 billion EUR. According to a recent report by the Committee of Regions, LEADER has created more than 150 000 jobs since it was launched.



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From the LEADER-programme and through LEADER-groups you can finance projects and activities which are described in the local strategy: it can be renovating community houses, supporting small enterprises, networking activities, environmental activities, culture, youth activities, elderly aso...

Information on the European Leader Association for Rural Development **ELARD: [www.elard.eu](http://www.elard.eu)**

## European Maritime & Fisheries fund (EMFF)

EMFF will contribute to a balanced, inclusive, sustainable territorial development on competitive fisheries and aquaculture-with an 5,75 billion EU budget.

From the fisheries fund and the Fisheries LEADER Groups you can finance projects that are environmentally sustainable, resource efficient, innovative, competitive increasing employment and territorial cohesion. The projects could eg. be around marketing activities and processing, knowhow transfer, tourism or investments.

## BROADBAND

Support to roll out broadband has been programmed in 14 Member States with a total of 18 million rural citizens expected to benefit. This covers € 900 m from the EAFRD but other EU and national funds are also being used to roll out broadband in rural Europe.

## Wifi4EU

The Commission proposes to invest EUR 120 million to give to all interested local authorities the possibility to offer free Wi-Fi connections for citizens and visitors in public spaces such as parks, squares, public building, libraries, health centres, and museums everywhere in Europe through WiFi4EU. Read more about the wifi-initiative and the possibility to apply in 2019.

<https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/policies/wifi4eu-free-wi-fi-europeans>

## Data on rural development in EU:

<https://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/events/2016/rural-development/fact-sheet.pdf>

## II/ Possibility of participation by rural people in different EU-funded activities

## ERASMUS

If you are young, in a school, in an adult/professional education unit or a sports club, you could use the ERASMUS program for exchanging experiences, practices and knowhow in EU and even outside EU. In 2021, it is meant, that even small NGO's would be able to join the ERASMUS-activities. To participate, contact the closest youth/sports organisations or municipalities to see if they participate in the ERASMUS-program.



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Examples: Youth prepare a week-program around a certain theme, invite others from Europe and implement it themselves. Educational units/school exchange learning and teaching methods.

[https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/erasmus-plus\\_en](https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/erasmus-plus_en)

## **Volunteering:**

If you are interested in training, capacity building and collaboration of volunteers and humanitarian organisations you can participate in the EU volunteering activities.

[https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/eu-aid-volunteer\\_en](https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/eu-aid-volunteer_en)

## **Europe for Citizens programme 2014-20**

This programme aims to improve people's understanding of the EU, its history and diversity, to develop awareness of the rights granted by European citizenship, and to increase democratic participation at EU level. You can apply yourself (a good level of cashflow is needed though) or be part of existing projects by contacting rural actors of your area NGO's, public sector, thematic organisations or research units).

[https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/europe-for-citizens/strands/democratic-engagement-and-civic-participation\\_en](https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/europe-for-citizens/strands/democratic-engagement-and-civic-participation_en)

## **Rights, Equality and Citizenship programme**

This programme supports projects to promote equality and fundamental rights, increase awareness of the rights granted by EU citizenship and encourage people to play a more active role in democracy at EU level. Projects can be about non-discrimination, intolerance, gender issues, citizens rights, consumer rights aso... You can be part of these projects by contacting rural actors of your area active in these themes or your national rural development organisations to cooperate in a potential project.

[http://ec.europa.eu/justice/grants1/programmes-2014-2020/rec/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/justice/grants1/programmes-2014-2020/rec/index_en.htm)

## **Youth employment initiative**

The Youth Employment Initiative (budget €8.8 billion for 2014-2020) was launched to provide support to young people living in regions where youth unemployment was higher than 25%. It ensures that in parts of Europe where the challenges are most acute, young people can receive targeted support, typically apprenticeships, traineeships, job placements and/or further education leading to a qualification.

<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1176>

**NB: Often also non-EU members can either totally or partially benefit from these programmes.**



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## III/ Some other big EU funding instruments are used in rural development and serve rural people

**The European Regional Development Fund (ERDF):** ERDF covers all Member States and It has a strong focus on 4 key priority areas: Research and Innovation, Digital Economy, SME Competitiveness and Low Carbon Economy. It has a 200 billion EU Budget.

**The European Social Fund (ESF):** The European Social Fund is Europe's main instrument for investing in people. It helps people find employment or create businesses, supports disadvantaged groups, improves education and makes public services more efficient. It has an EU budget of 84 billion euros.

## For general data on financing and implementation of programmes:

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

## The Connecting Europe Facility (CEF)

### CEF Transports

The CEF Transport programme currently contributes €19.3 billion in EU support to the realisation of transport infrastructure projects, for a total investment of €38 billion. It is expected that this investment will create more than 400,000 job years by 2030. The CEF Transport Programme has significantly increased focus on Cohesion countries. Even though just a small amount of road investments come to rural areas, road investments in general are beneficial for all the country. The CEF Transport programme contributes to the de-carbonisation of the European economy by investing heavily in environmentally friendly transport modes.

[https://ec.europa.eu/inea/sites/inea/files/2017\\_cef\\_transport\\_stat\\_web\\_final.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/inea/sites/inea/files/2017_cef_transport_stat_web_final.pdf)

### CEF Energy

The upgrading and development of new energy transmission infrastructures of European importance will require investments of about €140 billion in electricity and at least €70 billion in gas. A total budget of €5.35 billion is made available for energy projects for the 2014-2020 period, of which €4.5 in the form of grants.

<https://ec.europa.eu/inea/en/connecting-europe-facility/cef-energy>

### CEF Digital

It is about bulding a digital single market by helping teams deliver digital public services faster and comply with regulation.

<https://ec.europa.eu/cefdigital/wiki/display/CEFDIGITAL/Building+Blocks>



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