



**NAT/806**

**Avaliação do impacto da PAC no desenvolvimento territorial das zonas rurais**

## **RELATÓRIO DE INFORMAÇÃO**

Secção da Agricultura, Desenvolvimento Rural e Ambiente

**Avaliação do impacto da PAC no desenvolvimento territorial das zonas rurais**  
[relatório de informação]

Relatora: **Piroska Kállay**

Contacto  
Administradoras  
Data do documento

[nat@eesc.europa.eu](mailto:nat@eesc.europa.eu)  
Martine Delanoy/Laura Ernsteina  
21/04/2021

Base jurídica

Artigo 34.º do Regimento

Decisão da Plenária

Relatório de informação

29/10/2020

Competência

Secção da Agricultura, Desenvolvimento Rural e Ambiente

Adoção em secção

15/04/2021

## 1. Introdução

- 1.1 O Comité Económico e Social Europeu (CESE) realizou uma avaliação (relatório de informação) do impacto dos instrumentos e das medidas da atual [política agrícola comum \(PAC\) para o período de 2014 a 2020](#) no desenvolvimento territorial das zonas rurais, com especial incidência nos aspetos socioeconómicos, nomeadamente a inclusão social.
- 1.2 O contributo do CESE baseia-se em consultas das organizações da sociedade civil que representam empregadores, trabalhadores e associações de interesses diversos, bem como administrações públicas de cinco países específicos (França, Hungria, Irlanda, Itália e Espanha) da União Europeia (UE), no intuito de compreender a forma como vivenciaram e assistiram ao impacto da PAC no desenvolvimento territorial equilibrado. Os dados foram recolhidos através de missões de averiguação virtuais, de um questionário e de elementos adicionais obtidos durante as missões de averiguação. As conclusões são apresentadas e analisadas no anexo técnico apenso ao presente relatório de informação.
- 1.3 O relatório de informação consiste numa análise qualitativa *ex post* da pertinência e da eficácia da PAC, bem como do valor acrescentado da sociedade civil neste domínio. Inclui também propostas para dar resposta aos novos desafios.
- 1.4 O relatório final será partilhado com a Comissão Europeia, a fim de contribuir para o seu próprio exercício de avaliação, e com as partes interessadas.

## 2. Conclusões

### *Eficácia*

- 2.1 De modo geral, os efeitos positivos do financiamento da PAC no desenvolvimento rural foram reconhecidos em todos os países. Um dos efeitos mais importantes foi o aumento da gama de produtos agrícolas de qualidade a preços acessíveis para todos na UE, o que está em consonância com o seu objetivo principal.
- 2.2 A avaliação da **eficácia das medidas e instrumentos específicos da PAC** concluiu que o apoio ao programa LEADER e ao desenvolvimento local de base comunitária (Fundo Europeu Agrícola de Desenvolvimento Rural, medida M19) constituía a medida potencialmente mais eficaz, diversificando a economia das zonas rurais, criando novos mecanismos de governação, preservando o património histórico e cultural e apoiando o empreendedorismo. Contudo, deve dispor de mais recursos.
- 2.3 No entanto, foi proposta uma maior incidência nas necessidades locais reais e na participação efetiva da população local no instrumento do desenvolvimento local de base comunitária, a fim de reduzir a complexidade e a burocracia do programa LEADER e de criar mais sinergias entre a iniciativa LEADER e os programas de desenvolvimento local de base comunitária.
- 2.4 O impacto das medidas da PAC no **emprego** nas zonas rurais, ainda que positivo, ficou aquém do que seria necessário na maior parte dos países, embora todos tenham admitido que essas

medidas, associadas ao desenvolvimento de novas profissões e tecnologias agrícolas graças à digitalização, ajudaram à fixação da população no espaço rural e contribuíram para combater o despovoamento. A **inclusão social de grupos vulneráveis** nas atividades agrícolas também não foi suficientemente garantida, ainda que a atividade agrícola tenha sempre conseguido proporcionar emprego a pessoas vulneráveis com dificuldade em encontrar trabalho.

- 2.5 Em geral, é aceite que o papel das mulheres nas explorações agrícolas tem de ser reforçado e que, simultaneamente, o número das que têm acesso às subvenções agrícolas é variável nos Estados-Membros (na Hungria, por exemplo, as mulheres estão sobrerrepresentadas nos candidatos, principalmente no caso dos jovens agricultores, em que 40% dos candidatos escolhidos são mulheres). Constatam-se também que as mulheres estão sobrerrepresentadas no trabalho precário.
- 2.6 Os principais **obstáculos ou fatores limitadores** do desenvolvimento territorial equilibrado, incluindo fatores sem ligação à PAC, estão associados a défices nas infraestruturas (nomeadamente os equipamentos de transporte ou os serviços digitais, como a banda larga). Foram igualmente mencionados investimentos insuficientes no desenvolvimento do capital humano (como a formação profissional ou o investimento na modernização tecnológica aplicada). O acesso insuficiente ao financiamento também é considerado um grande obstáculo.
- 2.7 É muito difícil obter **dados concretos** de qualidade que digam exclusivamente respeito à economia das zonas rurais, por oposição aos centros urbanos a que estão ligadas. Esta situação dificulta a formulação de conclusões precisas e entrava também a elaboração de políticas.

#### *Pertinência*

- 2.8 Considera-se globalmente que, embora a **PAC seja a política principal** para financiar e manter o emprego na agricultura, este setor de atividade é multifuncional, com uma diversidade baseada em funções não produtivas que proporcionam múltiplos meios de subsistência (emprego, economia, ambiente, etc.). Por conseguinte, os outros programas de financiamento existentes complementam a PAC no apoio ao desenvolvimento territorial das zonas rurais. Contudo, uma **insuficiente coordenação entre as políticas e os fundos** resultou numa falta de coerência entre as políticas, sendo também necessário promover a coordenação entre os diferentes ministérios a nível nacional.
- 2.9 As soluções assinaladas como importantes para o desenvolvimento territorial das zonas rurais incluem garantir e melhorar a **qualidade de vida nas zonas rurais**, assegurar um trabalho digno e empregos de qualidade, melhorar a conectividade das zonas rurais (a digitalização foi identificada na maior parte dos países como uma das questões mais prementes) e melhorar a disponibilidade e o acesso a um leque mais vasto de serviços de interesse geral.
- 2.10 Um **melhor acesso aos serviços** poderá também promover a igualdade de género nas zonas rurais, já que muitas trabalhadoras agrícolas são excluídas devido a dificuldades relacionadas com a política de conciliação entre vida profissional e familiar e à falta de infraestruturas (estruturas de acolhimento de crianças, etc.).

- 2.11 **A coerência com outras políticas da UE, nacionais e locais, foi avaliada como insuficiente** em termos de políticas sociais, políticas alimentares, políticas ambientais, investigação e inovação e comércio, embora seja considerada essencial para inovar e apoiar a sustentabilidade e o caráter multifuncional da agricultura. A PAC deve poder combinar as políticas agrícolas e alimentares com o desenvolvimento territorial. A agricultura e a sustentabilidade ambiental, económica e social são indissociáveis.

#### *Participação da sociedade civil*

- 2.12 **Entre os países visitados, as organizações da sociedade civil não foram suficientemente associadas** às fases de planeamento, aplicação e acompanhamento ou avaliação das políticas da PAC. Os principais obstáculos à participação enfrentados pelas organizações foram a falta de vontade política (de os associar), principalmente na fase de planeamento, a falta de capacidade (para participar), principalmente na fase de aplicação, e a falta de recursos financeiros, sobretudo na fase de acompanhamento.
- 2.13 **Nem todas as partes interessadas foram associadas** ao mesmo nível em todos os países objeto de avaliação, e algumas não foram tidas em conta nas consultas nem integradas nos comités de acompanhamento da PAC.
- 2.14 Tendo em conta as diferenças entre regiões na maioria dos países, é essencial incluir uma **perspetiva regional**, principalmente nas fases de planeamento e aplicação, para aumentar a eficácia das medidas da PAC. A integração das organizações locais é essencial para garantir o bom funcionamento dos programas.

#### *Perspetivas futuras*

- 2.15 As zonas rurais e os setores agrícolas enfrentarão **numerosos desafios cruciais**. Alguns dos desafios mais importantes já foram identificados: o envelhecimento da população e a redução da mão de obra; os salários baixos e as más condições de trabalho; as desigualdades persistentes que afetam as mulheres; o atraso no âmbito da transição digital em comparação com as zonas urbanas; a sobreexploração dos solos e a perda de produtividade e a pouca atratividade.
- 2.16 Vivemos um período de **mudança de paradigma** (a incerteza climática, a maior prevalência de epidemias, o teletrabalho, a digitalização, as novas tecnologias e soluções, etc.). A PAC deve apoiar esta mudança e a adaptação do setor agroalimentar e da economia rural no seu conjunto. É necessário adotar mais medidas, de uma forma mais participativa, no domínio da inovação.
- 2.17 O setor agroalimentar deve dar resposta às novas exigências dos consumidores, nomeadamente em matéria de sustentabilidade.
- 2.18 **O fosso entre as zonas urbanas e rurais** não está a ser colmatado. As diferenças entre ambas no que respeita às condições de vida e de trabalho estão a aumentar e as zonas rurais continuam a perder atratividade. Há menos cooperação entre as zonas urbanas e rurais e os sistemas comerciais abordam as necessidades alimentares locais de forma independente dos alimentos disponíveis localmente, votando ao abandono os produtores que trabalham nos arredores das cidades. Além

disso, os cidadãos e os consumidores têm um conhecimento limitado ou impreciso sobre as zonas rurais e, mais concretamente, sobre o setor agrícola.

- 2.19 A **crise da COVID-19 pode ser transformada numa oportunidade** para aumentar o valor que a sociedade atribui às zonas rurais e ao setor agrícola. Este setor já demonstrou que tem caráter estratégico para a UE.

### 3. **Recomendações**

#### *Eficácia*

- 3.1 A PAC revista para o período de 2021 a 2027 tem de reforçar o segundo pilar, a fim de garantir apoio suficiente às zonas rurais para lhes permitir responder a todos os **desafios económicos, ambientais e sociais**.
- 3.2 É essencial melhorar a **qualidade de vida nas zonas rurais**. Para manter a competitividade das economias rurais, é importante combater o desemprego dos jovens nas zonas rurais, garantir remunerações adequadas aos trabalhadores e disponibilizar infraestruturas suficientes (transportes, serviços digitais, etc.). A PAC não é suficiente, por si só, para responder a todos os desafios que as zonas rurais enfrentam.
- 3.3 Embora as subvenções da PAC estejam particularmente subordinadas ao cumprimento de normas ambientais básicas e ao respeito da saúde pública e do bem-estar dos animais, o respeito dos **direitos humanos e laborais** não é de modo algum tido em consideração. É por esta razão que a PAC não logrou melhorar as condições dos trabalhadores agrícolas. Nos países visitados, os inquiridos e as organizações de trabalhadores salientaram firmemente a importância da **condicionalidade social**, que deve constituir um instrumento fundamental para assegurar condições de trabalho dignas para todos.
- 3.4 Os contratos públicos constituem um instrumento extremamente importante, pouco explorado, para incentivar práticas de produção sustentáveis do ponto de vista social, laboral e ambiental.
- 3.5 Além de garantir a segurança alimentar e a segurança dos alimentos, a PAC deve também cumprir as expectativas relacionadas com o acesso a **alimentos de qualidade** para todos, com o **contrato social agrícola** (remuneração, mas também qualidade de vida, dos agricultores e restante mão de obra empregada na agricultura) e com as **emergências ambientais**.
- 3.6 A PAC deve centrar-se mais na **criação de emprego**, contribuindo para uma economia rural mais diversificada nas zonas rurais, e apoiar a fixação de pessoas nas zonas rurais, a renovação geracional dos agricultores, que continua a ser um problema significativo, e a instalação de pessoas com novos projetos, nomeadamente no domínio da transformação de alimentos ou do turismo.
- 3.7 A PAC deve apoiar iniciativas destinadas a organizar a cadeia de abastecimento a montante ou as organizações de produtores que conferem maior poder de negociação aos agricultores para, nomeadamente, melhorar os preços de venda, e que também oferecem um enorme potencial de

emprego num leque extremamente complexo de atividades e serviços. As **cooperativas** desempenham um papel importante na promoção do desenvolvimento territorial, permitindo aos agricultores permanecer nas zonas rurais e melhorar os seus métodos de trabalho e a sua qualidade de vida; por conseguinte, devem ser reforçadas e apoiadas.

- 3.8 A PAC deve criar soluções para o problema do **abandono de terras** no espaço rural, que persiste em algumas regiões.
- 3.9 A **agricultura social** foi destacada, principalmente por representantes italianos e irlandeses, como uma medida eficaz da PAC para o período de 2014 a 2020, que desempenha um papel importante, em particular, no bem-estar e na prestação de cuidados às pessoas, bem como na atração da população urbana através do turismo rural e das quintas pedagógicas, devendo, por conseguinte, beneficiar de um maior apoio.
- 3.10 O papel das **mulheres** nas explorações agrícolas deve ser reforçado (assegurando a igualdade de remuneração e, se for o caso, o acesso à propriedade comum das explorações, aumentando assim a taxa de ocupação), sem esquecer que, como em qualquer outra política europeia, a igualdade de oportunidades tem de ser uma parte essencial da PAC.

#### *Pertinência*

- 3.11 É necessária uma **abordagem holística** do desenvolvimento rural; por conseguinte, a PAC deve estar ligada a outras políticas existentes, nomeadamente em matéria de condições de trabalho dignas, mobilidade, cursos de formação, inclusão social, fundos e planos (Pacto Ecológico Europeu, Estratégia do Prado ao Prato, Estratégia para a Biodiversidade, Próxima Geração UE).
- 3.12 As **políticas de emprego** devem desempenhar um papel fundamental na futura PAC, dado que o mundo agrícola se baseia no trabalho remunerado.
- 3.13 As competências de coordenação da PAC devem ser repartidas a **nível territorial**, a fim de assegurar uma ligação entre o emprego e os territórios. As oportunidades oferecidas pela PAC devem estar mais acessíveis a nível local (com menos burocracia e condições mais simples).
- 3.14 As medidas e políticas da PAC devem ser **coerentes e complementar** as estratégias europeias, como o Pacto Ecológico e a sua Estratégia do Prado ao Prato e, em particular, com a nova estratégia industrial prevista, que define o setor agroalimentar como um dos principais ecossistemas estratégicos da UE.

#### *Participação da sociedade civil*

- 3.15 O **reforço do papel das organizações da sociedade civil** permitiria que estas desenvolvessem recursos suficientes para estarem mais presentes nas diferentes fases (do planeamento à aplicação e à avaliação). Para o efeito, seria necessário que os poderes públicos reconhecessem o valor da participação de todas as partes interessadas e que as organizações criassem mais sinergias entre si. Importa mencionar que a participação das organizações ambientais da sociedade civil, enquanto partes interessadas fundamentais nos processos de decisão em matéria ambiental, foi

considerada a mais frágil e, por conseguinte, enfrentou uma resistência considerável durante as negociações da PAC. Numa altura em que sofremos fortes impactos ambientais, a sua voz seria fundamental para tornar a PAC mais ecológica.

- 3.16 O reconhecimento das **necessidades e características específicas das diferentes regiões** em cada país só pode ser amplamente promovido pelas organizações locais que fazem parte de cada comunidade. Uma maior participação destas organizações contribuiria para adaptar as medidas com base numa perspetiva regional.

#### *Perspetivas futuras*

- 3.17 É necessário desenvolver uma **abordagem holística da UE para as zonas rurais**, especialmente no contexto da recuperação após a COVID-19.
- 3.18 É igualmente necessário assegurar **a coerência e a complementaridade da PAC com quadros estratégicos abrangentes**, como a Agenda 2030 e os Objetivos de Desenvolvimento Sustentável.
- 3.19 A futura PAC e outras políticas com impacto nas zonas rurais devem concentrar-se em aumentar a **atratividade das zonas rurais**, o que implica garantir oportunidades de emprego, condições de trabalho dignas e serviços de elevada qualidade em domínios como a educação, a habitação, a cultura, o emprego e o apoio social, bem como medidas de comunicação para uma maior sensibilização.
- 3.20 Os fundos do **Mecanismo de Recuperação e Resiliência** (inserido no Próxima Geração UE) têm de ser bem concebidos para gerar um impacto significativo nas zonas rurais. É fundamental que os planos nacionais de recuperação e resiliência incluam a perspetiva rural.
- 3.21 Deve ser criado um **observatório do desenvolvimento rural** para permitir a identificação das verdadeiras tendências intrínsecas que se verificam nas economias puramente rurais, distintas dos centros urbanos a que estão ligadas. Tal é essencial para estudar a sua dinâmica interna, a fim de obter uma compreensão tão completa quanto possível, que sirva de base à formulação das políticas.

Bruxelas, 15 de abril de 2021

Peter Schmidt

Presidente da Secção da Agricultura, Desenvolvimento Rural e Ambiente

\*

\* \*

**N.B.:** Segue-se anexo.



# EVALUATION ON THE CAP'S IMPACT ON TERRITORIAL DEVELOPMENT OF RURAL AREAS

*Technical Appendix*

## Table of contents

<b>0. Introduction</b> .....	11
<b>1. Methodology</b> .....	11
<b>2. Sampling</b> .....	11
2.1 <b>Virtual fact-finding missions</b> .....	11
2.2 <b>Questionnaire</b> .....	12
2.3 <b>Respondent breakdown</b> .....	12
<b>3. Primary data: findings and analysis</b> .....	12
3.1 <b>Effectiveness</b> .....	12
3.2 <b>Relevance</b> .....	22
3.3 <b>Civil society involvement and added value</b> .....	34
3.4 <b>Future of the CAP and balanced territorial development policy</b> .....	37
<b>4. Secondary data: literature review of EESC work</b> .....	43
<b>5. List of organisations consulted</b> .....	49

\*\*\*

## 0. Introduction

The European Economic and Social Committee has drawn up an information report on **the impact of the instruments and measures of the current Common Agricultural policy (CAP) 2014-2020 on the territorial development of rural areas**, with a focus on socio-economic aspects including social inclusion.

Based on findings collected during virtual "missions" to selected EU countries and online questionnaire replies, this technical appendix gathers and summarises the views of civil society organisations interviewed by members of the EESC on the topic. In particular, stakeholders were invited to present their views on the effectiveness and the relevance of the CAP instruments and measures on balanced territorial development of rural areas, as well as their level of inclusion in the planning, implementation and monitoring/evaluation of CAP instruments and measures that have a potential impact on the territorial development of rural areas<sup>1</sup>.

The report aims to **help decision-makers improve the instruments and measures of the Common Agricultural policy in terms of balanced territorial development**, and it will thus be shared with the European Commission and other concerned stakeholders.

## 1. Methodology

The members of the EESC study group collected the views of civil society organisations through two channels: an online questionnaire and five virtual "missions" (due to the covid-19 related constraints no physical visits were possible).

- The **questionnaire** asked civil society organisations how they assessed the CAP's impact on territorial development of rural areas. The questionnaire was created on the EU Survey online portal, using a combination of question formats (filter questions, closed, open-ended, grid and most-significant-change method). The questionnaire was open during the period of January – February 2021.
- The **virtual fact-finding "missions"** took place via the online WebEX platform and included semi-structured interviews with local civil society organisations and public authorities, generally following the structure of the questionnaire.

Additional, secondary data collection drew on the EESC's past work on the subject was also analysed.

## 2. Sampling

### 2.1 Virtual fact-finding missions

The countries for in-depth assessment were selected by the study group in order to maximise complementarity and added value vis-à-vis the evaluation carried out by the European Commission. To

---

<sup>1</sup> The evaluation criteria are based on the European Commission's Better Regulation Agenda's Guidelines and Toolbox. [https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/law-making-process/planning-and-proposing-law/better-regulation-why-and-how/better-regulation-guidelines-and-toolbox\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/law-making-process/planning-and-proposing-law/better-regulation-why-and-how/better-regulation-guidelines-and-toolbox_en)

the maximum extent possible, selection was based on the criteria laid out in the [Revision of the arrangements for the European Economic and Social Committee's involvement in the European institution's assessment of EU policies and legislation](#) (adopted by the **Bureau of the EESC on 22 January 2019**). For practical reasons, the country selection was also influenced by the countries of origin of the members of the study group.

The sample of EU Member States chosen for this information report were: **France (26 January 2021), Hungary (29 January and 1 February 2021), Spain (1 February 2021), Italy (3 February 2021) and Ireland (3 and 4 February 2021).**

## 2.2 Questionnaire

The aim of the questionnaire was to complement the findings of the virtual fact-finding missions. Composed of 23 questions, it was sent not only to organisations from the Member States participating in the virtual fact-finding missions but also to other relevant organisations.

## 2.3 Respondent breakdown

During the five virtual fact-finding missions, the EESC delegation consulted **53 civil society organisations and 10 representatives of public authorities.**

In addition, **55 civil society organisations and public authorities** responded to the questionnaire, including **12** representatives of employers (**21%**), **11** representatives of trade unions (**20%**), **18** representatives of various interest groups (**33%**), and **7** representatives of public authorities (**13%**), while **7** respondents stated "other" (**13%**). Regarding the origin of the respondents, **25%** of the questionnaire respondents came from Spain, **24%** from Italy, **18%** from Hungary, **18%** from Ireland, and **15%** from France.

The complete list of organisations which participated in the questionnaire and the meetings during the virtual fact-finding missions is available in chapter 5 of this report.

## 3. Primary data: findings and analysis

### 3.1 Effectiveness

According to the European Commission Better Regulation toolbox, the criterion of effectiveness "*considers how successful EU action has been in achieving or progressing towards its objectives*"<sup>2</sup>.

#### *General conclusions*

As regards the general effectiveness of the CAP instruments and measures in supporting economic development, employment, growth, poverty reduction and social inclusion in rural areas, more than half of the respondents (56%) found them to be moderately effective, with almost equal amount of

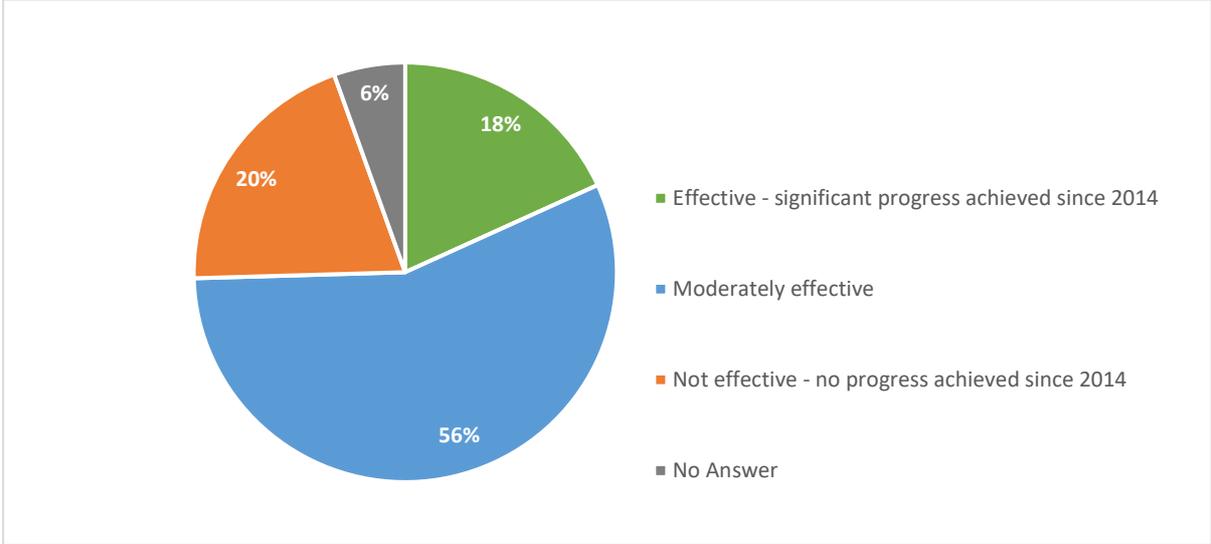
---

<sup>2</sup>

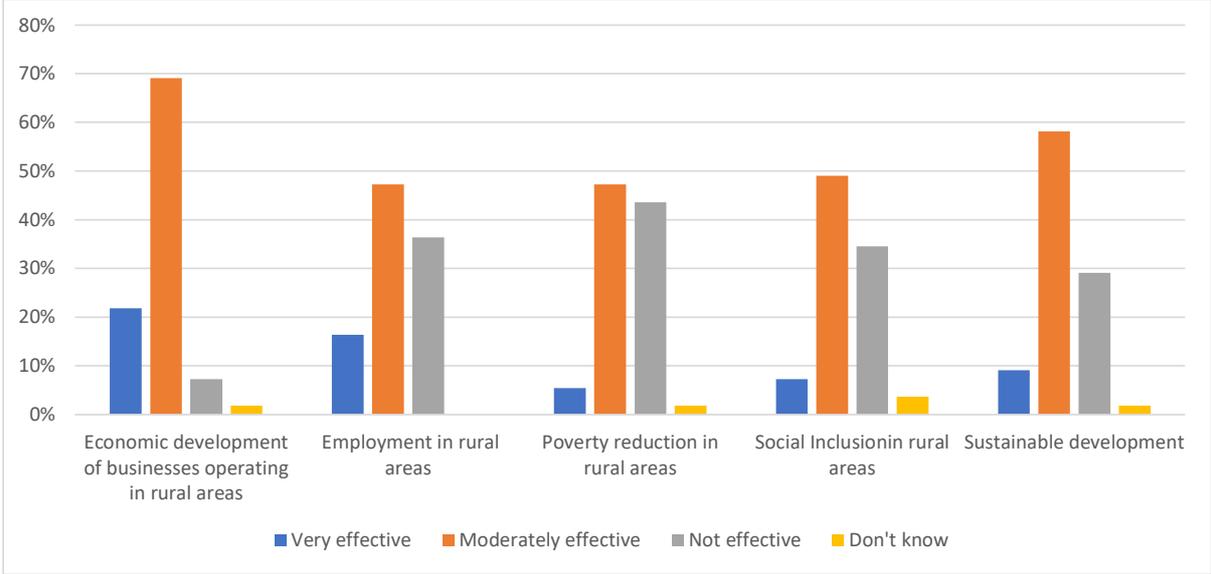
[https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/file\\_import/better-regulation-toolbox-47\\_en\\_0.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/file_import/better-regulation-toolbox-47_en_0.pdf)

respondents being utterly positive or negative: 20% found the CAP instruments and measures to be effective (with significant progress achieved since 2014) and 18% - not effective (no progress achieved since 2014). In the 5 country perspective, the Irish and the Italians were the most positive about the effectiveness of the CAP instruments and measures (40% of the Irish rated them as effective, and 62% of Italians rated them as moderately effective), while the French were the least positive (50% rated them as not effective).

*Graph 1. Do you think that the CAP instruments and measures were effective in supporting economic development, employment, growth, poverty reduction and social inclusion in rural areas?*



*Graph 2. How effective were the CAP instruments and measures in supporting:*



During the semi-structured interviews, positive effects of the CAP funding on rural development were widely recognised in all countries, especially in Ireland, where the CAP almost exclusively sustained the viability of at least two thirds of farms, thus underpinning agricultural production and direct as well as downstream employment in processing and in the entire local economy. It was also argued that in Ireland the direct payments made to the farmers also made a substantial contribution to the wider rural

economy, because every 1 euro in direct payments supported around 4 euros in the wider economy, thus having a very substantial multiplier effect.

However, for example, in Hungary the lack of vision for rural development on the side of the government was criticised. Also in Spain the governance problem between funds and policies was highlighted, noting that the CAP must be accompanied by other policies and funds (European, national or regional), and the rural challenges must be addressed in a comprehensive and crosscutting approach, including all policies (health, education, housing, mobility, industry etc.). Both in Spain and in Italy it was said that CAP alone was not enough to meet the challenges of rural areas.

Furthermore, in France, the aspect of food security and food safety was emphasised as a positive achievement of the CAP, whereas it was said to have failed to meet its objectives with regard to the renewal of agricultural populations (with almost 50% of farmers in France being at retirement age in the next 10 years), the remuneration as well as quality of life of farmers and farm workers. It was also noted in France that the current CAP has not met expectations in terms of access to quality food for all, the agricultural social contract and the environmental emergency. Also in Italy, generational renewal was mentioned as a requirement to boost employment and, above all, to revitalise the rural areas. Finally, also in Ireland generational renewal was mentioned as an issue, as young people were not going into farming because it was not an attractive career, among other factors due to long working hours and isolated work. The need to improve the attractiveness of agricultural employment was mentioned in several countries.

#### *Job creation and support of economic development*

In terms of **supporting economic development** of businesses operating in rural areas, respondents of the questionnaire were very positive: 22% saw the CAP measures and instruments as having been very effective and 69% - as moderately effective. Both employer organisations' and trade union representatives, as well as representatives of various interests overwhelmingly agreed on this point (17% of employers, 9% of trade unions and 17% of various interests' representatives agreed that the instruments had been very effective, and, accordingly, 75%, 82% and 72% - agreed that they had been moderately effective.

Regarding **employment** in rural areas, the respondents were not so positive: in total 36% regarded the CAP measures and instruments as having been ineffective. Especially negative assessment came from the side of the trade unions (55% - not effective). The views in country perspective were somewhat divergent with France and Italy judging the CAP measures' effectiveness in boosting employment in rural areas as not effective (63% and 62%), whereas Hungary, Ireland and Spain considered them as moderately effective (60%, 50% and 64%).

Workers representatives in France specifically considered that employment (work precariousness, link employment-territory, etc.) has been the great forgotten of the CAP, while the agricultural world is based on paid employment. It was suggested that job creation should be provided through the first pillar of the CAP, linked to the staff (ecoprogrammes, transition premium, financing of "replacement" checks for the training of farm workers, encouraging farmers to be part of employers' groups, etc.).

With regard to the creation of new quality jobs in rural areas, more than half of the respondents of the questionnaire (51%) found the CAP instruments and measures to have been moderately effective, 35% - not effective, and 13% - very effective.

During the interviews, some additional elements were brought to the fore. For example, it was said that in Italy youth unemployment in rural areas had not increased as much as in urban areas, which could be seen as a positive effect of the CAP, coming from the choice to support young farmers. Employers' organisations both in Spain and in France noted that CAP measures and instruments had failed to create better economic conditions, especially in terms of remuneration, and the quality of life for farmers and farm workers. In Hungary, the need to keep and offer quality jobs for the rural population, thus both preventing de-population trends and maintaining competitiveness of the rural economies, were mentioned several times as one of the main challenges. The need to improve the quality of life in rural areas was also mentioned in Hungary. In Ireland significant positive impact of the CAP instruments and measures was mentioned in terms of job creation, especially noting that the Leader programme had shown a strong track record for economic development until 2020 (with a halt due to COVID-19); however, at the same time, the prevalence of low-paid, part-time and seasonal work was a continual feature of rural employment.

The issue of **depopulation** was not often brought up by the participants during the interviews, however, it was agreed in all countries that CAP had helped people to stay in the countryside and in the regions and that the rural development aid was crucial for the agri-food industry. 51% of the respondents of the online questionnaire felt that the CAP instruments and measures had been moderately effective in helping farmers maintain their business in rural areas, whilst 20% found them very effective.

At the same time, the loss of the number of farmers in France was mentioned as a worrying trend, and in Spain, it was said that the CAP had not been effective enough in maintaining population in rural areas. Another aspect mentioned in Spain in this regard was the need for CAP to give priority to people working and living in rural areas, instead of being linked to hectares, which made the access for young people difficult. In Ireland, it was said that the low-income levels were a deterrent for entry of young people into farming, as well as the very little land available for sale. To the question of how effective the CAP instruments and measures had been in contributing to young farmers setting up in rural areas 58% of the questionnaire respondents felt that the answer was moderately effective, and 20% - very effective. Likewise, 51% of the respondents felt that the CAP instruments and measures had been moderately effective in supporting new farmers setting up in rural areas, whereas 31% found that they were not effective. The lack of settlement support for people with new projects (others that the farmers' children) was also mentioned in France (where only 40% of the new "farmers" in France were able to benefit from the CAP's young farmers' scheme).

Especially in Ireland and Italy, agri-tourism was mentioned as a side-activity for farmers. 56% of the questionnaire respondents considered the CAP instruments and measures moderately effective when it came to helping farmers set up new activities like food transformation activities/ tourism, and 20% found them very effective.

**Cooperatives** was another topic raised during the interviews in several countries. Representatives of the Spanish NGOs stressed that cooperatives must play an important role in promoting territorial development (for example, they had created jobs in the midst of the COVID-19 crisis). Cooperatives

also created a concentration of farms, which allowed them to have more bargaining power, inter alia, to improve prices. In France, it was said that the CAP, at territorial level, had enabled farmers to stay in rural areas, improve their working methods and quality of life and cooperate with each other through cooperatives. It was also suggested that cooperatives presented an enormous employment potential through the creation of shared jobs (employers' groups). The Irish cooperatives' representatives noted that support for cooperatives under the CAP was very limited and they would like to see more cooperation enabled. In addition, in Ireland, there were not many cooperatives due to the predominantly family-based farming structure, and support for the development of cooperatives at the national level was very limited.

In the questionnaire, respondents viewed the effectiveness of CAP instruments and measures in maintaining/developing agricultural cooperatives in rural areas as moderately effective (44%) or not effective (36%).

The issue of **land abandonment** was raised during interviews in France, Spain and in Ireland. In France, public authorities highlighted that around 50 000 ha of agricultural land were lost every year. In Spain, the employers' representative expressed the view that the CAP was not thought to have helped people to stay in the countryside; it had focused on benefiting farmers, but had done little to create better economic and social conditions to reverse the abandonment of the countryside (Spain "emptied"). In Ireland, the opposite was stated – that the CAP was vital for the Irish farming industry, and without it there would be lots of land abandonment. The Irish public authorities also highlighted the Areas of Natural Constraint (ANC) scheme in land abandonment prevention as having generally positive results.

In the questionnaire, 15% of the respondents considered the CAP instruments and measures as having been very effective in avoiding land abandonment in rural areas, 44% as moderately effective and 35% as not effective.

#### *Social inclusion and poverty reduction*

In terms of **poverty reduction** in rural areas, the sum of responses from all the countries was much split: with 47% of respondents considering the CAP measures and instrument as moderately effective and 44% as not effective. When comparing the countries, France, Italy and Hungary considered the CAP measures and instruments as mostly not effective (75%, 54% and 50% respectively), whilst Ireland and Spain saw them as moderately effective (60% and 57%).

During the interviews, the Spanish NGOs representatives stressed that steps had been taken in CAP priority number 6 (fight against poverty), however, they had not been very effective, and opportunities for coordination of different policies had been missed.

As to **social inclusion**, the general results for all countries together were slightly more positive than in terms of poverty reduction: 49% of respondents found the CAP measures and instruments to be moderately effective in improving social inclusion, whilst 35% found them to be not effective at all. France turned out to have the most negative view on this aspect again, with 75% of respondents considering that the CAP measures and instruments had been not effective in improving social inclusion. Italy, Hungary and Ireland, on the other hand, were more positive with 77%, 60% and 40% respectively

considering them as moderately effective. 30% of the Irish respondents even thought that the CAP measures and instruments had been very effective in supporting social inclusion.

The aspect of social conditionality was mentioned in France, Ireland, Italy and Spain, notably that CAP should implement a social conditionality clause, meaning that if the farmer does not comply with labour law, he or she should not receive CAP funding. Some respondents called for the CAP to have a very important social component. The social conditionality clause should be a key tool, for example, to eliminate the exploitation of seasonal workers, especially immigrants. In Italy, the hope was expressed that the social conditionality clause for farm aid (Article 11 of CAP) having now been approved by the European Parliament, would also be adopted by the European Commission.

### *Vulnerable groups*

During the interviews, the two most mentioned **vulnerable groups** were the seasonal workers and women.

In Ireland, the NGOs said that Ireland was typically a non-migrant country, with rural economy based on family farming with limited need for seasonal workers; CAP played a key role in maintaining rural agri-business. Nevertheless, it was mentioned that there was definitely a risk of exploitation of people within the asylum system, being kept in remote areas, labouring and not being paid a fair wage. In total, the number of Roma and legal migrants was low. On the other hand, trade union representatives stated that collective bargaining rights were usually not respected for the migrant workers working in the fruit and vegetables' and beef sectors (which were heavily dependent on migrant workers), who had arrived in Ireland from the new EU Member states after 2004, as well as from other countries; and generally there was no support for them.

In Spain, low wages, lack of access to training or limited access to decent housing were emphasised as persistent problems, which particularly affected seasonal workers and which the CAP was considered not to have improved or tried to improve.

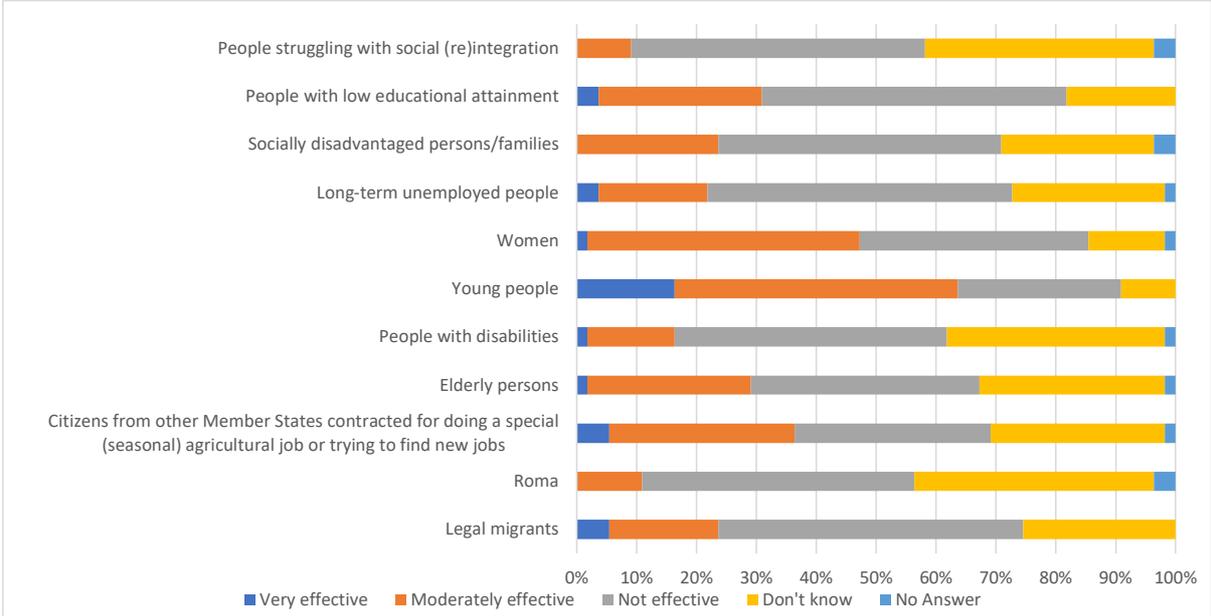
In Italy, it was noted that the country was subject to seasonal workers, mainly exploited immigrants and in this respect, the need to include the social conditionality clause in the next CAP was highlighted. The view was expressed that the inclusion of the social conditionality clause in the next CAP can be a key tool to eliminate the exploitation of seasonal workers, especially immigrants.

In France, the question of the seasonal workers was linked to the employment conditions and it was suggested to support and train the (first-time) employers to enable the development of quality jobs with correct working conditions for all employees.

In the online questionnaire, 51% of the respondents found the CAP instruments and measures not effective in targeting legal migrants. Regarding citizens from other Member States contracted for doing a special (seasonal) agricultural job or trying to find new jobs 31% of respondents found the CAP instruments and measures to have been moderately effective and 33% not effective.

As regards **Roma**, respondents were quite negative about the effectiveness of the CAP instruments and measures in supporting this vulnerable group – 45% found the measures to have been not effective and 40% had no opinion on this; only 11% found them to have been moderately effective.

*Graph 3. How effective were the CAP instruments and measures in targeting the following vulnerable groups:*



When asked how they viewed the effectiveness of the CAP instruments and measures in assuring the social inclusion of vulnerable groups in rural areas in terms of integrating them into agricultural and/or sustainability activities, including the development of social activities in existing farms, 38% of the respondents found them moderately effective and 44% not effective.

During the interviews in Italy, **social farming** was mentioned as an effective measure of the 2014-2020 CAP, stressing that agriculture had always been associated with values of solidarity, mutual aid, etc., and, therefore, social farming played an important role in particular for the well-being and care of people. Furthermore, it was said that agri-tourism and educational farms attracted the urban population and gave access to nature.

In terms of supporting **women** in rural areas, 45% of respondents of the questionnaire considered the CAP instruments and measures to have been moderately effective and 38% not effective. With regard to specific aspects of social inclusion of women in rural areas, 51% of the respondents considered the CAP instruments and measures moderately effective in promoting access of women to co-ownership and co-management of farms; at the same time, 42% of the respondents considered them ineffective.

During the interviews, in Spain it was said that the role of women in the farms needed to be strengthened, stressing that, as for any other European policy, equal opportunities must be an essential part of the CAP. However, the Spanish NGOs considered that the CAP had not been effective in terms of gender equality and the situation had worsened compared to the previous period. It was said that female farmers received less support than male farmers. Furthermore, in France, it was said that in terms of female employment in agriculture, women were found to be overrepresented in precarious jobs.

As to women taking over the responsibility of managing a farming business on their own in rural areas, 55% of the respondents of the questionnaire found the CAP instruments and measures to have been moderately effective and 35% not effective. For example, during the interviews in France it was said that the situation of women in agriculture needed to be improved, in particular as regards access to private finance and the right to land, and support/rehousing for widows of farmers.

Last but not least, in terms of promotion/recognition of the contribution women make to rural agricultural activities, 44% of the respondents of the questionnaire considered the CAP instruments and measures to not have been effective and 42% considered them moderately effective. The only country where this matter was raised during the interviews was Ireland, with the Irish public authorities noting that actions were taken for the promotion of women in rural activities in Ireland.

*Sustainable development (balanced economic-social development)*

With regard to the effectiveness of CAP measures and instruments in promoting sustainable development more than half of the respondents (58%) found that they had been moderately effective. In a country comparison, the respondents in France were the most critical, with 38% finding the measures and instruments moderately effective and 63% not effective, whereas the Spanish and the Hungarian respondents were the most positive – with 14% in Spain considering the measures and instruments as very effective and 64% as moderately effective, and with 80% in Hungary considering the measures and instruments as moderately effective.

Italian employers' representatives stressed that the CAP must contribute to economic, environmental and social sustainability and should economically reward the most sustainable farmers.

*Specific CAP measures and instruments*

When assessing the **effectiveness of specific CAP measures and instruments**, support for LEADER and local development (CLLD) (EAFRD M19) was found to be the most effective of all measures, especially in terms of economic development of rural areas (28% of total respondents), sustainable development (18%) and social inclusion in rural areas as well as employment in rural areas (16% each).

*Graph 4. Support for LEADER and local development considered as 'very effective' for:*

		Answers	Ratio
Economic development of rural areas		15	27.27 %
Employment in rural areas		9	16.36 %
Poverty reduction in rural areas		5	9.09 %
Social inclusion in rural areas		9	16.36 %
Sustainable development (balanced economic-social development)		10	18.18 %
No Answer		37	67.27 %

Respondents from all countries, except for Italy, were in agreement that Leader and CLLDs had been very effective in terms of economic development of rural areas (38% for France, 40% for Hungary, 30%

for Ireland and 29% for Spain), and also in terms of employment in rural areas, social inclusion in rural areas and sustainable development.

During the interviews, the Leader programme was particularly mentioned in Ireland, where its role had been huge and it was said to have made "a living countryside". However, there was a lot of criticism regarding the changes in its administration in Ireland brought in 2014 with the involvement of county councils and, hence, adding another level of bureaucracy (and slowing down the decision-making process). Furthermore, the need for the Leader programme to be funded and promoted to a much greater extent was emphasised in Ireland.

In France, the Leader programme was also quite extensively discussed, from its original and positive objective (significant and multiannual common European framework funds used as close as possible to the territories) to its delivery problems and need of optimisation.

During the interviews in Hungary, it was mentioned that in contrast to CLLDs the Hungarian Leader programmes were more successful in offering a number of viable solutions of local partnerships in the rural areas assisting to build a closer economic cooperation. In Spain, it was said that the Leader projects had been well targeted but their functioning was open to criticism; the Leader approach was also said to be rigid.

The cooperation instrument (EAFRD M16) was found to be very effective in terms of employment in rural areas (16%) and economic development of rural areas (15%), as well as for sustainable development (balanced economic-social development) (13%).

Investments in physical assets (EAFRD M04) measure was also found very effective in terms of economic development of rural areas (16%), employment in rural areas (11%) and sustainable development (11%).

Payments to areas facing natural or other specific constraints (EAFRD, M13 and EAGF) were found to be very effective by 11% of the respondents in terms of sustainable development and by 7% in terms of economic development of rural areas, as well as by 7% in terms of poverty reduction in rural areas.

Payment for young farmers (EAGF) was considered as very effective by 11% of respondents in boosting employment in rural areas and by 9% - in boosting economic development in rural areas.

Basic services and village renewal in rural areas (EAFRD M07) was considered as a very effective measure by 11% of respondents in terms of social inclusion in rural areas, and by 9% in terms of economic development of rural areas.

Basic income support (including small farmers scheme and greening) (EAGF) was found by 11% of respondents to have been very effective both in terms of economic development of rural areas as well as for poverty reduction in rural areas. Furthermore, 9% found that it had promoted sustainable development, and other 7% - employment in rural areas.

Last but not least, farm and business development instrument (EAFRD M06) had been very effective in promoting economic development of rural areas, according to 11% of respondents, and employment in rural areas – according to 7%.

Most of the other instruments (inter alia knowledge transfer and information actions (EAFRD M01), sectoral programmes (fruits and vegetables, wine) (EAGF), setting-up of producer groups and organisations (EAFRD M09) and others) seemed to be not well known among the respondents with a very low response-rate, with forest-environmental and climate services and forest conservation measures (EAFRD M15) being the least known – 98% of respondents were not able to provide an answer to evaluate this measure.

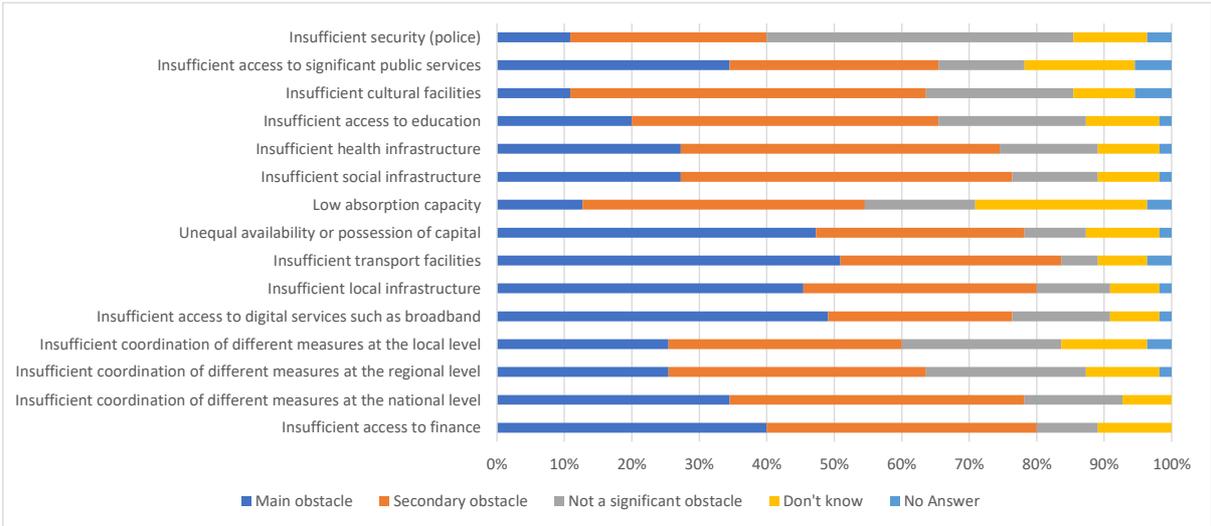
*The main limiting factors/obstacles for balanced territorial development*

When asked about the main limiting factors/obstacles for balanced territorial development in their respective area, including factors beyond those linked to the CAP, the respondents had the following opinion:

- Insufficient transport facilities: 51% of respondents considered this as the main obstacle
- Insufficient access to digital services such as broadband: 49%
- Unequal availability or possession of capital (natural, physical, human): 47%
- Insufficient local infrastructure: 45%
- Insufficient access to finance: 40%
- Insufficient coordination of different measures at the national level: 35%.

Insufficient security (police), insufficient cultural facilities and insufficient social infrastructure were considered as the least important obstacles to balanced territorial development.

*Graph 5. Which are the main limiting factors /obstacles for balanced territorial development in your area, including factors beyond those linked to the CAP?*



During the interviews, insufficient transport facilities were mentioned in Ireland, especially with regard to the rail network, and infrastructure in general. In Spain, transport policy was mentioned as a complementary services policy needed for balanced territorial development, for example, it was essential to facilitate transport between villages, as older people would live there where the services are.

The provision of a world-class broadband infrastructure was emphasised by all stakeholders in Ireland as an absolute prerequisite for the development of rural areas. It was said that there had been a continuous decline in terms of service provision in rural areas, and currently only 7% of rural Ireland had access to high-speed broadband versus 20% on average in the EU. In Italy, it was said that, under the CAP, important investments had been made for farms, but they were missing in terms of infrastructure and training. There is a need to develop integrated measures to step up infrastructure, such as digitalisation and broadband in rural areas. According to the DESI index, Italy ranks as one of the last countries in Europe in terms of digital skills.

As regards unequal availability or possession of capital (natural, physical, human) as an obstacle, human capacity and the improvement of the knowledge of the local actors was mentioned by the Irish public authorities as one of the fundamental challenges in the current CAP. It was said that the need for better coordination through better governance structures and human capacity development was paramount to collaborating at the different levels of the system. Furthermore, in Hungary it was noted that the competitiveness of rural areas had to be improved, with special attention to increases in value added of products, an improvement in human resources, technological modernisation and capital formation. It was emphasised that learning and sharing good practices should be more efficient.

With regard to insufficient local infrastructure, in Spain the lack of family related infrastructure was mentioned, for example, childcare facilities; also in France the need for improved childcare infrastructure in the rural areas was mentioned. In Hungary, it was stressed that the connectivity between smaller settlements and bigger cities should be improved to ensure the availability of crucial services within at least in 20-minutes reach for people. If this is not the case, people tend to leave rural areas even when jobs are available. Both infrastructure, better availability of services and communication networks should be developed further. In Italy, the need to revitalise the health network in rural areas was mentioned, and it was said that infrastructure was key to bringing young people closer together.

Regarding insufficient coordination of different measures at the national level, in France the question of the effectiveness of funding was raised, for example, in relation to LEADER and the need for more coordination between state and regions in order to create a more effective mechanism at local level. In Hungary, the participants noted that it was important to enhance the coordination between the different ministries at a national level.

### 3.2 Relevance

According to the European Commission's Better Regulation toolbox, the criterion of relevance *"looks at the relationship between the needs and problems in society and the objectives of the intervention and hence touches on aspects of design. Relevance analysis also requires a consideration of how the objectives of an EU intervention (...) correspond to wider EU policy goals and priorities."*<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>3</sup>

[https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/file\\_import/better-regulation-toolbox-47\\_en\\_0.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/file_import/better-regulation-toolbox-47_en_0.pdf)

3.2.1 *Relevance and coherence of the CAP instruments and measures with other existing funding programmes in relation with the support for development of rural areas*

*Existing funding programmes*

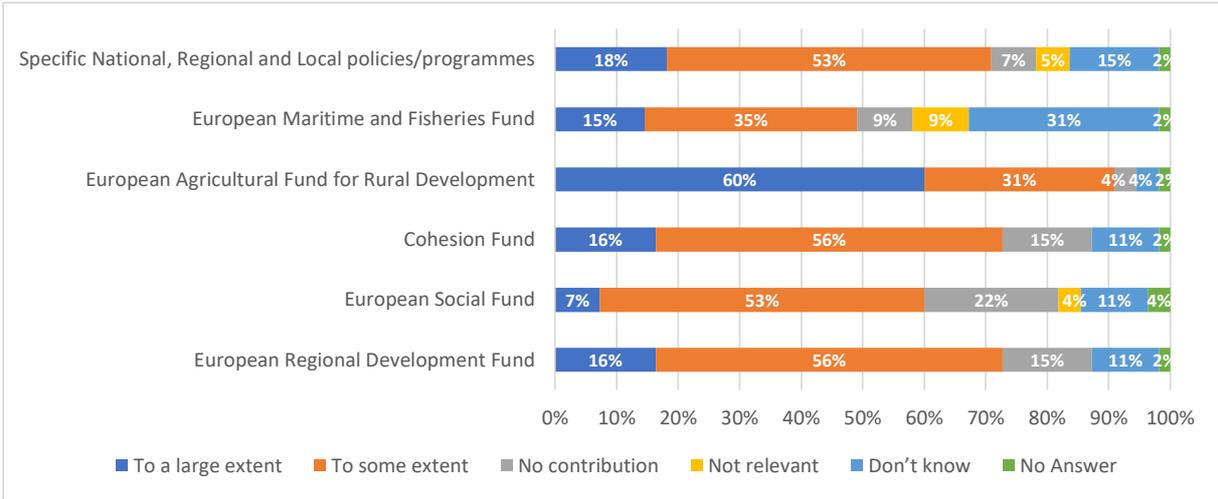
According to the answers of the questionnaires (see graph below), the CAP instruments and measures were considered the most coherent and complementary to the **European agricultural fund for rural development (EAFRD)**, with almost 91% of the respondents answering "to a large extent"(60%) or "to some extent" (31%).

The **European regional development fund (ERDF)** and specific national, regional and local policies/programmes (not directly linked to EU funding) were the two other existing funding sources for which the respondents consider by majority (71-72%) that the various CAP instruments and measures delivered a coherent and complementary contribution (to a large extent (16-18%) and to some extent (53-56%), while 15% and 7% of the respondents consider respectively that the CAP provides no contribution to the ERDF and the other specific programmes.

Of the almost 70% respondents who are familiar with the **European maritime and fisheries fund (EMFF)**, a large majority consider that the various CAP instruments and measures delivered also a coherent and complementary contribution to this fund.

Considering the **European social fund (ESF)** and the **Cohesion fund**, the views of the respondents to the questionnaire are less homogeneous, with more than 50% of the respondents who consider that the various CAP instruments and measures delivered a coherent and complementary contribution, while a quarter of them consider that it delivers no contribution at all.

*Graph 6. To what extent did the various CAP instruments and measures deliver a coherent and complementary contribution to other existing funding programmes in relation with the support for development of rural areas?*



*General coordination among policies and funds*

The stakeholders confirmed the general assessment that other existing funding programmes are complementary to the CAP measures in order to support the development of rural areas but that

**coordination between policies and funds** has not been sufficiently developed, leading to a **lack of coherence between policies**. More specifically, all stakeholders consider that rural challenges must be addressed in a **comprehensive and cross-cutting approach**, where all territorial policies have to complement each other (health, education, housing, mobility, transport, energy, forest roads, culture, home affairs/security, industry, justice, digitalisation, heritage management, etc.).

Therefore, the stakeholders consider that while the CAP is the key policy for funding and maintaining employment in agriculture, agriculture is multifunctional (all aspects are linked) and the CAP must be accompanied by **other policies and funds** (European, national or regional) that complement its approach, such as cohesion policy and structural funds, and must better integrate agricultural projects into **territorial projects**.

The complex nature of rural development was highlighted by all participants who calls urgently for a long-term, strategic approach addressing the different aspects in parallel, instead of focusing on one issue only, with the need for differentiated programmes and solutions in order to better take into account and address regional differences. Some regions offer many employment opportunities, while others are suffering from a big unemployment and people are unwilling to leave their homes for a more remote location. The general opinion is that rural life must be maintained and supported and that the EU should be able to identify **new resources** to help people living in rural areas. These new resources should derive not only from CAP funding but also from other funds/sources to give people living in rural areas more opportunities to implement development ideas outside agriculture.

In Spain, some representatives of workers consider that there is a sense of vacuum and lack of care in rural areas for which the CAP is made responsible, although the CAP alone is not enough to meet the challenges of rural areas.

Participants in France perceived the coherence between the two pillars of the CAP as sufficient. In terms of funding that can be mobilised for the CAP, the need for effective financing tools integrated into **the territorial development approach** was identified (as initially foreseen by LEADER: significant and multiannual common European framework funds used as close as possible to the territories), and the creation of an inter-fund was proposed.

None of the participants favoured the abolition of CAP or expressed themselves for any reduction in the funds involved.

#### *Coordination at national level*

In all countries, the great potential of the **LEADER and CLLD programmes** was recognised, while some limits and improvements were suggested.

In France, roles are clearly shared between the State and the regions which are the managing authorities of the EAFRD, but the implementation of the LEADER programme would need more coordination between state and regions in order to create a more effective mechanism at **local level**, and be improved to avoid the known problems of LEADER (low delivery of appropriations and implementation in particular). Indeed, a lack of coherence between agricultural and rural projects was highlighted, despite the existence of decision-making and co-construction structures (LEADER, national rural network, etc.).

and some examples of measures adopted in good complementarity with local measures (combating poverty for example).

In Hungary, it was also noted that the LEADER programme was the most successful in offering a number of viable solutions of local partnerships and in supporting innovative projects that were really aimed at revitalising the rural areas. CLLD programmes were not utilised enough for different reasons (e.g. unable to apply for a complex programme due to CLLD's significantly narrowed subject areas, lack of sufficient financial resources which was unable to provide support for more serious local development projects). It was suggested to give a bigger space to real **local needs** and the real involvement of the **local population** in the CLLD instrument, and to create more synergies between the CLLD and the LEADER programmes. Some stakeholders also raised a major problem at monitoring level with the lack of real coordination between operational programmes and joint agricultural development programmes (several objectives, such as recovery planning or resilience plans, are part of both the strategic planning of the common agricultural policy and the planning of the operational programmes). This lack of coordination was seen as leading to counterproductive use of the funds.

In Italy, representatives specifically called for more support for farms and **social inclusion** through the revision of the LEADER instrument.

In Ireland, representatives of the public authorities called for enhanced coordination between the different ministries at a national level. In IE, a number of participants also bemoaned the insertion of the local authorities into the Leader infrastructure contending that it had resulted in increased bureaucracy and stifling inflexibilities.

In Spain, the stakeholders confirmed that there have been cooperation mechanisms that have worked, such as the 'rural development groups' (local action groups) that were important.

#### *European coordination of the funds*

Some stakeholders in Hungary suggested that more was needed to be done at the EU scale to support **co-funding of initiatives** by improving the operation of Community-Led Local Development (CLLD). Representatives in Hungary further noted a certain lack of coherence among the DGs of the European Commission, asking the Commission DGs to set common main goals and coherent support programmes.

#### *Bureaucratisation of the funds*

The problem of **bureaucratisation** of the funds was further highlighted in several countries visited, limiting the use of the multi-fund due to bureaucratic hurdles, with a clear suggestion to increase resourcing and reinforcing the partnership concept while reducing the complexity and bureaucracy of the LEADER programme.

#### *Involvement of social partners and civil society*

There was a general call for greater involvement of **social partners and civil society** in both the planning and implementation of rural development projects in order to ensure that local needs and

interests are sufficiently taken into account. This should go hand-in-hand with creating more synergies among the different support programmes both at EU and at national levels.

Representatives of Spain also highlighted that a **gender perspective** in all funds is necessary.

#### *CAP and research and innovation funds*

In Spain, some representatives of other interest groups acknowledged that progress has been made in complementarity between the CAP and **research and innovation funds**, and that this should continue (connection between universities, research centres, farmers, businesses, etc.).

In the other hand, representatives of employers in Italy considered that the results of projects such as Horizon Europe did not reach the farmers while the benefits of money spent in these research programmes must be brought to them. They consider that it is important to involve **agricultural businesses** in carrying out research projects. In France also it was acknowledged that the CAP will need scientific and social innovation to ensure the sustainable transition of the food chain, with the need of enhanced cooperation between producers and knowledge centres (universities, etc.) to innovate and support the multi functionality of agriculture.

Representatives of the authorities in Italy further highlighted that **young people** have on average the largest, most innovative and most profitable companies. However, they identified two limits for youth employment: access to land and financing.

#### *Share and access to the funds*

The share of responsibility for **CAP and rural development policy** between different departments was identified in Ireland as problematic due to the fact that the bulk of funding is going to the Department of Agriculture and the Marine, yet the Department with responsibility for Rural Development shared the same cabinet minister as the Department of Social Protection and had a limited budget. Also, tensions between virtually exclusive expenditure 'inside the farm gate' and broader social and community investment was noted in IE. The absence of comprehensive analysis on the integrated dynamics of the rural economy and society was identified, which renders it difficult to fully address this question.

Representatives of farmers and cooperatives in Spain also highlighted that the agricultural sector cannot access other **funds or mechanisms beyond the CAP**, as some other funds are just not accessible for CAP recipients or very focused on large companies, with high bureaucracy, making them inaccessible for **small structures**.

In Hungary, participants noted that there was a lack of strategic thinking in the Hungarian rural development policy and a lack of commitment to direct sufficient resources to **small settlements**. It was suggested to have clearer definitions (e.g. what is considered agricultural activity, who counts as a primary producer) to contribute to a better access to funds by the **smallest players**.

Some stakeholders in Hungary warned that there are '**white zones**' where neither European programmes can provide funds, because either the funds' size is too small so the fund runs out or, due to administrative consolidation, some settlements are no longer eligible. They called for an improvement of the territorial

coverage, because if the CAP funds do not reach a region, there will not be a possibility to create synergies among the CAP funding and the funding from other EU programmes.

#### *CAP and the new European strategies and funds*

The stakeholders recognised that **coherence and complementarity** between the existing funding programmes is particularly important in the framework of the **new European strategies** (the European Green Deal, the Farm to Fork Strategy, the Biodiversity Strategy) and the Next Generation EU funds and **recovery plans**.

Furthermore, the Spanish authorities highlighted two milestones in the context of the new programming period and the COVID crisis: (1) EAFRD is no longer a fund (this may be a loss, and complementarity between all funds will have to be sought), and (2) the Recovery plan that will represent a huge amount of money for a limited period of time, with actions that will have an impact on rural areas.

#### *3.2.2 Relevance and coherence of the CAP instruments and measures with other EU/ national/ local existing policies*

##### *Agri-food systems*

While the CAP is recognised to be the key policy for funding and maintaining employment in agriculture, representatives in Italy identified that there is no continuity and coherence between the CAP and the **Farm to Fork (F2F) strategy**. A **holistic approach** to the European agri-food system is needed and must link the F2F strategy with the social policies to address also, among others, training courses and social inclusion.

In France, representatives of trade unions highlighted that the organisation of agri-food chains was linked to regional investments in the **reindustrialisation of rural areas** (slaughterhouses, veterinarians, logistics chains, etc.). Other participants highlighted the importance of innovation in this sector (policies and applied research centres) as well as cooperation with citizens to promote local food and to find collective solutions.

Representatives of a NGO in Italy further highlighted that the approach to food and resources must be an ecosystem-based approach, not closed within political boundaries, and that building **bridges between urban and rural areas** to ensure the survival of these areas is necessary (they consider that the rural environment is now almost marginal, especially from a social point of view). They consider that **local food chains** must become part of the CAP, and cite the concrete example of the Mercati della Terra Network in Milan, where thanks to a good relationship with the institutions, there are several land markets that connect local producers with urban areas. They warn that if there will continue to be this strong flow of resources channelled to the agro-industry sector to the detriment of small businesses, the gap will become ever more profound. Representatives of farmers in France considered also that the CAP should be able to support the sustainability and quality of the various types of farming, both "short-chain" and "long-chain" farming to meet the needs of all consumers.

### *Trade relations*

Furthermore, the issue of reciprocity in **trade relations** was highlighted to be crucial in order to avoid unfair competition from imported products and to ensure the quality of imported food products, including in terms of human rights. The European Green Deal and the Farm to Fork must be able to enforce EU standards.

Representatives in France also highlighted the need for consistency of the European obligations with the conditions under which products imported from third countries are produced.

### *Environmental goals*

While no obvious example of incompatibility between CAP and other existing policies or other EU funding programmes emerged, tensions between "hard" economic development and environmental protection were identified in Ireland and France.

Regarding **climate and biodiversity**, representatives of farmers highlighted the many positive results achieved in agriculture, one above all being the reduction in total emissions. That said, they highlight that the strategy to combat climate change must be from an all-encompassing perspective and all the additional techniques to traditional agriculture must be economically sustainable. Environmental, economic and social sustainability must go therefore hand in hand.

Representatives of the authorities in Italy were on the same line and highlighted the issue of **resilience** linked with the CAP: they consider that in addition to economic resilience, we also need to look at the environmental one. The agricultural sector accounts for 10% of greenhouse gas emissions, but it is the only sector that also absorbs emissions. In addition, the cultivation and maintenance of pasture and woodland in good condition takes place if there is economic support.

As regards the relevance of policies between them, participants in France highlighted the **lack of coherence between the CAP and environmental policies** (e.g. predator management such as wolves and bears). They suggested to support local initiatives that would, for example, allow environmental policies (often edited by central government) to be discussed or even reconciled with the expectations of rural/farmers (local needs). As CAP policies are not always coherent with structural funds and environmental policies, the need to improve the crosscutting nature of decision-making was highlighted.

Participants in France suggested that financial tools (both Community and national/local) should be considered in terms of **resilience, national/European sovereignty and value creation**, and take into account the diversity of farmers' profiles (reference to the JRC study "Farmers of the future").

It was highlighted in several countries that the EU environmental policy, including greening of Europe, helping to maintain biodiversity and developing renewable energy sources, require a sound proportion of healthy and happy **rural population** that must be achieved through efficient rural development.

## *Social policies*

Several representatives of workers in the visited countries considered that the Commission's assessments of the **social** and economic impact of the CAP in internal areas and in the agri-food sector in general are insufficient. They consider as unjustified and serious that no mention is made of employee work while the agri-food sector is a big employer (it employs for example over one and a half million people in Italy).

In France and Italy, representatives of workers consider that too often a choice is made of environmental policy without raising the problem of the impact it may have on employment. The representatives of Italy therefore highly appreciated the European Parliament's work on Article 11 of the CAP proposal related to the introduction of **social conditionality**. This would represent a historic transition as it can allow a new quality phase in the agricultural sector. They hope that the social conditionality clause for farm aid agreed by the European Parliament will remain in the final version of the CAP.

Furthermore, it was highlighted that the **low prices imposed by large retailers** do not allow farmers a margin to survive, favouring undeclared work and workers' exploitation mechanisms.

### *Identified success case/interesting synergies between CAP and other policies in local integrated schemes and joint actions of different funds*

A respondent from Italy identified in the questionnaire interesting synergies between the CAP and some measures of the Leader/ CLLD (Community-led local development) programme that were complemented by ESF funds. These synergies have for example made it possible to organise projects to improve the skills of people working in rural areas, to allow the creation of collaboration networks on innovative programmes for the enhancement of environmental sustainability in sheep, and enhancement of environmental sustainability in sheep and cattle breeding based on the use of natural grazing.

At the opposite, a respondent from Ireland regret that in Ireland, at the contrary of many other EU countries, a major opportunity was missed when managing authorities decided not to apply for the CLLD (Community-led local development) multi-fund approach across the various EU Funds. He believes that this would have meant expansion of the LEADER / CLLD approach across a broader set of policy areas (by allowing a minimum of 5% -similar to LEADER-of each fund to be used).

A respondent from Italy suggested in the questionnaire that there should be more connections among the different instruments such as EAFRD, LIFE projects, European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), intraregional cooperation projects and European social funds. A respondent from Spain highlighted in the questionnaire such an example of synergy between the CAP and projects such as LIFE, HORIZON, EIP, etc., with the leading role of farmers and livestock farmers to achieve the environmental ambitions of these programs.

However, another respondent of Ireland highlighted that LEADER supported Local Development Company (IRD Duhallow) has had success in accessing LIFE Environment Biodiversity to address specific Environment Issues locally, by including local smallholders and long term unemployed people in the conservation work and invasive species eradication, Water Quality and also Hen Harrier and

Raptor conservation. The LIFE programme also enabled local farmers, landowners and communities to continue the work through the European Innovation Partnership Agriculture.

### 3.2.3 *Relevance and coherence of the CAP instruments and measures with other EU/ national/ local existing policies related to access to services in rural areas*

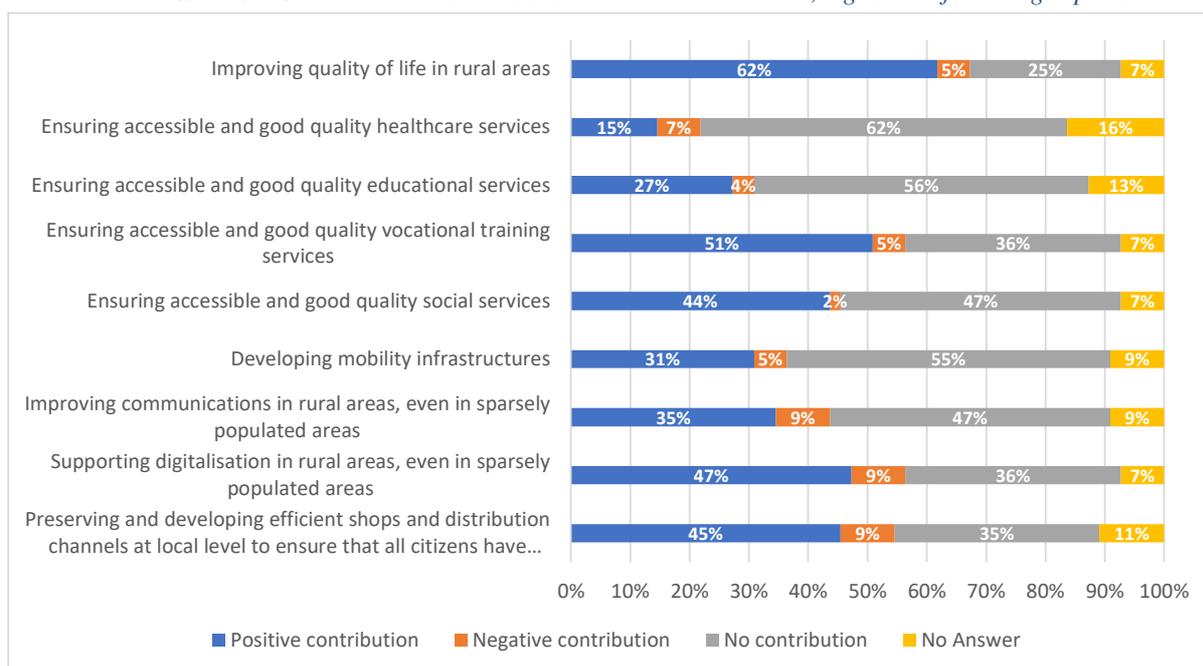
According to the answers of the questionnaires (see graph below), the majority of the respondents consider that the CAP instruments and measures had a positive contribution in improving **quality of life in rural areas** (e.g. access to cultural and natural heritage etc.) (62%), in ensuring accessible and good quality vocational training services (51%), in supporting digitalisation in rural areas, even in sparsely populated areas (47% ), and in preserving and developing efficient shops and distribution channels at local level to ensure that all citizens have permanent access to high-quality food, avoiding "food deserts" (45%). It has however to be noted that 25 to 36% of the respondents were of the view that the CAP instruments and measures had had no impact on these services.

On the other hand, a majority of the respondents consider that the CAP instruments and measures had no contribution in ensuring accessible and good quality healthcare services (62%, 15% positive contribution), ensuring accessible and good quality educational services (56%, 27% positive contribution) and developing mobility infrastructures (55%, 31% positive contribution).

The views of the respondents are diverging for what concerns the contribution of the CAP instruments and measures on improving communications in rural areas, even in sparsely populated areas (e.g. broadband) (47% no contribution, 35% positive contribution) and on ensuring accessible and good quality social services (47% no contribution, 44% positive contribution).

No one of these services are identified as being negatively impacted by the CAP instruments and measures (all questions with less than 10% of negative contribution).

Graph 7. Did the various CAP instruments and measures deliver a coherent and complementary contribution to other EU/national/local related to access to services in rural areas, e.g. on the following aspects:



### Territorial development

During meetings in the Member States, all stakeholders agreed that other policies complementary to the CAP are needed for the territorial development (health, education, housing, mobility, transport, energy, forest roads, culture, home affairs/security, industry, justice, digitalisation, etc.), with a comprehensive vision to be developed. Assuring and improving the **quality of life** in rural areas, ensuring **decent work**, improving the **connectedness** of rural areas and improving the **availability of and access to wider range of services** were mentioned as important solutions.

Representatives in France considered that the CAP has not allowed for sufficient cooperation between agricultural actors and other rural actors and suggested that the CAP should be managed at **territorial level** in order to ensure a link between employment and territories and thus enable the development of quality jobs, while maintaining a common European core (need for a balance between a common policy and a territorial policy).

In Spain, some participants highlighted also the need for services for **human development** (which require other policies) for rural areas to be viable.

Public authorities in Spain explained that a system (common strategic framework) was developed to avoid overlaps and ensure coherence of policies that have an impact on the rural world.

Representatives in IE noted that with limited funding and a predominant focus on agriculture as part of the rural development strategy, there has been a neglect in terms of the availability of **public services** and improving access to these services. They consider that there has been a continuous decline in terms of service provision in rural areas in Ireland. Access to finance, retention of talent/skills, digital connectivity, sustaining of innovation in the rural areas was mentioned as the main challenges.

In Spain, representatives suggested that Next Generation EU funds could be useful to ensure services and training, and could be decisive to cover what the CAP does not reach (e.g. green jobs, digitising the territory...).

#### *Basic services*

**Basic services** (roads, health, education, good internet connection, childcare facilities, transport between villages and to the services, etc.) need to be available to attract people to live in the countryside, and must be developed in parallel with **economic (industries)** and **service diversification (e.g. rural tourism)**. In addition, there must be better wages in order to stay in the countryside.

Representatives of the authorities in Italy consider that the **infrastructure** is needed to keep people connected to a territory, noting that 50% of the employed population lives in rural areas.

Participants in Hungary suggested that a better involvement of and a tangible financial support from Pillar 2 to **network of rural shops** offering financial, postal, pharma and ATM services as "rural service centres" in rural areas.

#### *Digitalisation*

**Digitalisation** was identified in most of the countries as one of the most pressing issues.

In Ireland, the low quality of rural broadband was especially mentioned as a crucial obstacle. Ensuring high-speed broadband in rural areas was seen as key (it was said that currently only 7% of rural Ireland had access to high-speed broadband versus 20% on average in the EU).

In Italy, representatives of employers identified the need to develop integrated measures to step up infrastructure, such as digitalisation and broadband in rural areas as they consider that while important investments have been made for farms, infrastructures, training and information are missing. They consider that infrastructure is key to bringing **young people** closer together. They noted that according to the [DESI index](#), Italy ranks as one of the last countries in Europe in terms of digital skills.

#### *Vulnerable areas*

Representatives in Italy identified that the inland areas and the most difficult areas must be at the heart of a **new economic and social focus**, and that they should benefit from a strong revival of the agro-industrial sector. When it comes to revitalisation, it must be economic, i.e. a series of key actions on infrastructure in rural areas, such as the health network and digitalisation, needs to be done. Farmers need CAP funding to survive in a particularly difficult environment.

Representatives of workers shared an example *of good practice* in Italy in the Emilia-Romagna region, which has provided housing conditions for citizens wishing to move to **mountainous municipalities** currently at risk of depopulation, thanks also to the novelties linked to the smart-working. This initiative has been accompanied by huge demands from people who want to leave cities to return to natural areas.

They considered that the development of rural areas would only be possible if there are satisfactory economic and structural solutions.

### *Gender equality*

A better access to services may also improve **gender equality** as participants highlighted that many female workers are evicted because of difficulties in reconciliation policy and lack of infrastructure (childcare facilities, etc.).

### *Quality jobs*

The need to keep and offer **quality jobs** for the rural population in rural areas thus both preventing depopulation trends and maintaining competitiveness of rural economies were mentioned several times as a main challenge.

### *Seasonal workers*

Representatives of workers in Italy and Spain highlighted that **seasonal workers** must also benefit from the CAP. Low wages, lack of access to training or limited access to decent housing, particularly affecting seasonal workers including exploited immigrants, were identified as persistent problems that the CAP is considered to have not improved or tried to improve. Representatives of workers in Italy noted that in Italy, 50% of the labour force is foreign, which was highly problematic during the very first part of the pandemic when borders were closed and migrants were no longer able to enter Italy.

#### *3.2.4 Relevance and coherence of the CAP instruments and measures with policies related to access to vocational education and training in rural areas*

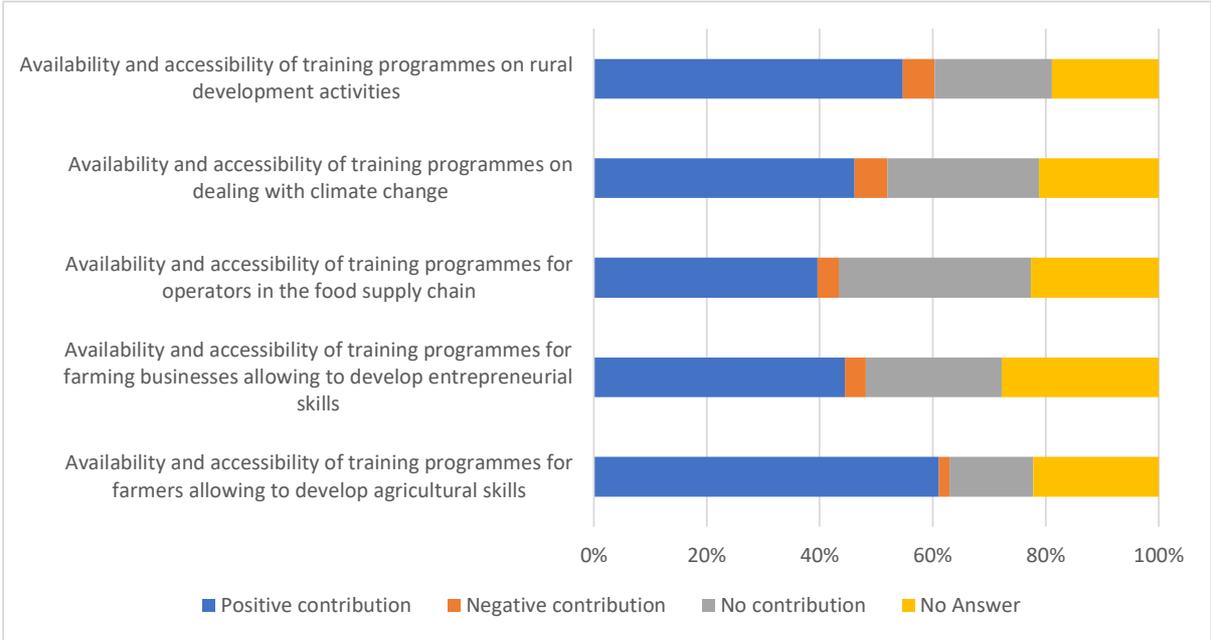
According to the answers of the questionnaires (see graph below), the majority of the respondents (60 and 53% respectively) consider that the CAP instruments and measures had a positive contribution on the availability and accessibility of training programmes for farmers allowing to develop agricultural skills (like training and advisory systems focusing on specific start-up and operational knowledge for young farmers, farm traineeships, exchange schemes under the Erasmus+ programme, professional paths, exchanges of experience, incubation services, presentation of best practices, etc.) and on the availability and accessibility of training programmes on rural development activities (e.g. tourism, environmental and landscapes preservation). It has however to be noted that 15 to 20% of the respondents were respectively of the view that the CAP instruments and measures had had no impact on these services.

A positive contribution of the CAP instruments and measures was also identified by many respondents on two additional training programmes, but with a lower positive rate (44% of the respondents): the availability and accessibility of training programmes, for farming businesses allowing to develop entrepreneurial skills (incubation services, etc.) and on the availability and accessibility of training programmes on dealing with climate change. It has however to be noted that a quarter of the respondents were respectively of the view that the CAP instruments and measures had had no impact on these services.

The views of the respondents are diverging for what concerns the contribution of the CAP instruments and measures on the availability and accessibility of training programmes for operators in the food supply chain (38% positive contribution, 33% no contribution).

No one of these services are identified as being negatively impacted by the CAP instruments and measures (all questions with less than 6% of negative contribution).

*Graph 8. Did the various CAP instruments and measures deliver a coherent and complementary contribution to policies related to access to vocational education and training in rural areas, e.g. on the following aspects?*



From the services policies that are needed to complement the CAP measures for a **comprehensive vision for territorial development**, representatives of workers and employers met in the different countries specifically highlight the need of vocational training (with its challenges of digitalisation and innovation) for workers in the agri-food sector.

In Italy, representatives highlighted that the 2014-2020 CAP encountered delays in the implementation of training, while training is crucial for the development of new skills and new forms of enterprise. Therefore, they are of the opinion that the next CAP must contribute more to technical and vocational training in agriculture.

In Spain, the use of other funds (e.g. ERDF, EAFRD) is proposed for this type of measure.

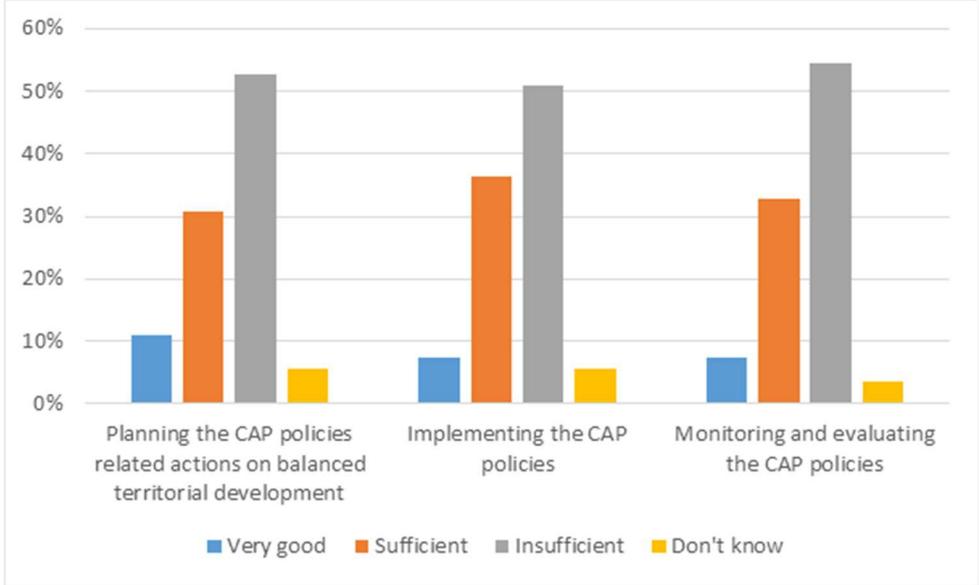
**3.3 Civil society involvement and added value**

*The European Economic and Social Committee has adapted the EU-added value evaluation criteria to a specific one, which looks for the contributions or the added value of civil society involvement in the object of the evaluation.*

Statistics from the questionnaire show that most of the respondents think that for the CAP 2014-2020 the involvement of civil society organisations is not sufficient for all the decision-making stages

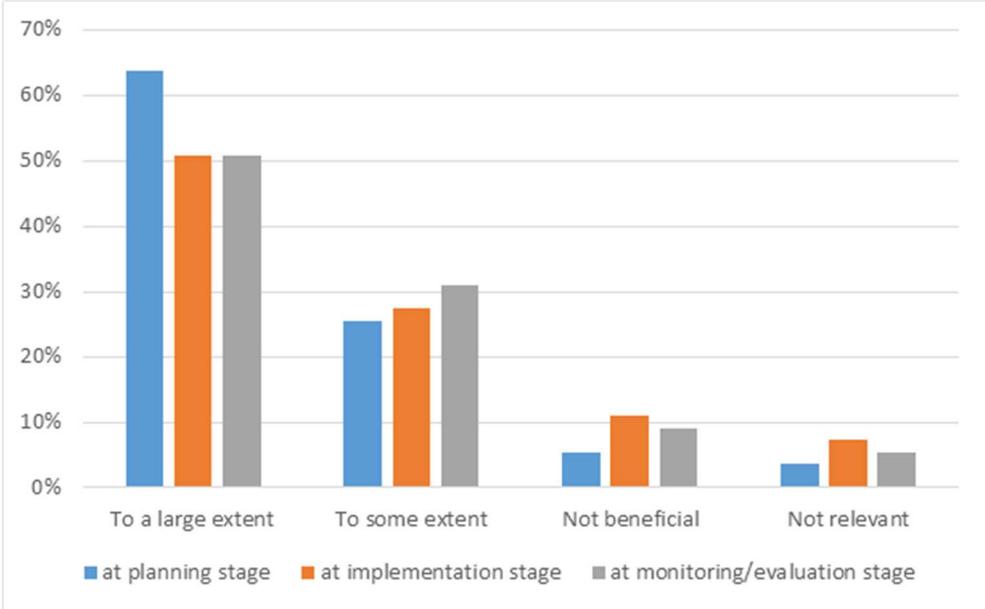
("insufficient" for a 53% at the planning stage, for a 51% at the implementing stage, and for a 55% at the monitoring stage); and in average, less than 10% of them considered it to be "very good".

Graph 9: For the CAP 2014-2020, how would you assess the involvement of civil society organisations in:



This contrasts with the fact that, when asked about how beneficial they consider the involvement of civil society organisations to be in the planning, implementation, and evaluation stages, more than 51% considered it beneficial to a large extent at the implementation and evaluation stages. This number increased to a 64% when asked the same question about the planning stage.

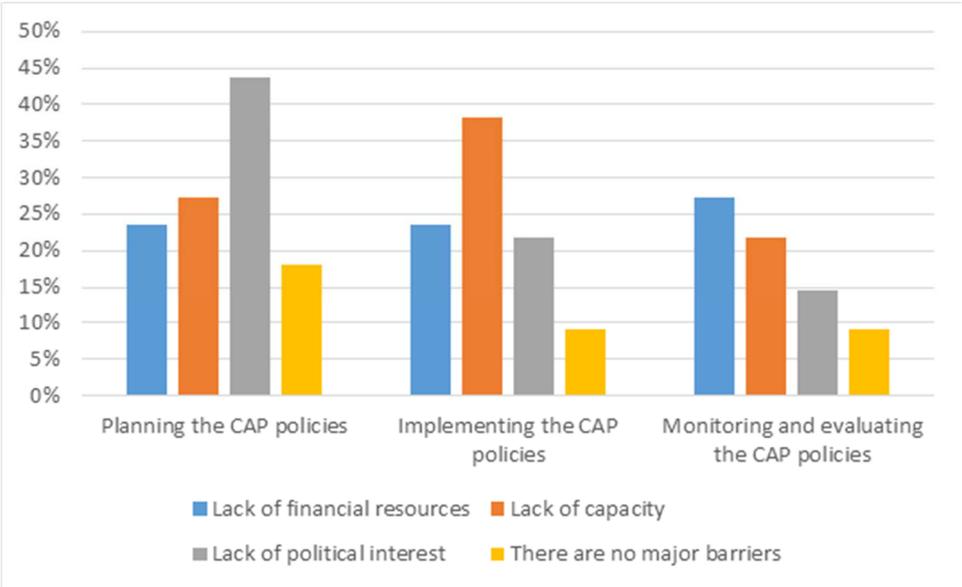
Graph 10: To what extent would you consider beneficial that civil society organisations are involved in planning, implementation and monitoring/evaluation?



Regarding the question about what barriers civil organisations faced to be involved in the decision-making stages, respondents pointed out that a lack of financial resources affected all the stages similarly; the lack of capacity to be involved was believed (by a 38%) to be a barrier mainly at the implementation

stage of the CAP policies, and a 44% of the respondents thought that the lack of interest in involving them was a barrier mostly at the planning stage.

*Graph 11: What are the major barriers for involvement of civil society organisations...*



All the visited Member States but Ireland stated that the civil society organisations were not properly involved during the planning and implementation stages of the rural development programs. Nevertheless, in contrast with that, at the monitoring and evaluation stages they were. On the other hand, Ireland was the only country in which this situation was reversed and civil society organisations were properly involved during the planning stage but not at the evaluation one.

All the Member States were aligned with the idea that the presence of the civil society organisations should be improved in all the stages, and that different actors had been involved very differently. For instance, the participants from Hungary explained that while the civil society organisations were involved in consultations, they did not influence the decisions neither were they invited to participate at the selection of operative programs. It was very welcomed by the participants from France that the employers' organisations were deeply involved at the CAP National Strategic Plan post-2020. On the contrary, while in the meeting with the employer's organisations in Ireland it was stated that they were fully included, the Trade Unions explained that they were excluded of participating at the CAP Monitoring Committee<sup>4</sup>. Similarly, the Trade Unions from Spain thought that the social dialogue is very poor and that they were not even considered by the Ministry of Agriculture at the same dialogue level as the agricultural organisations. Non-agricultural organisations were, in some cases, directly excluded from all the decision-making stages. In conclusion, it was widely believed that the civil society organisations were not sufficiently involved.

Regarding the matter of improving civil society organisations' participation, it was highlighted at the meeting in Spain the importance of doing so with more efficient procedures that did not lead to more red tape situations. The importance of restoring social dialogue in the country was widely mentioned

<sup>4</sup> Irish trade unions also regretted Ireland's refusal to opt into the Seasonal Workers Directive as being incompatible with other EU policy instruments such as the European Pillar of Social Rights.

during the meeting in Ireland. For France, the better involvement of the civil society was especially key to resolve the current decreasing number of farmers in the country, for which the stakeholders had different perspectives regarding the need to develop contact points between citizens and farmers at both the national and regional levels: while the employers' organisations pointed out the need to establish contact points between farmers and citizens at the local level (to discuss the implementation of measures and expectations of local actors), at the meeting with different organisations it was explained that there are already different structures that bring together stakeholders and frame citizens' projects and initiatives relating to sustainable agriculture (such as the *Réseau Mixte Technologique Alimentation Locale*) that act as a meeting point between the agricultural community and consumer citizens.

Very similarly, agricultural organisations in Italy are working on educating consumers on the quality of food, and there has been an increase in the transparency in the relationship between producers and consumers, but while they seemed to think that the CAP tool "LEADER" had potential, it was stated that the tool had not worked yet. Therefore, it is important to note that in some countries the CAP was believed to be still much unknown for civil society organisations (as in Spain) or its tools not very practical (as in Italy).

A main issue that was widely stated during the meeting with different organisations in several Members States was the importance of including a regional perspective at the different stages. Considering the huge differences among the regions in some of the countries (Hungary, France, Spain), it seems essential to include the regions mainly at the planning and implementation stages for the CAP policies to be efficient. During the meeting in Ireland with different organisations, it was mentioned that the applications to many programs were operated in very short timelines, which did not give enough time for local communities to prepare. They proposed to adjust the administrative requirements proportionally to the gran amounts. At the meeting in Hungary, the improvement of the synergies and cooperation strategies among the civil society organisations was considered key to assure the efficient use of funds and the correct functioning of the programs.

This aligns with a similar statement were the organisations from Spain highlighted that not all the organisations had enough resources to participate or be involved, and asked for a strengthening of the civil society organisations' role. The organisations' lack of resources was a main barrier when involving them, which is supported by the statistics from the questionnaire where this claim was also clearly stated.

During this meeting in Spain, it was also mentioned at this meeting that the CAP could promote greater social innovation if it counted with the presence of young people and woman, leading to a more social model of agriculture. This statement aligns with Italian employers' organisations that highlighted how crucial social-farming is and how this should be recognised as a cultural and social enrichment.

### **3.4 Future of the CAP and balanced territorial development policy**

Stakeholders shared the view that rural areas are facing major challenges but also identified opportunities in the next years to address these issues. Some of the challenges identified are linked to the CAP objectives but others are broader and go beyond the CAP mandate. Concretely, stakeholders interviewed discussed on specific measures that could need to be taken in order to increase the CAP's impact.

We are at a time of paradigm shift. The CAP needs to support this change and the adaptation of the sector. More needs to be done in the field of innovation and in a more participatory way. The sector also has to respond to new consumer demands calling for change, calling for sustainability.

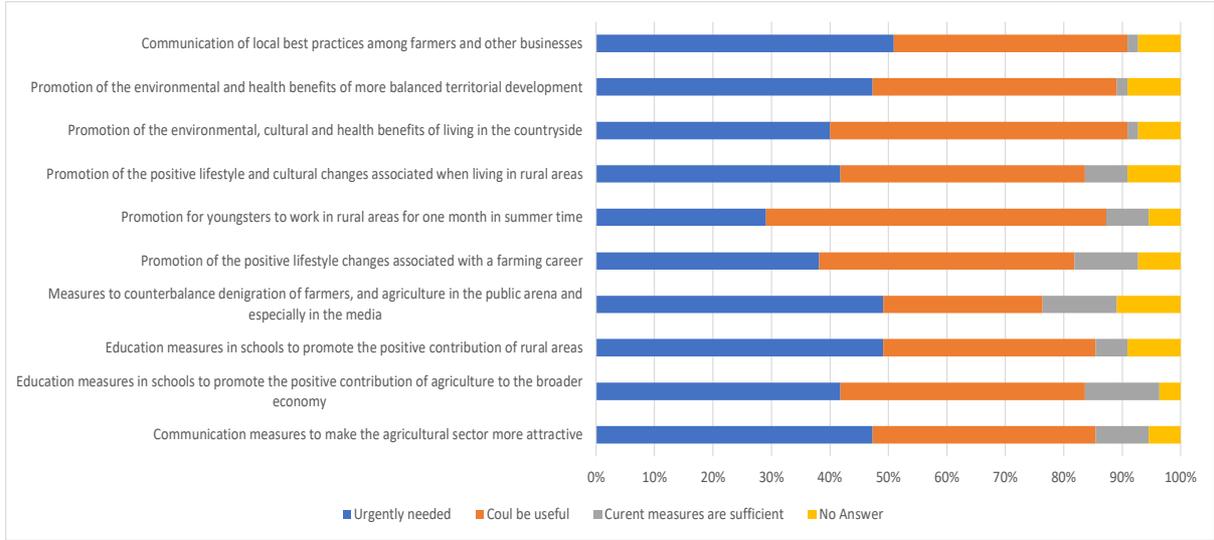
They also underlined the need to develop an **EU holistic approach to rural areas**, of special importance in the context of post-COVID recovery; and stressed the need to ensure **consistency and complementarity with overarching policy frameworks** such as the European Green Deal or the Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Finally, it was reflected in the need to raise the attractiveness and prestige of rural areas.

*Specific measures to reinforce the CAP's impact on territorial development of rural areas*

In addition to the recommendations suggested in relation the relevance and effectiveness of the CAP's impact on territorial development of rural areas and the involvement of civil society, stakeholders were asked in the questionnaire to assess with specific measures are more needed to promote the economic and social attractiveness of rural areas.

A significant majority of respondents considered that all measures proposed in the questionnaire were urgently needed or that they could be useful. Measures aimed at **improving the communication within the agricultural sector** were considered most urgent needed. For example, for 51% is urgently needed to promote the "communication of local best practices to help farmers and other businesses to learn from each other and to show an attractive image of rural area". It is also interesting to highlight the large consensus on the urgency of **improving the communication with the rest of society** (49% considered the urgent need to "adopting measures to counterbalance denigration of farmers, and agriculture in the public arena and especially in the media"; and 47% to "adopting communication measures to make the agricultural sector more attractive").

*Graph 12. Do you think that specific measures are needed to promote the economic and social attractiveness of rural areas?*



During the meetings organised at national level, stakeholders also stressed the need of improving how **society perceives** rural areas and concretely the agricultural sector. In all five Member States,

stakeholders are concerned about the limited knowledge of citizens and, specifically, as having limited knowledge about the agricultural sector contribution to society and about the use and benefits of the CAP. They also consider that the CAP must offer a **vision** for the medium and long term, with alternatives to young people, and **mobilise** farmers. The "[farmers of the future](#)" project, based on a prospective study which identified possible future professional roles for farmers in 2040, is appreciated in this context.

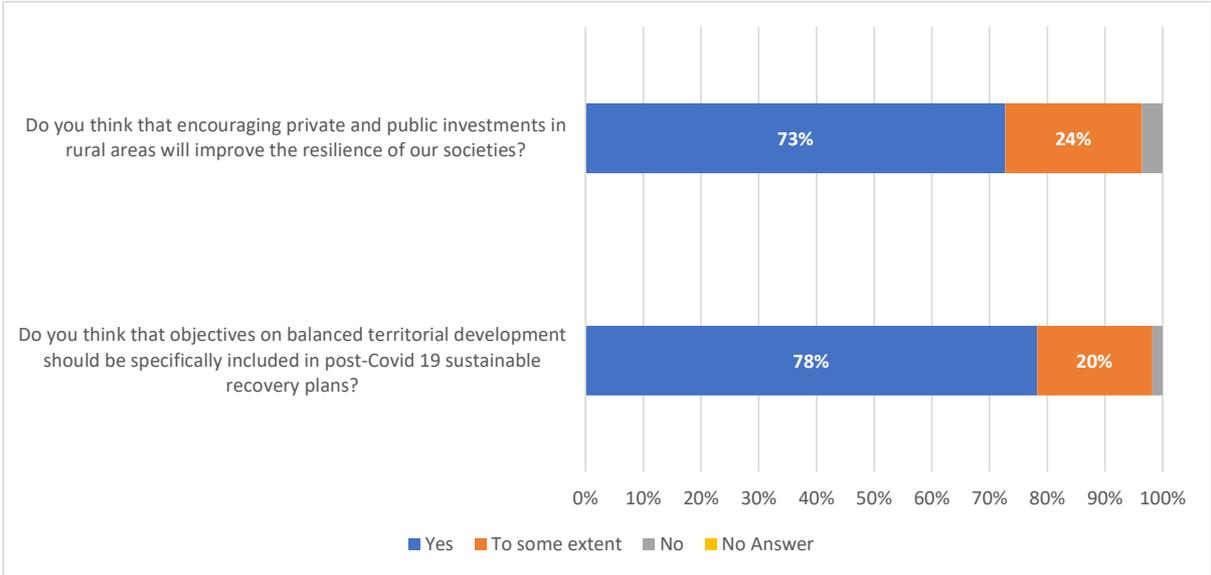
In all meetings participants debated about how to **revise** the CAP for the next period 2021-2027. There is consensus on the need to introduce measures to address the economic, social and environmental challenges ahead. The question of **data** (statistics on food production, consumption, distribution through the various supply chains, etc.) and their accessibility was also raised.

Several participants in all countries believed that the **social dimension** of the CAP should be strengthened. One way proposed was by implementing social conditionality of the funding. Additionally, it was mentioned that the CAP should aim at reinforcing the competitiveness of the sector. In this regard, it was concretely stress that the CAP should continue to promote vocational training, innovation and digitalisation of the sector.

*Rural areas as resilient and strategic areas in the post-COVID context*

A large majority of respondents agreed on that objectives on balanced territorial development should be specifically **included in post-COVID 19 sustainable recovery plans (78%)**. Additionally, most respondents considered that **encouraging private and public investments in rural areas would improve the resilience of our societies (73%)**.

*Graph 13. Contribution to resilience and to the post-COVID situation*



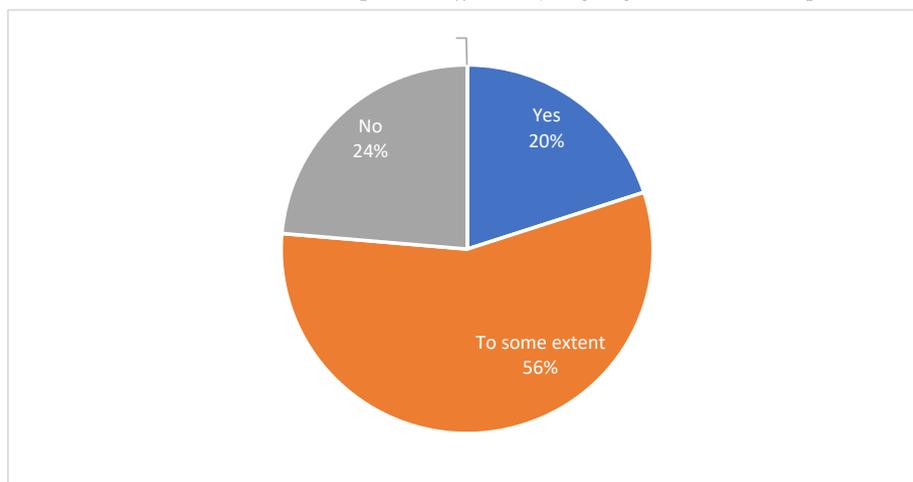
In the view of interviewees, the COVID crisis has shown the success of the CAP's contribution to food security in the EU. It is considered that the COVID crisis has demonstrated how resilient and strategic the sector is for the EU. The crisis has also generated a renewed interest of the population in rural life. This is seen as an opportunity to increase the value society gives to rural areas.

Most stakeholders considered that it is necessary to reflect about the future of the agricultural sector and other economic sectors relevant to rural areas. The EU (and Member States) needs to reflect what kind of agricultural sector is wanted. The new CAP 2021-2027 and the [Next Generation EU](#) funding provides a historical opportunity to make the right decisions and investments. The national recovery and resilience plans can play a crucial role. All involved stakeholders (from public authorities to farmers) need to be creative and courageous to make the most of the huge opportunity that the Recovery and Resilience Facility can have in terms of strengthening economic, social and environmental sustainability of rural areas in the medium and long term.

#### *Territorial development as part of an overarching strategy as the Green Deal and the Agenda 2030*

When asked if balanced territorial development is sufficiently highlighted in the European Green Deal, the majority of respondents considered that is highlighted to some extent (56%). It is interesting to note that one fourth of replies do not agree that is sufficiently highlighted (24%).

*Graph 14. Is balanced territorial development sufficiently highlighted in the European Green Deal?*

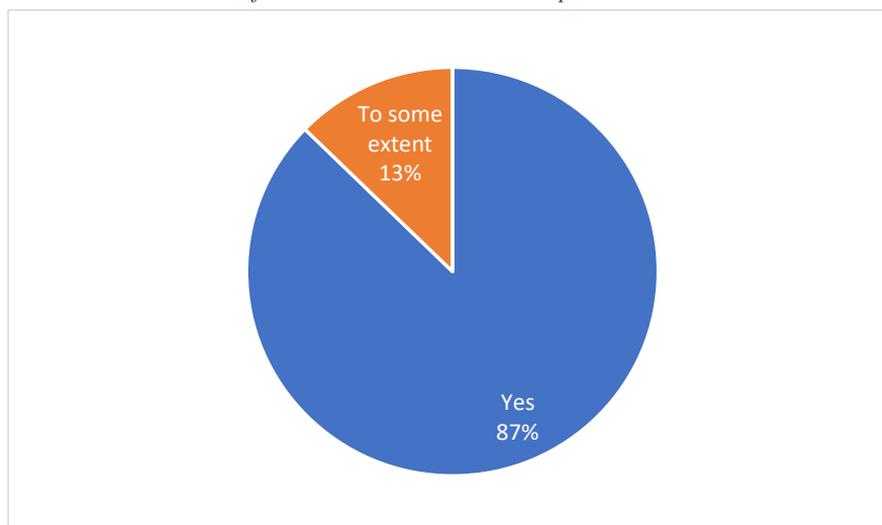


As mentioned before in the other chapters of the report, it is of crucial importance to ensure coherence and complementarity between the CAP and the recently adopted EU strategies, such as the European Green Deal, the [Farm to Fork Strategy](#), or the [Biodiversity Strategy](#).

In this regard, some participants expressed doubts about the current complementarity of the CAP and these strategies. For example, in France, employers' organisations were of the opinion that the current CAP is not ready to meet the new climate objectives set, and the allocation of its CAP funds is a challenge to enable it to progress towards its objectives. In Italy and France, it was also considered that the CAP should better combine agricultural and food policies (Farm to Fork strategy) as ways to revitalise the regions and resonating the factors for the development of the productive economy for rural areas with the creation of social links at a local level (e.g. through local food chains). The development of **common European labels**, based on multi-performance criteria for agriculture, including economic, environmental and social criteria, was also suggested as a tool to stimulate and enhance a multifunctional European agriculture.

Nonetheless, there is practically complete consensus that ensuring a balanced territorial development would help the EU in the implementation of the Agenda 2030 and of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (87%).

*Graph 15. Can balanced territorial development could help the EU in the implementation of the Agenda 2030 and of the UN Sustainable Development Goals?*



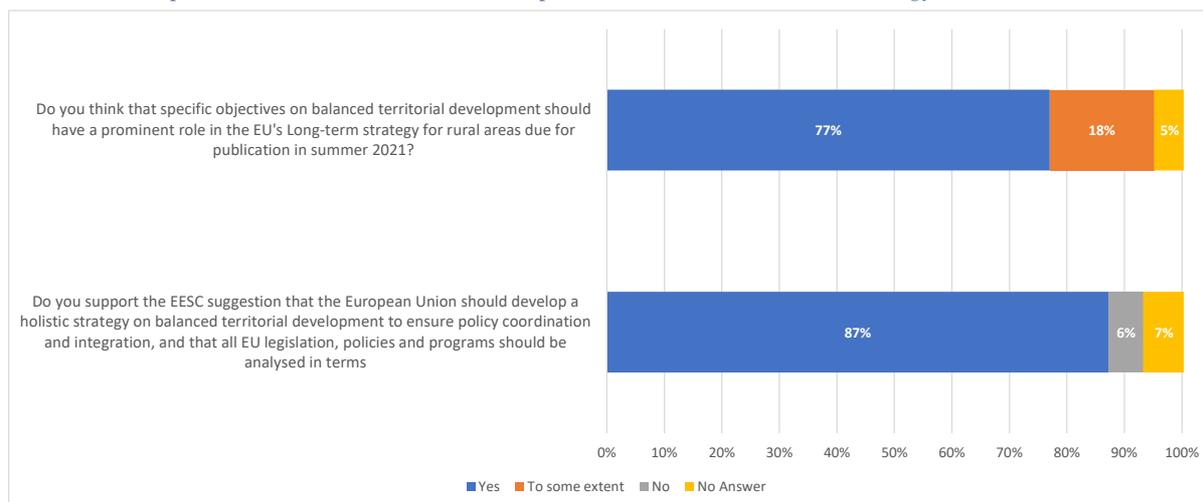
In this regard, the participants to the meetings see the important role of the CAP in contributing to sustainable development in all three dimensions: economic, environmental and social. The challenge ahead is to ensure overarching strategies such as the Green Deal, the Agenda 2030 and the EU's climate commitments are coherent and consistent with EU and national policies applied in rural areas.

It was not largely discussed, but some voices consulted underlined that the CAP should not forget to promoting exports. In addition, it was pointed out that ensuring equal level playing field regarding imports from third countries is and continue to be in the near future a challenge for the agricultural sector.

#### *A holistic EU strategy for rural areas*

With the same high level of agreement, respondents considered that the **European Union should develop a holistic strategy on balanced territorial development** to ensure policy coordination and integration, and that all EU legislation, policies and programs should be analysed in terms of their impact on territorial cohesion (87%). Moreover, the large majority of respondents agreed that specific objectives on balanced territorial development should have a prominent role in the [EU's Long-term strategy for rural areas](#) (due for publication in summer 2021).

Graph 16. *Balanced territorial development within an EU holistic strategy on rural areas*



The stakeholders consulted insisted on the need to develop a holistic approach to rural policies. Most participants underlined that the **CAP cannot be the only policy dealing with rural areas**. Even if the CAP's second pillar was to be reinforced, it cannot be responsible of addressing all the challenges the rural areas are facing.

All other policies need to be designed including a rural perspective. In all discussions held, this transversality was mentioned as crucial. CAP efforts need to be complemented or integrated within the range of policies applied, such as **education, healthcare, employment, social, industrial, housing, or security** policies. The combination of all in a holistic strategic is the right approach to ensure progress towards balanced territorial development.

#### *Making rural areas attractive in terms of decent working conditions and high quality of life*

During the meetings, several stakeholders underlined the important challenge of raising the **attractiveness of working and living in rural areas**. Concretely on the agricultural sector, this challenge needs to be address by ensuring decent working conditions (and remuneration/salaries), offering high-quality vocational training and promoting innovation within the sector. In fact, the **green and digital transitions** (assumed as EU priorities) are key opportunity to raise the attractiveness of agricultural-related professions and to attract younger workers to rural areas.

Indeed, **ageing population** is a huge challenge for rural areas. In this regard, interviewees agree in assessing that the CAP cannot face the challenge of generational renewal on its own. Applying the right measures from an all-encompassing approach will be crucial for the future of rural areas.

As it has mention before in the report, several national stakeholders stressed the importance of improving the **situation of women in rural areas**. In particular, as regards to access to private finance, to property of land, and support/rehousing for widows of farmers. It is necessary to design or revise policies with a strong gender perspective.

Moreover, national stakeholder argued that it is necessary to **reduce the gap between rural and urban areas**, to find ways to better connect those realities. A participant expressed as the need to rethink the

"urban-rural social contract". There a massive gap in services or cultural offer in cities compared to rural areas, which is not helping to keep population in rural areas.

The majority of stakeholders consulted underlined that **decent quality of life involving better access to services** has to be guaranteed for rural populations to maintain them in rural areas. This should also mean infrastructure developments and wider opportunities for investment support among others. How to bring these services to rural areas is one of the major challenges in all Member States consulted.

#### **4. Secondary data: literature review of EESC work**

In [NAT/790 on an integrated approach for the EU's vulnerable areas \(2020\)](#), the Committee underlines that the CAP should operate in close conjunction with regional and cohesion policies to ensure balanced territorial development as both a consideration and a requirement for any political decision that has a local impact. European policies should promote the harmonious development of the Union as a whole, paying particular attention to rural areas, areas of industrial transition and areas with severe and permanent handicaps such as islands and mountainous and Arctic regions. Furthermore, the EESC notes that the increasing prevalence of epidemics is an additional argument in favour of a more balanced territorial development.

The importance of rural areas for the EU as a whole lies not only in the numbers associated with them (they amount to 55% of the population, produce around 45% of gross added value and generate 50% of jobs) but also in their ties to each country's culture and identity. The purpose of this opinion is to lay the foundations for a holistic approach that will facilitate more balanced territorial development.

In order to have an impact on rural areas in the EU, with a special focus on vulnerable regions, the Committee calls for action to be taken in relation to five aspects:

- the spatial aspect: fostering balanced development that streamlines flows between rural and urban hubs in each area;
- the economic aspect: encouraging decentralisation and diversification as drivers for rebalancing income;
- the social aspect: ensuring access to essential education, health, transport, cultural and other services;
- the environmental aspect, with a view to a future based on agroecology and placing value on the defence of biodiversity undertaken in the EU;
- the institutional aspect: creating an accompanying ecosystem to facilitate progress with regard to the other aspects.

The EESC also proposes the preparation of a holistic strategy that precludes policies and institutions operating in isolation, for which institutional coordination, integration and alignment are key. With regard to the design of strategies and interventions, opportunities derived from the current institutional

context will necessarily be considered. These will include, from a global perspective, the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and, from a European perspective:

- the European Green Deal, which includes a number of strategies that will provide the reference points for the years ahead, some of which (the "Farm to Fork" strategy, the biodiversity strategy) will have a major impact on the rural environment;
- the Multiannual Financial Framework for the period 2021-2027 and the European Union Recovery Instrument, which will determine the available budget;
- the EU's commitment to moving towards carbon neutrality in the second half of the 21st century;
- the New Circular Economy Action Plan;
- together with the Smart Specialisation Strategies, Cohesion Policy, the Digital Single Market, etc.

In [NAT/787](#) on "**From farm to fork**": a sustainable food strategy (2020), the EESC stresses that an effective Farm to Fork Strategy should reduce costly externalities from agriculture and ensure that all farmers are fairly remunerated by markets; it will therefore be highly cost-effective in the longer term. However, the Committee notes that the transition to sustainable and competitive food systems requires urgent investment. In particular, major efforts and capital investment are required to achieve the levels of climate and environmental action identified in the European Green Deal and to help farmers to implement sustainable approaches. These goals cannot be achieved if key funding flows are interrupted. Cuts to rural development funding could be detrimental, given that it contains some of the most relevant tools for supporting transition, as noted in the Farm to Fork Communication.

Furthermore, farmers' markets, Community Supported Agriculture (CSA), consumer cooperatives and other short supply chain initiatives provide a crucial avenue for farmers to increase added value and receive fair prices, particularly for those practising organic farming or applying other environment-friendly methods that are not covered by a label. Local and regional authorities are often involved, putting local food governance systems in place that bring together the various players concerned and, in particular, fostering the use of local produce in mass catering. The EESC deplors that its previous opinions have not been followed by the Commission in this regard.

This re-localisation fosters jobs and local dynamism. It also increases resilience, as shown by responses to COVID-19 at all levels of the supply chain (producers, processors and retailers). Rural areas are one example of a domain where consumer cooperatives are usually the last business operator standing. For consumers, short supply chains offer a source of fresh, high-quality produce that is enriched by its history and the human relations involved, and acts to stimulate interest and educate people about the value of food, as well as rebuilding trust in food systems.

Lastly, the EESC notes that the Farm to Fork Communication and Biodiversity Strategy include crucial steps to rebuild and protect soil and agro-ecosystems, notably targets for the agricultural area under high-diversity landscape features (10%) and land under organic farming (25%). However, the starting position of different Member States should be considered. The Farm to Fork Communication fails to address sustainable land management and access to land. This is a major omission given that it represents one of the main obstacles to renewal of the farming population, without which the EU's basis for

sustainable and productive farming will be lost. The EESC has proposed an EU framework aimed at protecting agricultural land in the Member States that is valuable for food production<sup>5</sup>.

In [NAT/766](#) on the evaluation of the impact of the CAPs on generational renewal (2019, information report), the Committee takes a broader perspective than the Young Farmers payment under Pillar I of the CAP and the measures for young farmers under Pillar II of the CAP. In addition, aspects of how rural areas can be made more attractive have been analysed in the report. Coherence with other EU policies and actions have also been taken into account, given that Member States have unique competencies in areas affecting generational renewal in agriculture, such as regulations, taxation, inheritance law or territorial planning. The EESC notes that there is a need to assess also the impact of national policies, schemes and other relevant obstacles to generational renewal in agriculture.

The EESC highlights the importance of the CAP and a properly functioning single market to sustain viable farming and to attract young farmers into the sector. In order to support generational renewal in agriculture, the various CAP measures need to be better integrated and implemented in a more coordinated way to support young farmers in the different stages of developing their holdings.

Furthermore, the EESC considers that it would be beneficial to invest more in soft measures (education, social conditions). Although some Member States have ensured education and training facilities for young farmers (for example, Kildalton College in Ireland), there is evidence on the need to increase funding in education and training.

Also, young women should be encouraged to take on the responsibility of management in agriculture and to settle in rural areas and play a full and active role in the agricultural sector through the promotion of female ownership, networks of female young farmers, etc. The entrepreneurial skills development programmes could make an important contribution to the start-up and successful functioning of autonomous agricultural enterprises.

Last but not least, special focus should be paid to young farmers operating in areas with natural constraints. Their essential role should be better reflected in CAP Pillar II.

In [NAT/763](#) on promoting short and alternative food supply chains in the EU: the role of agroecology (2019), the EESC emphasises that short chains and agroecology represent a new prospect for agriculture in Europe. For more than 50 years, while these innovative approaches have run counter to the globalisation of food systems, they have been taking shape, being studied as part of numerous national and European research programmes, receiving support for their development from public and private funds, and attracting attention from increasing numbers of new farmers working in these systems. The capacity and relevance of agroecology and short chains as a response to food challenges have consequently been confirmed. They could serve as a crucial pillar of a policy seeking to establish sustainable food systems and implement sustainable development targets within the next ten years (2030).

---

<sup>5</sup> Land use for sustainable food production and ecosystem services, [OJ C81, 2.03.2018, p. 72](#).

The EESC sees the emergence of agroecology as a new paradigm for food and farming. As a science, a technique and a social movement, agroecology looks at the food system in its entirety and seeks to bring producers closer to their environment by safeguarding or even restoring the complexity and wealth of the agro-eco-social system. The EESC considers that agroecology is the horizon towards which European agriculture should work: farming inherently depends on conserving natural resources for its development. Building on fully-developed models such as organic farming (avoiding a number of negative trends in the organic "industry"), permaculture and other traditional small farming systems, commitments to moving towards fewer inputs, revitalising soils, introducing a variety of crops and protecting diversity must be encouraged and highlighted.

The EESC would like to see the agroecology project rolled out across the EU, based on a structured action plan along with various forms of leverage at local, regional and European levels. A comprehensive food policy promoted by the EESC can provide the framework for this. Important measures include:

- ensuring accessible finance to put in place the necessary structures, individual or collective (CAP second pillar);
- adjusting the application of food legislation to small farmers in a flexible way for small-scale production, as well as for requirements concerning labelling, etc.;
- setting up or strengthening appropriate education and advice services for transformation, direct sales and agroecology;
- encouraging exchange networks between farmers;
- gearing research to agroecology and producers' needs in short chains;
- at local and regional level: adapted competition rules should be introduced to make it easier to supply community catering through short, local chains.

Moreover, the internet is proving to be a new area of exploration and innovation for short supply chains. The way it has spread over the past decade or so has been reflected in the proliferation of short food supply chains. Offering a wider market than the traditional producers' market, it also helps to improve and streamline trade. Numerous on-line ordering platforms have emerged in the last five years. These "food hubs" allow producers and consumers to interact directly, particularly in the case of products that can only be found locally. They can enable producers and consumers alike to get together and buy and sell as a group, thus facilitating logistics in the food chain. Digitalisation can also be applied to production and processing.

In [NAT/747 on CAP legislative proposals \(2018\)](#), the EESC stresses that modernising and simplifying the CAP is essential to make it more fit for purpose to meet the needs for a more sustainable and viable EU farming and agriculture sector everywhere in Europe and in order to address the new challenges on climate change and the environment. Furthermore, the Committee welcomes the increased focus on generational renewal and additional supports proposed for young farmers, who require easier access to land, training and finance. This increase in aid must be accompanied by additional measures that allow for effective generational renewal. In that sense, incentives must be provided to farmers who retire and transfer their holding to a young farmer. Equally, the EESC is in favour of a complementary income support for young farmers and proposes that the definition of a young farmer be reviewed so as to ensure payments only go to genuine young farmers.

While recalling that farmers already contribute to environmental and climate protection, the EESC acknowledges the increased emphasis and higher ambition in the proposals on the environment and climate change and the alignment with the EU commitments under the Paris Agreement and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). However, the EESC points out that achieving delivery on these ambitious targets should not hamper the competitiveness of the sector and will require an adequate CAP budget.

In [NAT/738](#) **on the contribution of Europe's Rural Areas to the 2018 Year of Cultural Heritage ensuring sustainability and urban/rural cohesion (2018)**, the Committee specifically focuses on the wide range of assets and talent that rural areas and their citizens have, and will, contribute to Europe's cultural heritage and on how this wide definition of culture contributes to a more viable and prosperous rurality. The EESC stresses that rural Cultural Heritage with all its richness and diversity should be formally recognised for its intrinsic artistic value and its economic and social contribution to the wellbeing of all European citizens.

Furthermore, investment by public funders should be "rural proofed" so that when any new funding streams are designed, these include support for the ongoing contribution of farming families and employees and for non-governmental organisations involving individual creators, as well as folk groups, local action groups, and care farms. This should take full account of the measures needed to enhance the infrastructure of rural heritage. Existing EU funding streams, including the Rural Development Programme should increasingly see culture as of horizontal value and should support cultural projects, including those protecting, promoting and enhancing biodiverse landscapes.

The EESC recommends that rural cultural heritage be promoted sustainably for the purposes of tourism, among other things, so that urban citizens can learn to appreciate the cultural values of rural areas and increasingly opt for rural homes and work in remoter settlements. Marketing of rural cultural produce, including gastronomic heritage, should be promoted and geographically-branded status protected, giving assurance on quality and traceability to citizens.

In [NAT/727](#) **on the future of food and farming (2018)**, the EESC stresses that the CAP must support the small and the large, the young and the old, the new and the established, self-employed farmers and their employees, women as well as men, in such a way as to make life in the countryside viable for active farmers involved in agricultural production, delivering public goods, taking care of the environment and contributing to employment. Moreover, the Committee is very supportive of improved measures for young farmers. It considers that a clear definition of young farmers has to be established and that is important that measures are included in the CAP to involve more women into agriculture and to give them greater motivation. Furthermore, the EESC underlines that the EU needs sustainable food consumption that respects the requirement for low carbon emissions and high environmental and climate change standards, in line with the circular economy and environmentally-friendly farming.

In [NAT/703](#) **on a possible reshaping of the CAP (2017)**, the EESC recommends that the CAP strongly support the European Model of Agriculture, with its traditional family farms, farming cooperatives and companies, as well as redress the major income inequality both between rural and urban areas and within agriculture with the involvement of agricultural sectoral organisations. Furthermore, the Committee

expresses the view that strong targeted programmes which focus on young farmers, especially women, and retirement must be implemented to address the important issue of generational renewal.

In [NAT/698](#) on **Villages and small towns as catalysts for rural development – challenges and opportunities (2017)**, the Committee expresses the view that despite the decline of balanced populations and traditional economic activity, in many villages and small towns, there is sufficient evidence of good practice to be optimistic about sustainable futures in many, if not all rural settlements. Such settlements can be catalysts for the wider renewal and sustainable development of rural areas. However, this optimism depends on a sustained, holistic effort involving people and financial resources at all levels of government and across all three – private, public and civil – sectors.

The EESC stresses that fast broadband – mobile as well as fixed – is crucial for intelligently developed villages and towns to have any hope of economic and social development, and must be fully accessible, as guaranteed under the rural proofing highlighted in the Cork 2.0 Declaration of 2016. Public services in education, training, health and social care, as well as child care, should be accessible, integrated and be innovative in using technological advances. Poor transport connectivity is another challenge and transport sharing, community-owned buses and cars are recommended where the private sector withdraws.

Furthermore, the Committee recommends that, where possible, employers should be encouraged to support distance working, and to realise the potential benefits of rural/urban partnerships. The contribution of both agri- and rural tourism, health-related activities and the branding of local farm and craft products, as well as increasing the cultural and historical catalogue of events is very important in this context. Further, the EESC is of the view that the European Council of Young Farmers (CEJA) and other youth representative bodies should be supported to create a pathway for youth forums in local communities which will galvanise action on their needs and aspirations. They need a much stronger say in developing economic and social solutions; and training, mentoring and financial support needs to be tailored to their aspirations.

In [NAT/682](#) on **the factors that influence CAP post-2020 (2016)**, the Committee stresses that the setting up of young and new men and women farmers should be reinforced in the CAP, not only with specific tools, but with real stability in the policy. Indeed, farmers need more stability to be able to invest for decades and take up the challenge of generational renewal. To maintain agriculture, generational renewal is a key question and setting up young and/or new men and women farmers should be reinforced through all available tools.

Furthermore, the future CAP should take into account, on the one hand, the diversity of farming models and regional specificities, and on the other, the diversity of its objectives: economic, social and environmental.

In [NAT/615](#) **Towards a more balanced territorial development (2014)**, the Committee pleads for more balanced development so that all parts of the EU can contribute to the objective of territorial cohesion enshrined in the Lisbon Treaty, against a background of increasing territorial imbalances within countries and regions.

Depopulation must be regarded as the most severe threat to rural economies. Many rural areas are seriously affected by depopulation. In some countries and areas the recorded figures are dramatic, standing at around 1 per cent depopulation a year, sometimes even more. However, the picture is very uneven. Most EU rural areas are not experiencing a decline in their populations and continue to be attractive places for people and businesses. The EESC stresses that strong political action is urgently needed at every level to tackle the economic and social consequences of depopulation. There should be a focus on jobs, infrastructure and services, supported by integrated rural development policies at all levels (European, national and regional) and focusing on making use of endogenous local resources.

In order to attach young workers to their rural territories, or to bring them back if they are already gone, the availability of good job opportunities is a necessary condition but not a sufficient one. Education and health services, ICT links, even cultural activities have to reach a minimum level that makes living in these places not only acceptable but indeed attractive. Since almost all EU policies are affected, a transversal, across-the-board approach is required that includes this territorial dimension as a permanent sustainability concern in every policy planning.

Furthermore, every policy decision with a geographical dimension should be assessed in terms of its territorial impact. Existing environmental and socio-economic assessments should be given more attention and new specific quantitative and qualitative indicators should be developed.

Creating job opportunities is vital and it is urgent to ensure that the individual's right to education and training is secured in practice by investing in appropriate facilities for promoting knowledge and technology. Developing attractive jobs and education for young people should be a key concern. There is a need to create the right conditions to facilitate the installation of young farmers as a factor of stability in rural areas. The potential of women as workers and entrepreneurs should be unlocked. The employment of regular migrants could, if supported by accompanying measures effective in preventing segregation, be an opportunity to include migrants as active players in rural development.

Investment in infrastructure in the form of efficient transport, communication (including high speed broad band) and energy links, is necessary in order to reduce geographical disparities and make rural areas attractive locations for people and businesses.

An adequate supply of services - both commercial services and social services of general interest - is another key condition for making rural areas attractive and reducing territorial imbalances. Investment not only in health, education and care centres of different kinds but also in cultural and other leisure activities is urgently needed.

## 5. List of organisations consulted

The EESC would like to express gratitude to the following organisations for their contributions:

Organisation name	Member State	Group	Consultation via	
			Questionnaire	Meetings
Fédération Nationale des Syndicats d'Exploitants Agricoles – FNSEA	France	I		x

Fédération Nationale d'Agriculture Biologique (FNAB)	France	I	x	x
CoopFr	France	I		x
Terralim	France	I	x	
Confédération syndicale CFTC	France	II		x
FGA CFDT	France	II	x	x
FGA FO	France	II	x	
R.E.D. (Rural Europe Development)	France	III		x
Réseau Mixte Technologique (RMT) Alimentation Locale	France	III	x	x
FR CIVAM (Centres d'initiatives pour valoriser l'agriculture et le milieu rural)	France	III		x
Réseau National des Espaces-Test Agricoles (RENETA)	France	III		x
Les Greniers d'Abondance	France	III	x	
WWOOF France	France	III	x	
Pour une autre PAC	France	III	x	
Chambres d'agriculture France	France	PA <sup>6</sup>		x
Ministère de l'Agriculture et de l'alimentation	France	PA		x
Conseil économique social et environnemental français – CESE	France	PA		x
Nemzeti Agrárgazdasági Kamara (National Chamber of Agriculture)	Hungary	I		x
Élelmiszer-feldolgozók Országos Szövetsége (National Association of Food Processors)	Hungary	I		x
Általános Fogyasztási Szövetkezetek és Kereskedelmi Társaságok Országos Szövetsége - ÁFEOSZ-COOP (National Federation of Co-operative Societies and Trade Associations)	Hungary	I		x
Fiatalközvetítő Magyarországi Szövetsége (AGRYA) (Agricultural and Rural Youth Association)	Hungary	I		x
Kisléptékű Termékelőállítók Országos Érdekképviseletének Egyesülete (National Association of Interest Representations for Small-scale producers and service providers)	Hungary	I		x
Collectivo - Magyarország első független szakértői közössége (Collectivo - Hungary's first independent expert community)	Hungary	I	x	x
Kinizsi 2000 MGZrt	Hungary	I	x	
Mezőgazdasági, Erdészeti, Élelmiszeripari és Vízügyi Dolgozók Szakszervezete (MÉDOSZ) (Trade Union of Agricultural, Forestry, Food and Water Workers)	Hungary	II	x	x
Nestlé Hungaria Kft	Hungary	II	x	
Koppányvölgyi Vidékfejlesztési Közhasznú Egyesület	Hungary	III		x

<sup>6</sup> Public authorities.

Mecsek-Völgyesség-Hegyhát Egyesület (Mecsek-Völgyesség-Hegyhát Association)	Hungary	III		x
Falusi és Agroturizmus Országos Szövetsége (National Association of Rural and Agrotourism)	Hungary	III	x	x
WWF Hungary	Hungary	III		x
Agrárgazdasági Kutatóintézet (AKI) (Agricultural Economics Research Institute)	Hungary	III	x	x
A professor from Central European University and the Gödöllő University of Agricultural Sciences	Hungary	III		x
Nemzeti Agrárgazdasági Kamara	Hungary	III	x	
LEADER Egyesületek Szövetsége	Hungary	III	x	
Fiatal Gazdák Magyarországi Szövetsége	Hungary	III	x	
Ministry of Agriculture	Hungary	PA		x
Települési Önkormányzatok Országos Szövetsége (National Association of Municipalities)	Hungary	PA		x
Irish Business and Employers Confederation (IBEC)	Ireland	I	x	x
Chambers Ireland	Ireland	I		x
ICMSA	Ireland	I	x	
Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU)	Ireland	II	x	x
Services, Industrial, Professional and Technical Union (SIPTU)	Ireland	II		x
Think-tank for Action on Social Change (Tasc)	Ireland	III		x
Social Justice Ireland (SJI)	Ireland	III	x	x
Irish Local Development Network (ILDN)	Ireland	III		x
Irish Farmers Association	Ireland	III		x
Irish Creamery Milk	Ireland	III		x
Suppliers Association	Ireland	III		x
Irish Rural Link	Ireland	III		x
Irish Co-operative Organisation Society (ICOS)	Ireland	III		x
Irish Environmental Network	Ireland	III		x
Environmental Pillar	Ireland	III	x	
Monaghan Integrated Development	Ireland	III	x	
IRD Duhallow	Ireland	III	x	
Individual expert	Ireland	III	x	
Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine	Ireland	PA	x	x
Department of Rural and Community Development	Ireland	PA		x
Agriculture and Food Development Authority (TEAGASC)	Ireland	PA		x
National Confederation of Independent Farmers	Italy	I	x	x
General Confederation of Italian Agriculture	Italy	I	x	x
Legacoop Agroalimentare	Italy	I	x	
CGIL FLAI	Italy	II	x	x
UILA	Italy	II	x	x
ISMEA	Italy	II	x	
Slow Food Italia	Italy	III		x

Ministry of Agriculture, EU Permanent Representation	Italy	PA	x	x
Agenzia Laore Sardegna	Italy	PA	x	
Consiglio per la Ricerca in Agricoltura e l'analisi dell'Economia Agraria	Italy	PA	x	
Research Centre for Agricultural Policies and Bioeconomy	Italy	PA	x	
ASEDAS	Spain	I		x
Spanish Federation of Food and Drink Industries (FIAB)	Spain	I	x	x
Individual employer	Spain	I	x	
UGT	Spain	II		x
CCOO	Spain	II	x	x
UAGA	Spain	II	x	
Associació d'Iniciatives Rurals de Catalunya (ARCA)	Spain	III		x
Coordinator of Farmers' and Livestock Organisations (COAG)	Spain	III		x
Agricultural Association of Young Farmers (ASAJA)	Spain	III	x	x
Union of Small Farmers and Livestock Farmers (UPA)	Spain	III	x	x
University of Cordoba	Spain	III		x
Spanish Agro-Food Cooperatives	Spain	III		x
Federation of Rural Women's Associations (FADEMUR)	Spain	III	x	x
Xarxa per a la Conservació de la Natura	Spain	III	x	
Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food. Directorate-General for Rural Development, Innovation and Agri-Food Training	Spain	PA		x
Consorti per al desenvolupament de la Catalunya Central	Spain	PA	x	