



RURAL ROADMAP

**For a Sustainable Development of
European Villages and Rural Communities**



1. Preamble: Rural Europe

Preamble

Objectives & Intentions

Methods & Strategies

Project Areas

Mission Statement

Europe is about four fifths rural. About half of all Europeans live in rural areas and more than 50% of the workplaces can be found there. While the surface of rural areas only changes minimally to the benefit of urban areas, the number of inhabitants has decreased over time.

There is no such thing as one rural area. However, there is a wide spectrum of types of rural areas, which present themselves as varied spaces in terms of residential area and economic areas. Especially around cities rural areas turn into urban centres, marked by an exploding population, enormous use of surfaces, destruction of the natural landscape and the loss of identity. On the contrary, peripheral regions, which are often situated in nice scenery, are confronted with migration, an aging population, unemployment and economic downturn. Areas with a high degree of valuable natural resources, focus on agricultural production or tourism face their own specific challenges.

Natural, cultural and historical givens; economic, social and political frameworks; economical and infrastructural standards, and the distance to urban centres are responsible for the considerable difference between rural areas in Europe, between North and South, between old and new member states and even within individual countries – not last because of the importance of functions they may have to or can fulfil: Room for life or recreation, regeneration and leisure, workplace and economic area.

Today villages are subject to constant changes and make room for new forms of work and life. Better mobility, information and communications technology make spatial borders less important. Often, traditional social networks and rural facts of life mix with urban patterns. In fact the multilateral links and relationships between cities and the countryside become more and more dependent on each other.

This results in a number of new challenges, new options and opportunities, but also in serious problems, especially where political and social city-countryside-hierarchies, unreflected adjustment or self-destructing opponents have an important influence.

The Policies of the European Union for Rural Areas

The European Union is an important partner for rural areas, which are ready to start towards a strong future. Reducing the developmental lag of certain areas, including rural regions, has been one of the goals of the European Union as early as in its Maastricht Treaty. It intended to strengthen economic and social links as well as harmonious interactions.

Regional structures and concepts have gained importance during the past years and offensive policies for an integrated development of rural areas have been initiated. The cohesion politics of the European Union promote growth and progress in rural regions on a numerous of active levels and contradict the request of reducing the funds for rural development and liberalisation of agricultural markets.

The welcomed extension of the European Union during the past years also creates new challenges for the structural politics of the EU and the policies regarding rural development as well as village renewals, marked above all by their extreme differences in size and forms of agriculture, high unemployment rates in rural regions and often also a lack of efficient civil organisations to represent the interests of the rural population in the new member states. Before this background, the general assembly of the European Association for Land Development and Village Renewal has ratified in December 2009 the „Leitmotif Roadmap for a sustainable development of European villages and rural municipalities.“



2. Objectives & Intentions

The European Association for Rural Development and Village Renewal acts in the knowledge that rural areas constitute one of Europe's special treasures. It is convinced that the rural areas will play a key role in the development of Europe and that society as a whole will benefit from policies in favour of these areas.

Policies for rural areas must be targeted at promoting both economic power and job opportunities within the villages as well as rural communities and increasing the standard of living of their inhabitants considerably. In addition, it should contribute to the creation of rural areas as independent, unmistakable and manageable natural, cultural and residential areas, where tradition and innovation as well as form and function can be equal partners.

Rural development must be based on policies that do justice to the principles of sustainability and subsidiarity, follow an integrative approach, give space to an active citizenship and link all relevant forces and facilities, especially „Lokale Agenda“ and „Regionale Agenda 21“. Successful development of Europe's rural areas presumes comprehensive, innovative and creative

strategies and tailor-made solutions for every single region. This requires breaking out of restricted sectoral and geographical approaches:

Interdisciplinary and horizontal and vertical cooperation in a variety of ways are required.

It is mandatory that rural areas can take and fill out their space next to metropolitan areas without any hierarchical devaluation. The reciprocal dependencies and links should be used as a big opportunity for fertile cooperation between equally valuable, but different and independent partners, who walk a part of the path to development together.

People living in villages must be enabled and motivated to develop their own visions and commitment to improve their living conditions and mobilize their forces. However, they should not only take over responsibility for their direct surroundings, but also develop the willingness to participate in and support regional, national, European and global matters such as the Kyoto Convention, agricultural initiatives, the Global Marshall Plan Initiative or Fair Trade.

Preamble

Objectives & Intentions

Methods & Strategies

Project Areas

Mission Statement

3. Methods & Strategies

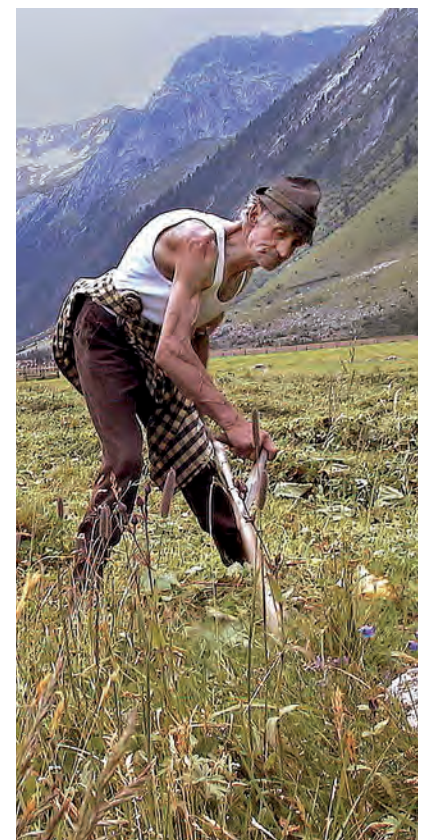
All projects focus on people

The key to any positive development lies within the people, in their intellectual, social and emotional abilities, their willingness to commit themselves and to take responsibilities. Rural development therefore, must promote the will for people to take matters in to their own hands.

Intensive opportunities for citizen participation are an important element regarding policies. This provides room for qualitative solutions, raises satisfaction

with the work of the communal bodies and reduces costs. In addition, the success itself strengthens the sense of community and the social glue. However, the inclusion of experts of public administration and other relevant institutions and organisations as competent partners has always been important.

Citizen participation in decision-making processes implies a high degree of education, information and motivation in order to awaken and develop their specific skills and abilities. It also creates awareness of





Preamble

Objectives & Intentions

Methods & Strategies

Project Areas

Mission Statement

special issues in the countryside and initiates cooperative, innovative and entrepreneurial action patterns.

Participation should not only be tolerated, but initialized. In detail, appropriate structures for information, communication and participation must be created, which guarantee continuous citizen participation on eye level with elected representatives and therefore result in a new responsible community.

Subsidiary & Good Governance

A key task of regional, national and European authorities is the provision of resources for small units in rural areas, but at the same time leaving enough freedom to enable subsidiary. The communal administration through self-reliant municipalities, necessary in politics for the preservation or regaining of responsibilities and the trust of the population, are important elements.

Opening honest, realistic, strong and reliable perspectives must be one of the objectives of politics. They are the basis for formulating new visions and necessary for implementing actual projects in order to improve the material and nonmaterial circumstances of the affected parties in a sustainable way.

Policies regarding rural areas must be easily accessible and transparent. Decision-making and filling in positions or outsourcing tasks must be made in consideration of objective criteria, and where these do not exist, independent supervision must be installed. Politics and administration must be able to act coherently.

Interdisciplinary

Regional politics and administration must be organized in a strategically wide-ranged way. Political sections like economy, infrastructure, environment, agriculture, culture and social politics and any other parts should be interlinked, so that one can rightly speak of holistic rural development. Imbalances, for example to the detriment of cultural or social equipments, must be

avoided. The integration of abilities, skills and knowledge gained from science, artists and other creatives is especially important.

Integrated rural development requires bundled and flexible programs and responsibilities, as well as proximity to the population. Consultants and other administrative services are of particular importance in that context.

Interdisciplinary agreements must be lived on a small and a large scale and requires backup of all political levels.

Cooperation

Alliances and cooperation between villages and municipalities are indispensable strategies for the successful development of the rural space. They enable communal bodies to meet challenges and find solutions to issues, which would otherwise exceed the potential of individual municipalities. Intercommunal cooperation is not only important to achieve more on the outside, but also creates and maintains a joint, lively cultural identity on the inside. Furthermore, it is an important requirement for efficient synergies that help to implement regional development concepts. The future tasks of everybody involved with the development of rural communities must therefore include the promotion and support of such cooperation. The leader approach can be a good framework for this.

The interlinked results of village renewal, development of municipalities, integrated rural and regional development are important to initiate an independent movement of renewal and renovation or maintain existing efforts and have people benefit from the dynamics.

Building on strong regional development strategies the individual villages and municipalities can develop their profiles in a local network of rural developers and village renewers.

It is recommended that small-scale initiatives obtain information about policies on national, transnational and European level in order to understand them better and give them a chance to contribute in a more confident



way. Politicians and administrators acting on a large scale must ensure the freedom and a climate, from which such small-scale dynamics can benefit.

Partnerships

Cooperation between the countryside and cities is essential for a positive development. Both sides can contribute from their strength and qualities and then benefit from the synergies resulting thereof.

One prerequisite is that cities and countryside are not played against each other or that it is tried to adjust them in some way, robbing the individual areas their special characteristics, unique selling points and identities. Not the same, but equally valuable conditions and a balance must be created, which ensure high quality of life in both urban and rural areas.

The harmonisation of principles of integrated development for rural and urban spaces is especially productive for city-countryside partnerships.

Public-private partnerships, the cooperation between the public hand and private businesses, can have very positive consequences for the development dynamics. However, it must be ensured that these are not purely financial transactions, but long-term cooperation set forth in agreements, where all parties contribute with their strengths, skills and resources to the benefit of all.

Variety as a Value

The variety of villages and rural regions constitutes a form of wealth in itself. Variety is not only an aesthetic consideration and an aspect of identification, but also gives helps finding adequate solutions to numerous challenges.

Therefor the preservation of this variety has to be a goal for policies affecting rural areas, as well as the consideration of the social, cultural, natural, economic and regional wealth and refraining from trying to make all rural areas similar or adjust them to big cities or more dense areas.

Preamble

Objectives & Intentions

Methods & Strategies

Project Areas

Mission Statement

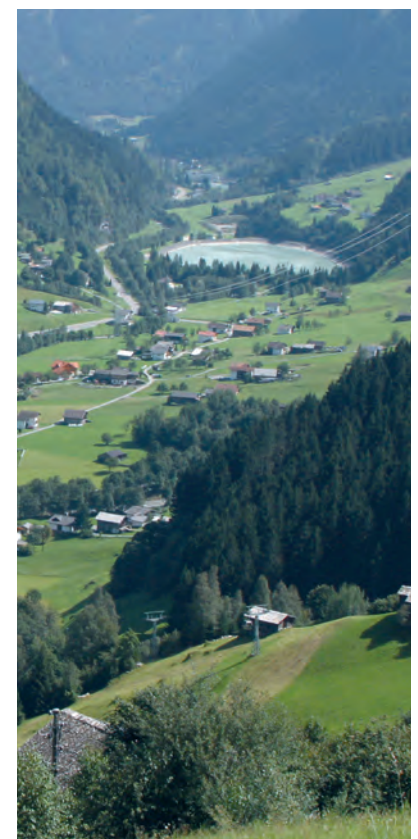
4. Scope of Activity & Sphere of Action

The development of rural regions requires a comprehensive approach, that meets the demands of interlinked challenges and issues and opens a new path for using potential opportunities. The integrated rural development through the development of the countryside and the renewal of villages can give important impulses to that end. Tasks and necessary steps for implementation are detailed in the bullet-points below. The selected list shows in no way the priority of issues and will only achieve its full potential when implemented together. Depending on the given regional situation and starting point, individual areas will have to be more or less emphasized.

Businesses and Workplaces

The rural space was and is subject to major structural changes. Compared to urban centres, this has led to reduced economic power and an insufficient offer of workplaces in many rural regions. Consequently, lots of young and motivated people leave their villages and migrate to where jobs and economic growth can be found.

However, the viability of a region is always closely connected with its economic power. It is a huge challenge to strengthen these necessary economical basics in a sustainable and ecologically appropriate





- Preamble
- Objectives & Intentions
- Methods & Strategies
- Project Areas**
- Mission Statement

way. As a principle, the support of existing enterprises and their dynamics and the creation of new, qualified jobs are first steps on the way. Another step is the initiation of innovative start-ups, especially in the areas of trade, commerce and industry, sectors like regenerative energies, alternative energies, rural tourism, health and other contemporary services. In detail:

- Supporting businesses considering regional potentials and value-added chains,
- Rejuvenating traditional trades in connection with tourism,
- Construction of start-up centres with attractive and innovative services,
- Establishment of entrepreneurial networks to develop synergies,
- Development of job models, enabling parental custody and employment,
- Creating qualified jobs under consideration of women as a target group,
- Supporting „time-sharing“ workplaces, for example in multi-functional tele-houses,
- Decentralization, privatization, of areas of public interest on a case-to-case basis,
- Integration of universities and educational institutions on village and communal level and broad outsourcing of at least some institutions into rural areas.

Generally agriculture, forestry, trade, services and tourism must be efficiently linked, transportation must be kept short and a strain on the environment must be avoided to support „ecology in the countryside“. In addition, quick data networks covering large areas are vitally important to overcome the disadvantages in terms of location. However, data highways will not be able to substitute for comprehensive traffic concepts and adjusted transport infrastructure. They are and remain an important prerequisite for the improvement of market opportunities of regional products and access to workplaces. They also contribute to the attraction of touristic potentials in a rural region.

Agriculture and Forestry

Agriculture and forestry fulfil a number of functions in rural spaces and will be an essential actor for time to come. They directly and indirectly create jobs and strengthen the economic basis. At the same time, they

are an integral part of the community and basic for a functional village structure.

Due to the large percentage of surface area they also define the regional economy and the appearance of the cultural landscape. Consequently, these important economic, ecological, social and cultural contributions to agriculture and forestry have an enormous impact on the attractiveness of rural spaces. The integrated development in the rural regions and villages can only be successful if agriculture and forestry have been included in the concept. This includes comprehensive support and deepening of the following strategies and measures:

- Producing, processing and marketing of healthy food,
- Creating coops to build and distribute regional product brands,
- Producing and marketing renewable resources and alternative energy,
- Integration into the regional value-added chain of affiliated economic sectors,
- Development and modernisation of agricultural services,
- Integration into maintenance and service in connection with simple communal and social tasks,
- Maintenance and care of regional cultural landscapes and their characteristics,
- Maintenance of healthy soil, water and air.

To strengthen the regional functions, agriculture and forestry must also be competitive across the region. Important elements are therefore the creation of good conditions for production, the preservation of healthy and productive soils, improvement of agricultural infrastructure through modern equipment and suitable measures for the reorganisation of rural spaces.

Only such a double strategy can ensure comprehensive and sustainable farming of the cultural landscape on one hand and meet the challenges of a sustainable supply with foodstuff for an exploding world population on the other.

Landscape, Soil, Water and Ecology

An intact environment is an important prerequisite for quality of life in the village. Pure



potable water, clean air and healthy soils are an essential basis for life across the region, and at the same time constitute a part of the services rural ecological systems render to urban centres.

A key role in relation to the ecological quality of a region is played by the agricultural sector and forestry. Farming practices have a direct and indirect impact on the environment, because they are responsible for the ecological system and the appearance of a cultural landscape, which would fall into demise without appropriate farming. Cultural landscapes typical for the region are a result of sustainable use of land and offer habitats for varied flora and fauna. In addition, they guarantee the unique appearance and can be used as recreational spaces with essential touristic potential.

In their endeavour to maintain or improve the high quality of rural spaces and to preserve the ecological performance of landscape and ecological system, the development of the land and the renewal of the villages are carried out in close partnership with agriculture and forestry. The EU-wide environmental support program and the ecological measures in the framework of integrated rural development are valuable support to that end. However, consumers must also be won over for careful and ecologically sound use of water, foodstuff and goods.

Land development and village renewal must therefore strengthen environmental consciousness and call for action in the following areas:

- Conscious and careful use of natural goods, especially the resources soil and water, through ecologically orientated further development of agriculture and its infrastructure,
- Creation of sustainable land use systems,
- Realization of natural habitats and cultural landscape programs,
- Creation of natural habitats and habitat systems,
- Maintenance of natural surfaces and habitats based on the European Convention for the Preservation of Landscapes with reference to cultural, ecological, agricul-

tural, social and economical aspects,

- Forcing of decentralized supply and utility infrastructure, adjusted to the demographic development and the financial power of the communal authorities,
- Committed participation in networks like the Climate and Soil Agreement,
- Decision for regional, ecologically sound products.

Energy and Climate Change

The rise in demand for energy and resources from fossil sources result in exploding environmental problems, contributing considerably to the climate change. Counterstrategies are a necessity and should be pointing in two directions, which are not mutually exclusive alternatives, but complement each other:

- Energy saving and increasing energy efficiency,
- Increased use of regenerative energies such as bio mass, water power, solar energy, photovoltaic, geothermal energy and wind power.

Land development and village renewal see a multiple-steps, environmentally sound, regional energy production as an ecological necessity, but also a special economic opportunity for the rural area. Naturally, points such as protection of the environment, climate change and reduction of the dependence from insecure oil and gas markets are on the forefront of such considerations, but at the same time developmental effects in the areas technology, production and services can be expected. First and most important step of the value-added chain in terms of regional energy production, however, are the sectors agriculture and forestry, whereby a balanced relationship between the production of foodstuff and raw materials must be achieved.

Big, centralized facilities and companies for processing plants and the supply of the population with regenerative energy create new strains on the environment with longer transportation and in addition have the disadvantage that parts of the value-added effects is lost for the region. From the viewpoint of land development and village re-

Preamble

Objectives & Intentions

Methods & Strategies

Project Areas

Mission Statement





Preamble

Objectives & Intentions

Methods & Strategies

Project Areas

Mission Statement

newal, local energy production and supply must be preferred. In sum, the following aspects must be considered:

- Supervising and if necessary increasing of energy efficiencies regarding to buildings, machinery and equipment with incentives and financial aid for energy saving,
- Forcing of a decentralized and possibly small-scale energy supply with renewable or regenerating resources,
- Environmentally friendly production of bio mass and agricultural waste products using as few energy as possible,
- Sustainable measures for the exploitation and protection of forests to be able to appropriately use its rich potential as a source of regenerative energy,
- Zoning plans, where energy-sufficient buildings and a reduction of mobility costs have high priority,
- Cooperation between villages and municipalities with the vision of becoming as energy-self-sufficient as possible.

Mobility and Local Supply

Mobility is an essential part of human life, because our actions occur at and between different locations. Settlements and local supply facilities are at the same time a destination for and source of traffic. A functional transportation network is the basis for the accessibility of different facilities and their exchange and therefore an important element when considering the ranking or the quality of a location.

Mobility requirements for citizens in rural areas are especially high, considering the longer distances and lower density of settlements. Public transportation has to be preferred from an ecological point of view. In order to promote its use, creative and mostly inter-communal adjusted concepts must be found.

Individual traffic should be characterized through the change to more environmentally friendly technologies. Especially government and industry must act, for example through the provision of commonly used e-mobiles, a good network of service-orientated biogas fuel stations or the fun-

ding of the acquisition of climate-friendly vehicles.

Long-term objective is the creation of compact and well-linked settlement structures that have a satisfactory local supply of everyday goods and medical, public and other modern service facilities. This will not only reduce traffic in general, but also considerably increase the quality of life of the citizens. When decisions about the continuation or discontinuation of public services are made, questions such as vicinity to the citizens and accessibility must be considered to a higher degree. However, at the same time citizens must be asked to question their settlement, mobility and shopping patterns and change them accordingly, if necessary.

Furthermore, land development and village renewal promote:

- Creation of sufficient space and safe traffic connections for pedestrians and bicyclists,
- An improved image of public transportation networks and efficient and cost-effective concepts for their use,
- Creation of park-and-ride and bike-and-ride facilities,
- Flexible transportation services such as oncall collective taxis and disco shuttles,
- Extension and use of possibilities of modern information and communication technologies to minimize traffic currents,
- Increased public relations and awarenessbuilding for the actions of citizens in the areas „settlements“, „mobility“ and „ensuring local supply“.

Settlements and Construction Developments

In the past, the rural population often took over urban values and lost large parts of its own culture as a result. This is also reflected in the constructions. Old buildings, which sometimes deserve to be preserved, do not meet the requirements of today's families, life forms or the modern way of living. New constructions at the fringes of the localities, together with increasingly empty village centres and the development of surfaces valuable for agricultural or ecological purposes are a direct result.



The orientation towards traditional constructions typical for the region requires new architectonic ideas and concepts for contemporary solutions. The preservation of the appearance, use of alternative energy systems, limitation of surface usage and contemporary elements of design must be balanced.

Zoning plans and the development of settlement areas are of central importance to that issue. In rural areas with a decrease in population, the inner development must be preferred, where the preservation of existing buildings takes precedence over new constructions in the „green“. Migration and empty buildings should not be accepted passively, but if possible, preventative measures should be actively taken. In individual cases it may also be necessary and sensible to enable a qualitative retreat from settlement areas.

The cost aspect for the creation, maintenance and renewal of the construction infrastructure – roads, water and electricity supply, wastewater disposal and waste – deserves special consideration when designing the concept for the development of settlements. Since dense developments guarantee more efficient use of the infrastructure, this should be forced.

Land development and village renewal focus on:

- Plans for controlled development of settlements, a surface efficient building strategy and priority of internal development under consideration of ecological requirements of the village,
- Inter-communal concepts and cooperation, especially in view of internal development and surface-efficient development,
- Harmonisation of residential areas and economic areas,
- Awareness building, competitions and financial incentives to maintain and further develop formal elements of typical regional construction culture,
- Development and realization of modern architectural forms,
- Preservation of the character and the identity of the village and of old buildings worth preserving,

- Creative use of buildings that are not in use anymore but serve a identity-giving function in the village,
- Consideration of the relation between settlement and surrounding landscape,
- Allocation of surfaces for new developments in view of low surface and energyuse,
- Maintenance of the existing infrastructure through comprehensive financial planning of the municipalities,
- Consideration of biological viewpoints in constructions,
- Consideration of barrier-free building.

Vital, attractive centres with multi-functional and pleasantly designed open spaces and community houses are important hubs for contact and communication. Land development and village renewal therefore request that such places of encounter be promoted and funded.

In some areas, the higher quality of residential housing and an attractive appearance of settlements and landscapes have initiated a trend for living in the countryside. A development to the benefit of rural spaces can be successful, if the number of new arrivals can be controlled and the new citizens or owners of second homes can be integrated into village life.

Education

Education is more than the education of children and young people. School knowledge alone is not sufficient anymore, lifelong further education is necessary. Acquiring methodological knowledge and social competences is gaining more and more importance, too. This calls for processes of awareness building, learning in projects and village communities as a „learning organisation“.

Material concerns cannot be the one and only criterion for the preservation of educational institutions in the countryside. They also serve as places of cultural and social encounter and therefore are an integral part of the region. Closing the often only school usually results in grave losses for the entire rural region. Land develop-

Preamble

Objectives & Intentions

Methods & Strategies

Project Areas

Mission Statement





Preamble

Objectives & Intentions

Methods & Strategies

Project Areas

Mission Statement

ment and village renewal must therefore bring those issues to the awareness of responsible parties.

Attention must not only be paid to „education in rural areas“ but also to „education for rural areas“. In this sense, the following goals should be envisioned:

- Study programs and educational platforms regarding the sustainable development of rural areas,
- Research projects to elaborate village typologies, functions and strength of rural areas as a balance to and in comparison with urban centres,
- Topic-related further education for quality assurance of new products or services and the use of modern information technologies,
- Training for cooperation and communication and conflict-solving.

The acquisition of knowledge has become easier through Internet access, because it made interested parties more flexible in view of space and time – a new opportunity for rural areas, which, to date, were disadvantaged compared to cities. This applies especially if broadband access covers wider areas and the citizens in peripheral areas have improved access to Internet. No matter how valuable the Internet can be, it does not substitute the social aspect of learning in work groups, action groups or clubs.

Cultural and Social Identity

Land development and village renewal focus on the promotion of the improvement of regional and rural social life. They promote and request participative and cooperative elements and subsidiary structures for commitment on part of the citizens. This is the only way to interest citizens in the independent design of their living environment.

Starting points are the respectively given spatial and economic conditions. The rural culture and social identity can then develop from the inside, mostly different to cities, where cultural and social life is often in the hands of professional organisations. In many rural areas voluntary initiatives

of the citizens build strong communities, which then give identity and become a central focus point.

Not only the existence of appropriate rooms is of importance in order to support these self-organized services, because these turn into places of encounter, where a sense of community develops. Ideal and material support for organisational structures and education are just as important – always according to the motto „help to self-help“.

For the land development and village renewal, this results in the following demands:

- Educational programs for children, young people and adults, promoting the understanding of historic roots, character and the strength of the region,
 - Functional expansion of schools and preschools to regional cultural and educational institutions – also as a contribution to maintain such institutions on a small scale,
- Re-use and/or extension of buildings and public spaces to places of encounters,
- Supporting the establishment of local communities, work groups and clubs and other informal networks on a local level,
- Impulses for citizen participation in view of planning and decision-making in respect to the design of the direct environment,
- Integration into rural life of local personalities from politics, economy, art and culture,
- Decision-making by the small and directly affected communities,
- Support of rural clubs and societies and their festivities, customs and activities,
- Forcing of cooperation in view of issues and different localities,
- a balanced ratio of traditional and contemporary events and activities, where the maintenance of the cultural heritage and the promotion of new cultural and sportive leisure activities both play a role.

Societies, clubs, interest groups and other forms of movements by the citizens usually have a positive effect on the quality of life of a village. They offer the opportunity to get active. For many people who consider moving to the countryside, these are important criteria for their decision. In addition they can create regional value, open



new opportunities for tourism and enrich the local supply.

Living Together

In the villages, life has changed as well. Young and elderly people hardly ever live together under one roof anymore. However, the social system village still works well in many places, not at least thanks to the vivid social life, organized in clubs and societies, which can be seen as the supporting pillars of the rural daily life. An advantage, that carries a danger in itself, which needs to be faced: It must be ensured that less organized population groups are integrated into social processes and social life. A village needs the involvement, creativity and participation of all its citizens.

Women should be encouraged to take on responsible positions. This however, can only work, if this is accepted among society and families. Apart from promoting gender equality in the sense of gender mainstreaming, it must be especially important to enable dignified aging without excessive risks in rural spaces. Living together also requires a certain openness in

regard of the needs of the younger generation and empowering young families in all their forms. Not at least the integration of newly migrated inhabitants and people with special needs or different views opposed to those of the majority require the necessary attention.

Land development and village renewal therefore considers it as a material task to strengthen the quality of relationships between people.

Incentives should be given through:

- Organisation of care services for children, so that family and work are not mutually exclusive,
- Establishment of services that make self-reliant living of the elderly in their own or rented houses attractive,
- Varied services in relation to care and supervised living accommodations for a dignified sunset age in the village – including for migrating pensioners,
- Incentive models for voluntary initiatives in the scope of activities for all generations and services,
- consideration of people with special needs in view of construction projects and social activities.

Preamble

Objectives & Intentions

Methods & Strategies

Project Areas

Mission Statement

5. Self-Concept and Mission Statement

The European Association for Rural Development and Village Renewal is planning on playing an active role in the maintenance and development of rural areas. With its network of partnerships, it promotes measures intended to improve quality of life, economic opportunities and leisure factors necessary for the improvement of the quality of life in view of culture, society and human relationships. It sees its tasks in:

- Making visible and evaluating knowledge, gaining skills and special performances in the area sustainable rural and regional development,
- Promoting knowledge transfer and encounters on a vertical level between de-

cision-makers, multipliers and citizens and on a horizontal level between the European states, countries, regions, municipalities and villages,

- Increasing the motivation of the rural population to contribute to decision-making processes and commit to initiatives creating their own living environment,
- Strengthening confidence within the rural population and their identity as locally rooted Europeans with joint values, a common history and culture, and
- Forcing perception of the meaning of rural areas and the issues of their inhabitants for society as a whole through publicity, media and politics.

