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## Project of the month

### Investment support for a juniper syrup-producing business

Discover how female entrepreneurs in the village of Leedri in Saaremaa used Rural Development Programme (RDP) investment support to increase the production capacity of their [juniper syrup-producing business](#). Support from the Estonian RDP helped convert an old barn into a workshop for producing juniper syrup products and high performance boilers and other necessary equipment were purchased to produce different syrups, peanut delights, sauces and marmalade.

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## News

### Rural Vision Week - Bringing Rural Europe together

The [Rural Vision Week](#), organised online between 22 and 26 March 2021, brought together a wide variety of rural actors and stakeholders bringing forward their views about the future of rural areas in Europe. Vice President Dubravka Šuica, European Commissioners Janusz Wojciechowski and Elisa Ferreira, together with other European and international key speakers, led the event, emphasising the EC's commitment to listen to rural voices when drawing up the Long Term Vision for Rural Areas Communication, that it would be accompanied by a concrete Action Plan with aim to move closer to a greener, smarter and more inclusive rural Europe.

More than 650 participants from 35 countries attended the online event, debating during 8 [Workshops](#), 4 plenary sessions & 11 [fringe meetings](#), and 23 organisations showcased their rural perspectives in [Our Rural Marketplace](#). The event also hosted the ceremony of the [Rural Inspiration Awards](#), where, out of 20 nominees, five projects were awarded for their outstanding achievements in four thematic categories and one online 'popular vote'.

Visit our [event page](#) for more info, presentations, video recordings and links to the ENRD Long Term Rural Vision [Thematic Group](#) and [Portal](#).

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### A new push for European democracy – Long-term vision for rural areas

The European Commission has embedded the Long-term vision for rural areas under one of its priorities for 2019-2024 - [A new push for European democracy](#), aiming to develop a common European vision for vibrant, connected and sustainable rural areas by 2040. In shaping this long-term vision, the Commission is gathering the views of rural communities and businesses through public consultations and stakeholder-lead events, including the Rural Vision Week organised by the ENRD. It will also embrace the transformative possibilities brought by the research and innovation projects of Horizon 2020. Through this collaborative and innovative process, the Commission intends to create a wide-ranging vision and a comprehensive rural action plan that will help rural communities and businesses reach their full potential in the coming decades. Visit the dedicated [webpage](#) and discover more!

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## Long-term vision for rural areas: public consultation outcomes

Improved infrastructure, especially in terms of public transport, is among the most pressing needs for rural areas. Farming is seen as the sector contributing the most to rural areas.

These are some of the key outcomes of the [online public consultation on the Long-term vision for rural areas](#) held in the autumn of 2020. A total of 2 326 respondents from all EU Member States participated in the public consultation, providing their views on rural areas today, aspirations for the future of rural areas as well as involvement of citizens in decision making and the vision itself.

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## New public consultation on the EU forest strategy!

As announced in its [Communication on the European Green Deal](#), the European Commission is developing a new (post 2021) [EU forest strategy](#). The strategy will build on the EU's 2030 biodiversity strategy, cover the whole forest cycle and promote the many services that forests provide. It will also be aimed at ensuring healthy and resilient forests that contribute significantly to biodiversity and climate goals, reduce and control natural disasters, secure livelihoods and support a circular bioeconomy and rural communities.

You can contribute to this consultation by filling in the online [questionnaire](#) available in all official EU languages. You can submit your responses in any official EU language by **19 April 2021**.

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## Launch of calls for proposals to promote European agri-food products at home and abroad

The European Commission launched the calls for proposals for European agri-food promotion programmes in the EU and abroad. This year, a special focus is put on promoting products and farming methods that more directly support the [European Green Deal](#) objectives and in particular the [Farm to Fork strategy](#). With a total budget of €173.4 million dedicated to co-financing promotion programmes, almost half (€86 million) will go towards campaigns more directly in line with the European Green Deal ambitions. This includes promotion programmes on organic products with a total allocated budget of €49 million and on sustainable agriculture with a budget of €18 million.

Furthermore, €19.1 million has been allocated to the promotion of fruit and vegetables in the context of encouraging a balanced diet. Proposals should be submitted by **28 April 2021** via the dedicated portal.

Find out more info and browse related documents [here](#).

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## Climate Change Adaptation - a new EU strategy

The European Commission adopted a new [EU Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change](#), setting out the pathway to prepare for the unavoidable impacts of climate change.

Economic losses from more frequent climate-related extreme weather are increasing. In the EU, these losses alone already average over €12 billion per year. Building on the 2013 Climate Change Adaptation Strategy, the aim of the new EU strategy proposals is to shift the focus from understanding the problem to developing solutions, and to move from planning to implementation.

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## European Commission published the evaluation support study on information policy under the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP)

The [study](#) carried out for the European Commission, confirmed that the information policy on the CAP was successful in improving understanding and perceptions of the policy.

Based on figures from Eurobarometer and results of a stakeholder survey conducted as part of the study, awareness of the CAP has increased over the last five years, and perceptions of its performance have improved. These are among the key findings of the evaluation support study.

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## Happy birthday LEADER!

**30 years ago the EU adopted a new approach for community-led rural development: the [LEADER method](#), focused on the participation of the local population & public-private collaboration.**

To mark the occasion the Commission has made available a banner which Managing Authorities, NRNS, LAGS and other stakeholders are invited to use on LEADER related products during 2021- more details and downloadable version [here](#) (scroll down to 'LEADER').

The ENRD website hosts a wealth of [LEADER Resources](#), including [guidance](#), projects examples, videos and news from the field. A special edition of the EU Rural Review looked at '[LEADER Achievements](#)' and is now available in eight languages.

What did LEADER mean to you? What impact did it have on your rural areas? [Share your LEADER story!](#)

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## Females in the field

**The number of women in farming has been slowly increasing in recent years. Around 30% of farms across the EU are managed by a woman but this data masks some considerable differences between countries.**

In Lithuania and Latvia, nearly half of all farms are managed by a woman. By contrast, in Malta, Germany, Denmark and the Netherlands the proportion of female farm managers does not exceed 10%. Read more about the [European Commission's latest news on 'Females in the field'](#).

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## Biodiversity: new accounting for nature's economic contributions

**A new statistical framework to better account for biodiversity and ecosystems in national economic planning and policy decision-making, approved this week, allows countries worldwide to use a common set of rules and methods to track changes in ecosystems and their services.**

The new framework goes beyond the commonly used statistic of gross domestic product and ensures that natural capital accounts (the contributions of forests, oceans and other ecosystems) complements existing economic accounts. [Learn more](#) about the next steps in the revision of the Regulation on European Environmental Economic Accounts (EEEA) to expand its coverage to include a new module on natural capital accounting.

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## Meet the winners of the Rural Inspiration Awards 2021!

**During the virtual award ceremony, held on 25 March 2021, Commissioner Janusz Wojciechowski announced the five winners of this year's edition!** Congratulations to ReWI Visions (Resource Wise Visions) (FI) winner of the Green Future category, The HofladenBOX (DE) winner of the Digital Futures category, Pilot Project on Circular Bioeconomy (ES) winner of the Resilient Futures category, Green Care – Where People Flourish (AT) winner of the Socially Inclusive Futures category and Angelic Gardens / Anielskie Ogrody (PL) winner of the Popular Vote Award.

All the winners and finalists showcase great examples of EAFRD funded projects leading the future of rural areas. Find out more about them and meet their rural vision [here!](#)

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## Networking goes digital!

**The ENRD CP office in Brussels remains closed until further notice due to the COVID-19 outbreak but ENRD activities are all going ahead using digital approaches adapted to the new context.** The team is as busy as ever networking, organising and delivering virtual events, producing publications and keeping you abreast of the latest news. We invite you to keep an eye on the [Upcoming Events](#) section of our website, where we list relevant forthcoming events. Feel free to contact us at any time!

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## Past Events

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### **3rd meeting of the Thematic Group on the European Green Deal and rural areas**

The third meeting of the [ENRD Thematic Group on the European Green Deal and rural areas](#) focused on rural areas and the transition to clean energy. It presented different renewable energy solutions for farmers and foresters and discussed further opportunities. In addition, participants identified where CAP interventions are relevant to support rural renewable energy solutions.

Presentations from the day, together with related publications and background materials are available [here](#).

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### **9th Rural Networks' LEADER/CLLD Sub-group Meeting**

The ninth meeting of the European Rural Networks' Assembly's permanent Sub-group on LEADER/CLLD

provided an opportunity to update members on the state of play of LEADER implementation and Commission initiatives relating to LEADER. It presented the results of the governance survey of Sub-group members, exchanged views on the achievements and challenges of the current Sub-group, and possible future needs. Participants heard from Member States on how LEADER will be used during the transition period.

Presentations from the day are available on the [event page](#).

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## **Publications**

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### **The highlights report of the 3rd meeting of the ENRD Thematic Group on the Long Term Rural Vision is now out!**

The [highlights report](#) of the [3rd meeting of the ENRD Thematic Group on the Long Term Rural Vision](#) provides more insight into the Foresight Scenarios developed by the JRC and takes stock of the main messages that have been coming out of the work carried out so far on the LTVRA.

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### **LEADER for resilience and sustainability: report available**

The [highlights report](#) of the ENRD [LEADER Thematic Lab on 'Designing LEADER for resilience and sustainability'](#) is now available. It looks at the main social, economic and environmental aspects of resilience and LEADER's role in optimising these aspects. It also provides an overview on key capacity and delivery systems' features for resilience and how LEADER can build on them.

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### **The dynamics of implementation of the LEADER approach and its way forward in Albania**

This [policy document](#) by the Albanian Rural Network provides an overview of the dynamics and progress of the introduction and implementation of the LEADER approach as an instrument of rural development in Albania.

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## **Events**

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**06 - 27 April 2021**

[Climate neutral agriculture, RUBIZMO, Webinar](#)

**08 April 2021**

[The New European Bauhaus, European Commission, Webinar](#)

**12 April 2021**

[Farm to fork in France, Euractive, Webinar](#)

**13 April 2021**

[EU Nature restoration targets, EP intergroup biodiversity, hunting and countryside, Webinar](#)

**13 - 14 April 2021**

[Healthy soils for Europe: sustainable management through knowledge and practice, EIP-AGRI, Webinar](#)

**19 - 22 April 2021**

[Global symposium on soil biodiversity, FAO and GSP, Webinar](#)

**21 April 2021**

[Challenges and solutions to cope with ageing in rural Europe, SILVER SMEs, Webinar](#)

**21 April 2021**

[Reducing the use of antibiotics in the meat sector, Euractive, Webinar](#)

**26 April 2021**

[ENRD Thematic Lab “LEADER funding made simpler - using SCOs in the transition period and under the CAP Strategic Plans”, ENRD Contact Point, Webinar](#)

**29 April 2021**

[How could your rural community become smart?, SMARTVillages project Final conference, Webinar](#)

**19 May 2021**

[Animal health and welfare, EURACTIV, Webinar](#)

**25 May 2021**

[15th Rural Networks Steering Group Meeting, ENRD Contact Point, Webinar](#)

**31 May - 04 June 2021**

[EU Green Week 2021, the European Commission, Webinar](#)

**16 - 18 June 2021**

[European organic congress, IFOAM Organics Europe and AGROBIO, Webinar](#)

**23 - 24 June 2021**

[European Research and Innovation Days, DG RTD, Webinar](#)

**20 - 23 July 2021**

[Raising the impact of agricultural economics, The European Association of Agricultural Economists - EAAE, Webinar](#)

**06 - 10 September 2021**

[Organic world congress, Webinar](#)

**27 - 29 September 2021**

[Agritravel and slowtravel expo, Bergamo, Italy](#)

**11 - 14 October 2021**

[European Week of Regions and Cities, the European Commission, Webinar](#)

**19 October 2021**

[16th Rural Networks Steering Group Meeting](#)

**25 - 29 November 2021**

[EU Sustainable Energy Week, The European Commission, Webinar](#)

**07 December 2021**

[8th meeting of the EU Rural Networks Assembly, Webinar](#)

**10 - 14 April 2022**

[European farming systems conference, The Mediterranean Institute for Agriculture, Environment and Development \(MED\)](#)

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**ENRD Contact Point**

Rue de la Loi, 38 (bte 4)  
B-1040 Bruxelles  
[info@enrd.eu](mailto:info@enrd.eu)  
Tel. +32 2 801 38 00  
<https://enrd.ec.europa.eu>

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