



## Intergroup Newsletter

December 2022

**We wish you a very happy holiday season and all the best for the New Year! We hope you have a restful and enjoyable winter break!**

**Looking forward to working together in 2023 😊**

### Overview

The Secretariat is happy to present you the activities carried out by our Intergroup and its members over the past two months. In this fifth edition of the Newsletter, you will find relevant information concerning:

- Intergroup news
- Member's Corner
- Events
- Twitter Updates

Share your latest updates with us! We would love to hear from you and include your events and news in our next newsletter, so don't forget that you can email us about anything you have been up to.

**Happy reading!**

## Intergroup News

- **Warm welcome to our new Intergroup members**

We are delighted to welcome as new members of our Intergroup:

- [Simone Schmiedtbauer](#) (AT, EPP)
- [Angelica Winzig](#) (AT, EPP)

## Members' Corner

### **Report on the long-term Vision for the EU's Rural Areas passed in plenary on 13.12.2022**

The European Parliament voted nearly unilaterally in favour of the report on the long-term vision for rural areas, which was written by our RUMRA and Smart Villages Intergroup Member Isabel Carvalhais. Our co-chair, Franc Bogovič, shadowed the text for the EPP Group and our Member Jérémy Decerle for Renew Europe. The fact that the report did not receive a single amendment to its text is proof of the unity that exists in the European Parliament across all political groups on the topic of rural development.

The report demonstrates the importance of the long-term vision and the added value of the rural pact. It ensures that rural areas remain high on the political agenda. It shows that the European Commission and the European Parliament are aligned in achieving a demographic, green and digital transition in rural areas.

The mission is to make rural areas more prosperous, dynamic and attractive places for people to live and work in, while preserving their original character. Food security and food waste are key concerns.

We need to address the political discontent in rural area and help solve it by giving rural citizens ownership over their communities and actively involving them in the ongoing process of the digital, green and demographic transition. EU funds complement each other in the support of our rural areas and we are pleased to see that 100 billion Euros from the European Agricultural fund are earmarked for the rural development budget, while 33 billion euros can be found within the cohesion policy for investments in rural areas

The Long Term vision for rural areas mentions smart villages as a flagship project that can help solve the problem of rural depopulation and the demographic challenges we are faced with. High-speed broadband connections in rural areas are central to the solution, because it will allow rural areas to develop new options and opportunities and create jobs. We have to provide financial support on various levels from various sources, in order to cover all the important areas of rural development, such as precision farming, e-health, mobility and sustainable energy solutions. We

need a common rural development policy and with the long-term vision we believe that we have received that.

A successful future of rural areas in Europe, which span over 80% of the European territory and inhabit 30% of the European population, is essential for the great challenges we face in European society, especially in light of the war in Ukraine and the ongoing effects of the pandemic. The European Green Deal and food security in Europe are part and parcel of what we are committing to through the long-term vision. Now all the good initiatives that we have, in order to help achieve true cohesion between our rural and our urban citizens, need to turn into action with clear-cut goals. Now that we have the report, we need clear commitments from the EU. We need an integrated cross-cutting view. Not a sectoral one.

It is our understanding that the European Commission will amend its version from June 2021 to our version.

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## **Euromontana commits to making mountains attractive and resilient in the face of social, economic and environmental transitions**

In October 2022, more than 150 mountain stakeholders from all over Europe gathered in Camigliatello Silano in Calabria, Italy, to take part in the 12th European Mountain Convention on “Smart mountains: how to make our territories attractive and future oriented”. As a main outcome of the Convention, the Sila Declaration was co-developed to give shape to the mountains of the future.

Euromontana and its members are committed to bring the vision of the Sila Declaration to European, national, regional and local policy makers in order to increase mountain communities’ quality of life and to take the mountains on board of the current and future transitions.



[Sila Declaration | Smart mountains: Making our territories more attractive and resilient in the face of social, economic and environmental transitions - Euromontana](#)

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## **The SSPA Network launches the SSPA Talent Network to unite people of Cuenca, Soria and Teruel who are living abroad**

The project is aimed at all those emigrated professionals who are related to some SSPA territory but carry out their professional activity outside of them. The objective of the project is to create a united community to contribute innovative and entrepreneurial ideas to the provinces and facilitate both professional relations between the members of the network, as well as the return of talent.

The Network of Sparsely Populated Areas of Southern Europe (SSPA), formed by the business' organizations of the provinces of Soria, Cuenca and Teruel, launches a talent network to unite emigrated professionals from their provinces. The objective they pursue is to create a united community that contributes innovative and entrepreneurial ideas to the development of the provinces, as well as facilitating both professional relations among its members and promoting the return of talent. The official presentation of the Network took place today, beginning with the screening of a brief informative video about this initiative (in Spanish): <https://youtu.be/MvY4TE973VA>

The objective that SSPA Talent Network pursues is to be the meeting point between all those from Cuenca, Soria and Teruel spread throughout the world who want to maintain the link with Cuenca, Soria or Teruel and who are willing to join forces to build better provinces with greater opportunities, as well as becoming a tool to facilitate the return of talent. This network seeks to become the meeting point for all of them. In other words, it seeks to position itself as the new "House of the SSPA territories in the world".

According to data from the National Institute of Statistics (INE):

- There are 195,516 residents in Cuenca that were born in the area, 147,860 in the rest of the provinces of Spain and 3,848 abroad;
- There are: 60,429 residents born in Soria who are living in the area, 65,304 in the rest of the provinces and 6,849 abroad;
- There are 134,545 people born in Teruel who are living in Teruel, 85,552 in the rest of the provinces and 5,884 abroad.

These data show that more than half of those born in Cuenca, Soria and Teruel reside outside the provinces, both in the rest of Spain and in the world.

The main purpose of the project is to become a model of collaboration between professionals, companies in Cuenca, Soria and Teruel, and the territory, with the aim of contributing knowledge and experience to the development and growth of the provinces.

The platform also wants to facilitate the return of talent to Cuenca, Soria and Teruel, as well as for registered users to become the most important community of influence in the provinces abroad.

To take part, interested users only have to enter the SSPA Talent Network website (<https://www.redtalentospa.es/>) and register by providing some simple information. Once validated, they will have access to all the tools of the platform.

In addition, the business' organizations of Cuenca, Soria and Teruel will organize different online events and activities of interest to the Network participants, as well as meetings with companies and businessmen. The first scheduled event is a face-to-face meeting in Soria in December, which will include presentations by various people from Soria who live abroad and will serve as the first meeting point for emigrant talent from Soria.

Once again, SSPA network encourages all those from Cuenca, Soria and Teruel who are living abroad and want to maintain the link with their province or even return to it to register at <https://www.redtalentospa.es/>.

LET'S JOIN FORCES TO BUILD A BETTER CUENCA, SORIA AND TERUEL  
WITH GREATER OPPORTUNITIES FOR EVERYONE

Links by province:

Cuenca: <https://cuenca.redtalentospa.es/>

Soria: <https://soria.redtalentospa.es/>

Teruel: <https://teruel.redtalentospa.es/>

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## **A message from North Sweden European Office and the Northern Sparsely Populated Areas (NSPA) network on the upcoming Swedish presidency of the EU**

The priorities of the Swedish Presidency of the EU Council of the European Union were presented by the government yesterday, and the focus will be on “A greener, more secure and freer Europe.” The very first meeting will be in Kiruna, which in combination with the green transition, has created an immense interest for the development in Kiruna and north Sweden among decisionmakers and businesses from across Europe. The fact that the presidency starts in Kiruna is symbolic, as it usually happens in the capitals and not in an extremely remote municipality, with about 23.000 inhabitants spanning over an area close to Belgium’s size. This meeting, along with other activities during the spring above the Arctic Circle, offers great opportunities to see and experience some of the potentials that the northernmost sparsely populated areas of Europe encompass, as well as create a better understanding of the specific structural challenges that the region faces.

The aim of the Northern Sparsely Populated Areas (NSPA) network is to use the Swedish presidency to highlight the need for EU to continue to have a territorial place-based approach through its development policies and support schemes with EU Cohesion Policy as a corner stone. It is important for EU to build global competitiveness in all parts of Europe, and the European Arctic would like to serve as an example of how strategic development can be possible in the most remote areas. The Committee of the Regions have decided to have their political bureau in Kiruna 27-28 April, which will be one of many appropriate opportunities to showcase the need for EU to better adapt its strategies and investment schemes to fit the territorial specificities of each region, especially within such a unique arctic context. One of the last meetings during the Swedish Presidency 2009 was also held in Kiruna and focused on the future of EU Cohesion Policy. The conclusions of the conference were to “Make use of the territorial potential!,” including many ideas that came to influence much of the debate of EU Regional Policy for years to come. Principles that are still relevant for the debate on the new centralised top-down instruments introduced through Next Generation EU.

Hopefully, the discussion on the future of EU Cohesion Policy can be revitalised again during the spring.

**Next Events**



## **Europa kann Digital - Linz, Austria, is exemplary** **European Smart Villages Forum fact-finding mission to Linz,** **Austria**

8-9-10 February 2023

Invitation by the MEPs Franc Bogovič (SL, EPP) & Hannes Heide (AT, S&D)

### ***Draft agenda***

#### **8 February**

----- Travel to Linz via Vienna or Munich -----  
*pick up with mini bus from airport*

After arrival: Check-in at Hotel Am Domplatz in Linz (Linz-Land District, Upper Austria). *Minibus leaving from hotel*

17:00-19:00 Visit of a “Paris we are coming”- municipality\*, [Ottensheim](#), together with Upper Austrian Environment and Climate Regional Councillor, [Stefan Kaineder](#)

20.00-22.00: Dinner on the Danube with Minister for Agriculture, [Norbert Totschnig](#)  
\*comprehensive installation of PV systems on municipal buildings, the expansion of micro-public transport systems and cycle paths, the promotion of green facades or flat roofs, sustainable energy management, the revitalisation of town centres or the conversion of all municipal events to green events

#### **9 February**

08:00-10:00: Visit of [PEAK Technology](#), who have built large parts of the Ariane 6 carrier rocket. More info [here](#).

10.00-12.00: Visit to the 5G Smart Farm “[Nussböckgut](#)” in Leonding, which is powered by Deutsche Telekom, Dronetech and Huawei

12.30-14.00: Wine tasting and lunch at the 5G Smart Farm “[Nussböckgut](#)” in Leonding with Austrian State Secretary, [Claudia Plakolm](#)

14.00-15.00: Visit of a Green Site in Linz powered by Deutsche Telekom and Huawei

16:00-18:00: Visit of [Tabakfabrik](#), a beacon of the Upper Austrian creative industries and conversation with [Chris Mueller](#)

19:00: Presentation on relevance of satellite technology for smart development by leading representative of the EU Agency for the Space Programme (EUSPA) in the hotel

#### **10 February**

08.00-09.30 Meeting with Klaus Luger, Mayor of Linz, Rathaus Linz, Hauptstraße 1-5

10:00-12:00 Visit of [Ars Electronica Center in Linz](#), a festival for the presentation and promotion of art in close connection with (digital) technology and social issues

12:30 Lunch

----- return travel -----

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## Ageing in rural Europe: opportunities for local economies

21 February 2023 – Brussels

Hosted by Birgitta Sacrédeus, member of the European Committee of the Regions.



By 2070, 30% of Europe's population will be aged 65 and over, which is 10% more than today. Rural and mountainous areas are particularly affected by this demographic change but often lack the goods, services and infrastructure that meet the needs of the older population. Rural Europe must create living environments that meet the needs of older people. In these territories, the Silver Economy can help to improve the quality of life of older adults, while at the same time creating economic opportunities for businesses.

With the contribution of 8 rural and mountainous regions and representatives of European institutions, the conference will be an opportunity to explore the challenges of ageing in rural Europe and to provide solutions and inspiration to territories facing similar challenges.

Useful links : [SILVER SMEs final conference - Ageing in rural Europe: opportunities for local economies - Euromontana](#)

### Past Events

**Joint Seminar between Czech EU Presidency, the CoR and our RUMRA & Smart Villages Intergroup on Community-led Local Development and Smart Villages as Innovative Tools for Effective Development of the Rural Areas**

*27-28 October 2022, Lednice, Czech Republic*



This seminar was part of the Presidency of the Czech Republic in the Council of the EU and will be organized jointly by the NAT commission of the CoR and the European Parliament Intergroup RUMRA/Smart Villages. It is closely connected to the Long-term vision for the EU's rural areas, published at the end of June 2021. The seminar represented an important contribution to the Rural Pact process launched in June 2022 and builds on the conclusions of the Conference on the Future of Europe. It is also connected to the start of implementation of the programming period 2021-2027 in most of the member states, introducing Smart Villages as a new EU policy and promoting wider use of territorial instruments and integrated approaches like LEADER/CLLD.

Other partners were MEP Stanislav Polčák (EPP), the Ministry of the Regional Development of the Czech Republic, the European Smart Villages Forum, and the European LEADER Association for Rural Development (ELARD). Ivan Bartoš, Deputy Prime Minister for Digitisation and Minister of Regional Development was be our special guest, alongside EU Commissioner Wojciechowski.

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## **[XII European Mountain Convention on Smart Mountains: 25-26-27 October 2022 in Sila Natural](#)**

*25-26-27 October 2022 - Sila Natural Park & Biosphere Reserve (Italy)*





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## URBAN and RUMRA Intergroups on urban-rural partnerships: How can urban-rural partnerships promote Europe's green transition and territorial agenda?

23 June 2022 - European Parliament (JAN 6Q1)



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Together with STOA our intergroup hosted an informal MEP meeting with **Ms. Ismahane Elouafi, Chief Scientist** at the Food and Agriculture Organization (**FAO**) of the **United Nations**, a position within FAO's core leadership structure.

22 June 2022 – European Parliament (room A5F3 85), 9:00 to 10:00



## Rural brain drain: How can the Cohesion Policy help reverse the trend?

21 June 2022 – European Parliament, 09:00-11:00



### Rural brain drain: How can the Cohesion Policy help reverse the trend?

**21<sup>st</sup> June 2022 - 09:00 – 11:00 (new time!)**  
European Parliament (ASP5G305 room, ASP Building) , Brussels

Brain drain of young people and ageing population are two critical problems in rural and mountainous areas. As evidenced by a 2022 [study by Euromontana](#), 66% of mountain youth would like to remain in mountains but name the lack of employment opportunities and dynamism as the main reasons for them to consider leaving. As result, the average age of mountain populations is higher than in other territories, with 4 out of the 6 top ageing regions in Europe being mountainous regions. 2022 was declared European Year of Youth by the European Commission, and International Year of the Sustainable Mountain Development by the United Nations. This conjunction of international pledges raises the question of how European policies, and in particular the 2021-2027 Cohesion Policy and the Next Generation EU, address the needs of youth in marginal areas, such as mountains. Are these policies ambitious enough to live up to the challenges faced by mountain areas and offer mountain youth the same opportunities as in other regions of Europe?

*Event organised in the framework of the DG-REGIO funded [Montana174 project](#) – *How does the Cohesion Policy shape mountains?**

- (08:30 - 09:00) **Arrival and registrations**
- (09:00 - 09:10) **Welcome and introduction**  
*Guillaume Corradino, Director, Euromontana*
- (09:10 - 09:30) **Brain drain – mitigating challenges associated with population decline**  
*Vesna Caminades, Head of Brussels Office, Autonomous Province of Bozen/Bolzano*
- (09:30 - 09:45) **Seizing the opportunities of the cohesion policy to increase the attractiveness of mountain areas**  
*Blandine Camus, Policy officer, Euromontana*
- (09:45 - 10:15) **Q/A and coffee / tea break**
- (10:15 - 10:30) **How do cultural and educational offer reduce rural outmigration?**  
*Hannes Heide, Member of the European Parliament - Sozialdemokratische Partei Österreichs*
- (10:30 – 11:00) **Conclusions and next steps**

## Twitter

We kindly invite you to follow our [Twitter handle](#) and to interact with our publications.

← RUMRA & Smart Villages Intergroup  
355 Tweets



**RUMRA & Smart Villages Intergroup**  
@IntergroupRUMRA

RUMRA & #SmartVillages - Intergroup on Rural, Mountainous & Remote Areas  
Development for European territories in all their diversity #RuralEurope  
#RuralVisionEU

📍 Brussels 🌐 [smart-rural-intergroup.eu](http://smart-rural-intergroup.eu) 📅 Joined September 2020

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