

CONCLUSIONS – Clara Aguilera

Co-chair of the Intergroup RUMRA & Smart Villages



The importance of rural areas in Europe

Represent **+80%**
of the territory

29.1% population

Vital for **cohesion policies**

Improve the **well-being** of Europeans

Nature reservoir

The importance of rural areas in Europe

In the COVID-19 context

Many of the **resources** and **products** consumed in cities come from rural areas

They offer **fundamental services** such as the **production of food** through agriculture, but also serve as a **hub for innovation and new business models** in the context of sustainability

They have proven to be a **safe haven** away from the highly populated areas for many Europeans

Rural areas in a global context – Challenges & solutions for rural areas compared to urban areas

Areas with a great **differences** in terms of **income** and **opportunities**



All need development and investment, but not in the same way

Very **heterogeneous** and **depopulated** areas, with **different realities** regarding geography, climate, production models, etc.



Example of "multi-activity"



Lack of basic services



Policies must be adjusted to the different realities

Rural areas in a global context – Challenges & solutions for rural areas compared to urban areas

Key challenge: **equal opportunities** among rural and urban areas with respect to:

➤ Basic services (especially education & health)

➤ Employment opportunities

➤ Digitalisation

➤ Leisure and culture options

Integrated and horizontal vision of rural areas with respect to urban areas

➤ so far policies have been promoted in the most populated areas

➤ Past rural policy was overly focused on agriculture

The importance of rural areas in the fight to stop global warming

rural areas are **more vulnerable** than urban areas to the impact of climate change

The effects of climate change are felt **earlier** and **stronger** in rural areas.

They have a **greater impact on vital sectors** such as agriculture

There is **greater pressure on natural resources** such as soil, water resources, etc.

The importance of rural areas in the fight to stop global warming

Rural areas represent the **best platform for promoting renewable energies** (wind, solar, hydraulic, biomass)

Promotion of the **most sustainable and fairest agricultural policies** to assist an essential sector for the EU - preventing the degradation of the most productive farmland using sustainable production models with a long term perspective.

Multiple economic opportunities for companies and producers in rural areas through an innovative and **resource-efficient Bioeconomy**



Protection of diversity



Reduction of emissions

The European policies we need

Improving **infrastructure** – in particular improving accessibility with an adequate communications and transport network

Offer appropriate services to the population in order to **stop and reverse depopulation**

Creating **opportunities** and **developing new industrial models** in rural areas

Promoting investment
in rural areas

The pandemic has shown that **greater digitalisation** opens up the possibility of working remotely, practically all sectors can find ways to be present in the rural environment.

The European policies we need

Rural woman

Opportunities for young people

A strengthened new CAP

Short supply chains

Horizontal Vision = European rural agenda

➤ **EU Green Deal**

Circular Economy

Integral energy strategy

Artificial Intelligence & Digitalization

Increased citizen participation