Conclusions – Clara Aguilera
Co-chair of the Intergroup RUMRA & Smart Villages
The importance of rural areas in Europe

- Represent +80% of the territory
- Vital for cohesion policies
- 29.1% population
- 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

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

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

Past rural policy was overly focused in the most populated áreas

so far policies have been promoted

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

Creating opportunities and developing new industrial models in rural areas

Promoting investment in rural areas

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

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

- Horizontal Vision = European rural agenda
  - EU Green Deal
  - Short supply chains
- A strengthened new CAP
- Circular Economy
- Rural woman
- Opportunities for young people
- Increased citizen participation
- Integral energy strategy
- Artificial Intelligence & Digitalization