

RURACTIVE Forum

Empowering rural
communities to act for change

17 November 2025



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Welcome!

RURACTIVE Forum second meeting

Serafin Pazos-Vidal

AEIDL

10 February 2025



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Forum guidelines



The session and breakout rooms will be **recorded**.



Please keep your **microphone muted** and **camera on**, but you can turn it off if your internet connection is not optimal.



Rename yourself with your name and last name and organisation, as you registered for the event.



For technical support, write to **Miranda García (AEIDL)** in the chat.

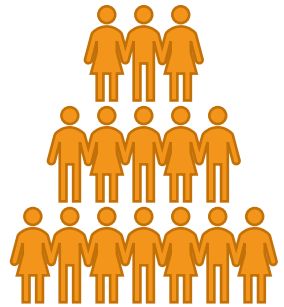


Raise your hand or use the chat if you want to say or ask something.

Your participation is key!

Ask openly questions, clarification, doubts.

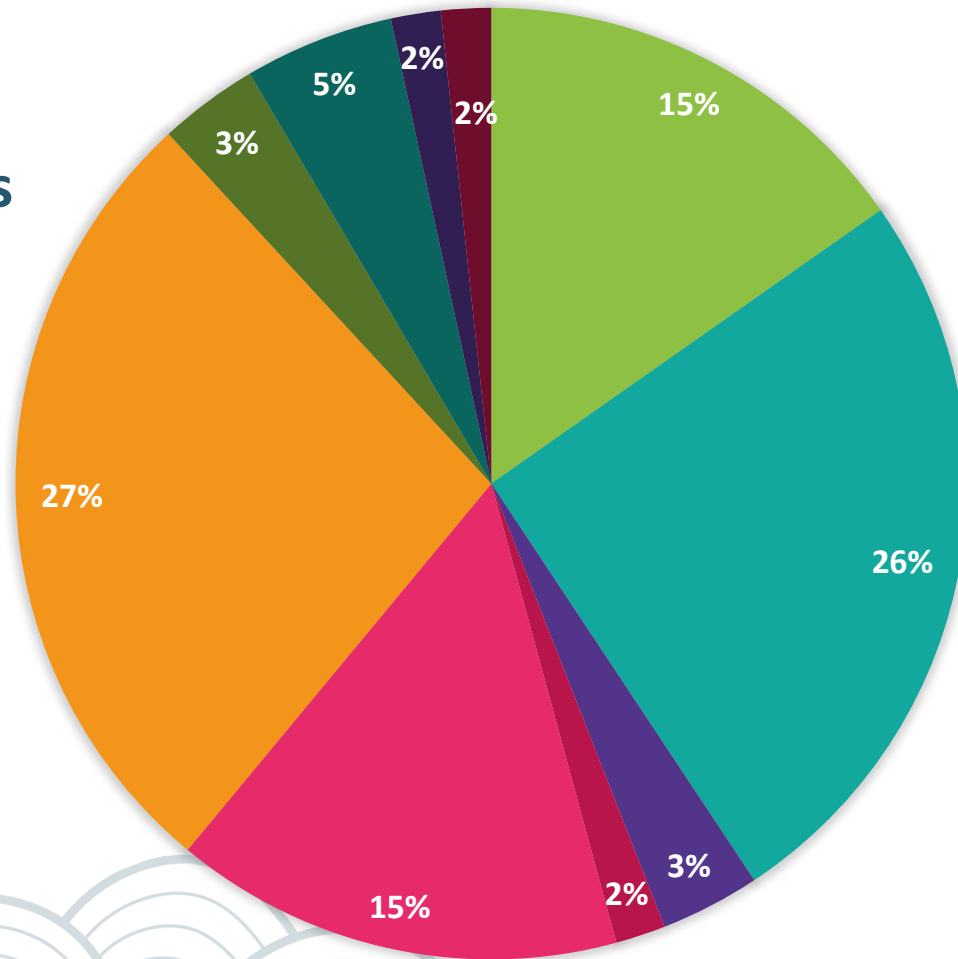
Who has registered today's event?



59 registrations



22 Countries

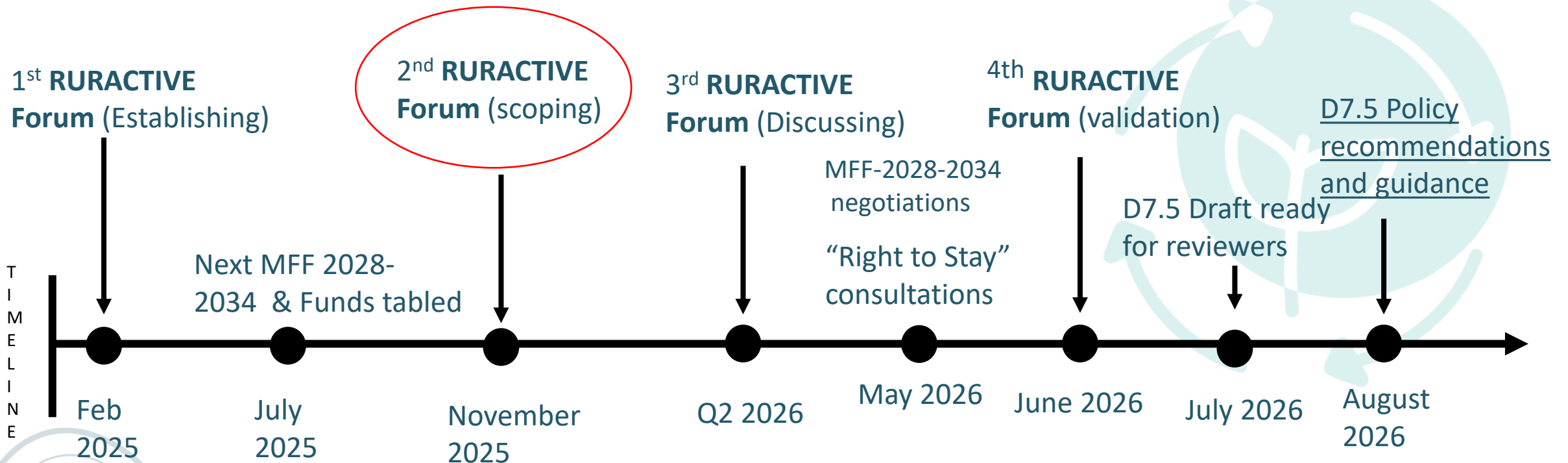


- Public authority/policymaker (local, regional, national)
- Researcher
- Other
- Farmers, producer & producers associations
- Civil Society Organisation (local, regional, national, European)
- NGO (local, regional, national, European)
- Business and rural entrepreneurs
- EU-funded projects (Horizon Europe, LIFE, Interreg, etc.)
- Advisor/Innovation broker/intermediary
- European institutions (EC, EP, EESC, CoR, etc)

RURACTIVE Goals

- The Horizon Europe **RURACTIVE** project, launched in September 2023, aims to foster a just and sustainable transition of rural areas.
- **Goal:**
 - To unlock the innovation potential of rural communities
 - Developing smart, community-led, tailor-made, place based and inclusive solutions,
- To be implemented in 12 pilot areas (**Dynamos**) all over Europe.
- Focus: 6 **Rural Development Drivers**:
 - *sustainable multimodal **mobility**;*
 - ***energy** transition and climate neutrality;*
 - *sustainable **agri-food systems** and ecosystem management;*
 - ***culture** and cultural innovation;*
 - ***local services**, health and wellbeing*
 - *nature-based and cultural **tourism**.*
- Cross cutting: **climate change** mitigation and adaptation, **social justice** and inclusion, and biodiversity.

Policy recommendations and guidance to support smart solutions and community-led innovations



Purpose of the 2nd Forum meeting

- The **RURACTIVE Forum** is a platform for co-creation, knowledge transfer, and experience sharing with key external actors across the EU. The **Forum** will build on RURACTIVE's insights, facilitating discussions among stakeholders, project partners, and policymakers.
- The RURACTIVE Forum is an **iterative process** that will contribute to developing **policy recommendations** on the **6 RDDs**.
 - 1st meeting (February) had a *first discussion* on the topics
 - 2nd meeting (today) considers the implications of *new EU Budget*
 - 3rd meeting (March 2026) will *refine* the ideas
 - 4th meeting (June 2026) will seek to *validate* the Recommendations

2nd RURACTIVE Forum

What are the possible alternatives?

Identifying options

Tabling of draft policies and funds

Ideas for decision makers

Policy context & methodology

- The new EU Term, with the new Commission Political Guidelines and the post 2027 EU Budget provide an opportunity to reconsider **how EU policies promote smart, sustainable and inclusive development in rural areas** and how they can be improved.
- The **MFF 2028-2034** tabled in July 2025 has introduced a change of paradigm of how local and indeed rural areas should be supported by EU -and national- policies.
- AEIDL has been carrying out a series of assessment on **Rural Policy Environments** and the **new MFF**
- Today's 2nd RURACTIVE Forum meeting will adopt a **policy hackathon** format:
 - We will test these initial ideas through collaborative thinking and solution-focused dialogue.
 - This participatory format brings together individuals to jointly address specific challenges, providing a dynamic environment for idea generation, learning, and active stakeholder engagement.
 - First of a series of iterative discussions.

Today's Agenda

Timing	Session	Speaker
09.30	Opening	Serafin Pazos-Vidal, AEIDL
09.45	Latest updates of RURACTIVE project	Francesco Vettore, RURACTIVE project coordinator, UNIBO
10.00	The implications of next MFF regarding policies around sustainable, community-led development	Serafin Pazos-Vidal, AEIDL Janne Sinerma, AEIDL
10.15	Policy hackathon Breakout sessions	All participants
11.00	Break	
11.15	Plenary discussion	All participants
12.00	Closing remarks	AEIDL



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Project presentation

RURACTIVE Forum Second meeting

Francesco Vettore

Unibo

17 November 2025



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The implications of next MFF regarding policies around sustainable, community-led development

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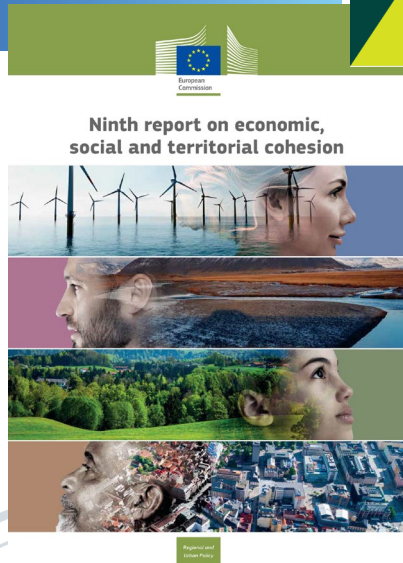
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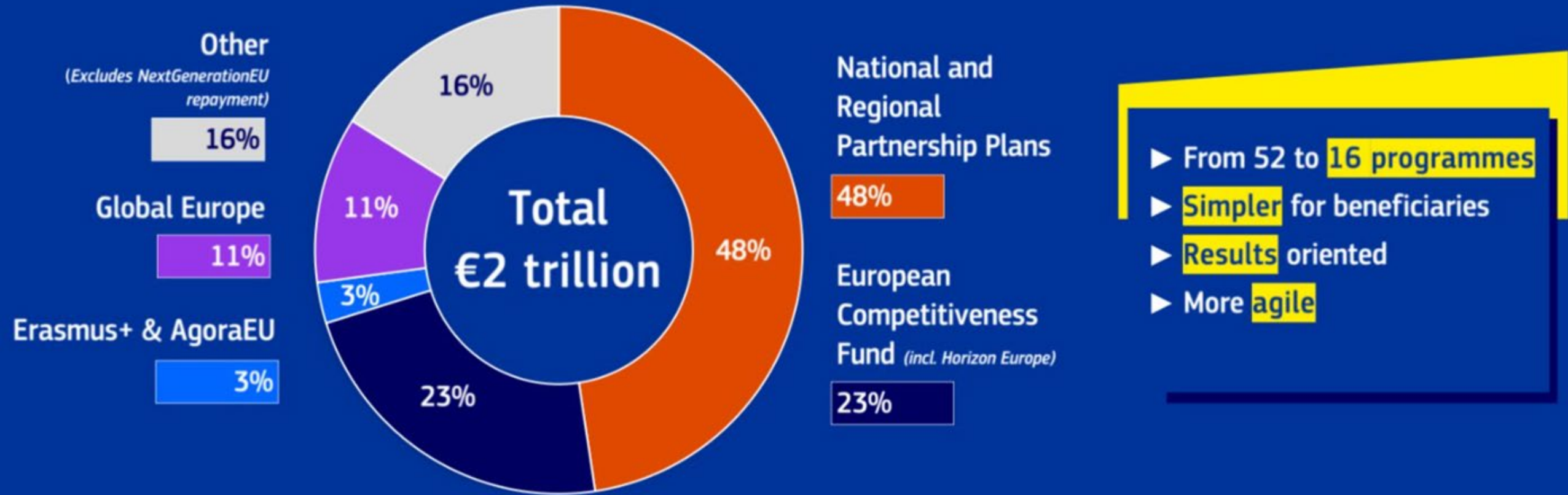
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Future of Europe



A radical restructuring of the EU Budget

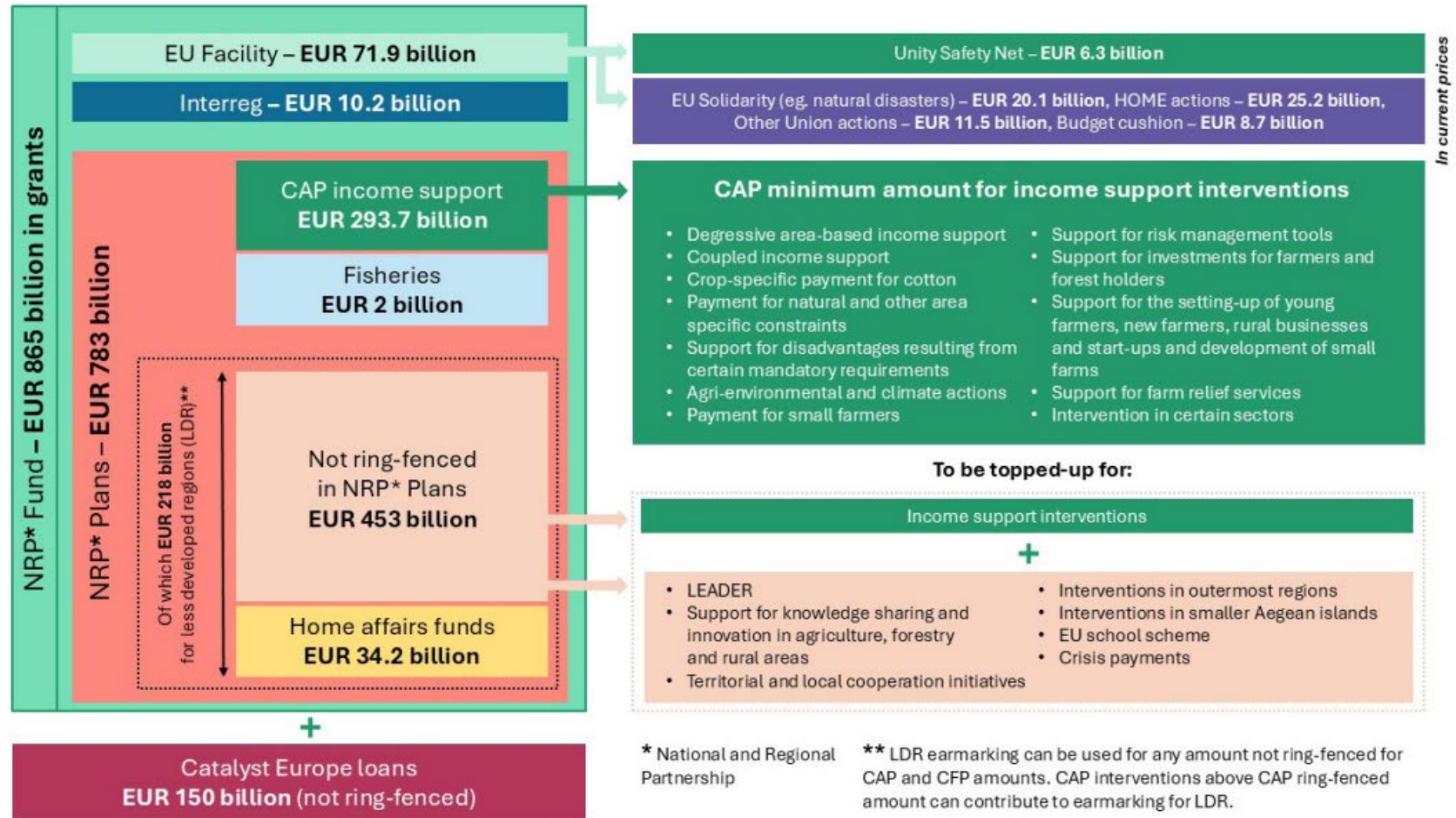
AN AMBITIOUS BUDGET FOR A STRONGER EUROPE 2028-2034



The EU budget shift 2028-2034

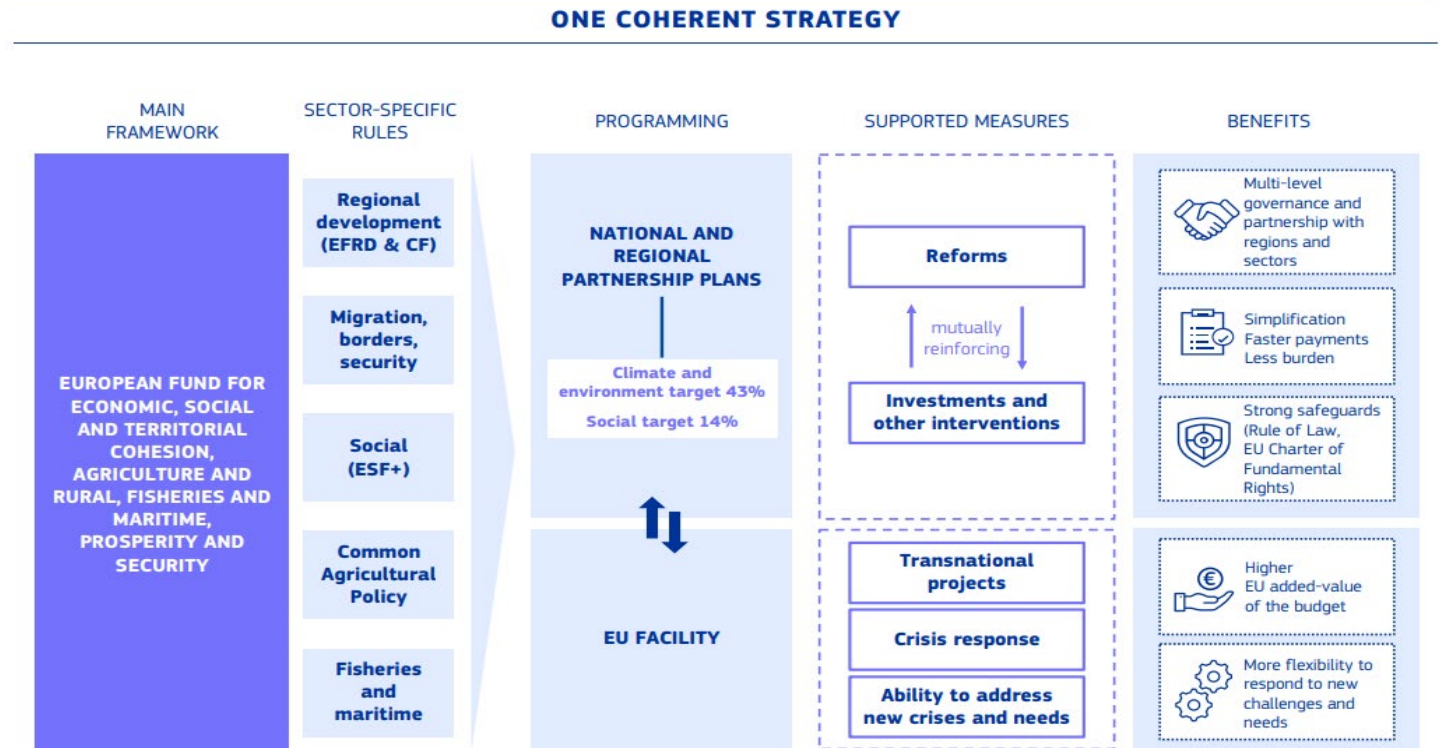
- Radical restructuring of EU policies
- One Plan per Member State (NRPPs)
- CAP Budget (Pillar I farm support) earmark
- New performance framework (output, milestone based)
- Structural Reforms
- No earmark LEADER, Urban

Figure: The CAP within the National and Regional Partnership Fund 2028-2034



National (and Regional) Partnership Plans

- Follows template COVID Recovery and Resilience Facility
- “Performative” Partnership, Right to Stay
- Structural Reforms
- Centralised by default
- Avoid silos between funds supporting Local Development
- Same figures per Member State as in 2027 (2018 costs)
- Rural Development, LEADER, Urban funds available but are optional by Member States



Latest Developments:

- MEP, CoR, EESC, Stakeholder opposition
- Commission suggest changes in proposal
- 10% Rural earmark
- Partnership principle Check
- Regional Chapter Safeguards
- Direct dialogue with Regions

Implications to RURACTIVE 6 RDDs (1/3)

Sustainable multimodal mobility

- Transport funding remains heavily supply-oriented, with strong support for modal coverage and decarbonisation.
- Limited focus on the specific rural mobility needs.
- The new Performance Framework tracks infrastructure and vehicle deployment ...But fails to systematically capture rural realities such as low-density demand, affordability, and accessibility.
- This calls for social sustainability metrics on affordability, accessibility, and rural coverage, plus stronger multimodal coordination to link rural areas to wider mobility networks.

Local services, health and wellbeing

- Addressed through EU funding for research, infrastructure, prevention, and digitalisation.
- However, the proposals prioritise tangible outputs such as equipment, facility size, and digital platforms
- Overlooked outcomes that matter for rural populations (service accessibility, patient satisfaction, and equitable provision).
- For ageing, depopulating rural areas, these gaps risk deepening inequalities.
- Adopting place-based health metrics and integrating wellbeing outcomes into rural investment evaluations could help address them.

Implications to RURACTIVE 6 RDDs (2/3)

Sustainable agri-food and ecosystem management

- The MFF frames ecosystems through both environmental and industrial perspectives, supporting agroecological and digital transitions while fostering synergies across food production, climate resilience, biodiversity, and ecosystem services.
- However, fragmentation across the Common Agricultural Policy, European Competitiveness Fund, and environmental funds may undermine efforts for systemic change.
- The absence of coherent indicators for soil health, resource recycling, and food supply chain resilience is a critical gap, hindering the assessment of rural agri-food sustainability.

Energy transition and climate neutrality

- The proposals focus heavily on renewables, grids, storage, and hydrogen, positioning rural areas as key sites for energy generation and carbon sequestration.
- However, the new Performance Framework emphasizes supply-side capacity (such as MW installed, km of networks) over demand-side considerations and distributional equity, with energy poverty, affordability, and behavioural change largely unmonitored.
- This risks reinforcing rural inequalities if transition benefits are not fairly shared.
- Opportunities exist to embed indicators on affordability, energy poverty reduction, biodiversity impacts, and job transitions in energy-intensive rural sectors.

Implications to RURACTIVE 6 RDDs (3/3)

Culture and cultural innovation

- Support for culture is included in the MFF proposals, with strong indicators on participation, gender, and cross-border cooperation.
- However, rural cultural ecosystems remain undervalued, as indicators continue to prioritise quantitative outputs over qualitative resilience.
- Measures of fair working conditions, income diversity for artists, and the role of digital innovations in expanding access are missing.
- Without these, rural cultural initiatives risk being viewed solely through the lens of tourism or urban regeneration.

Nature-based and cultural tourism

- Tourism indicators are still largely limited to visitor counts and employment
- This risks promoting overtourism and overlooking deeper measures of rural impact.
- The MFF proposals largely treat cultural heritage as an economic resource, rather than recognising its potential as a lever for sustainability.
- For rural areas, this risks prioritising quantity over quality in tourism development.
- Opportunity to align EU tourism support with green and social goals by using place-sensitive indicators on inclusiveness, accessibility, and resilience to crises.



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Policy Hackathon

RURACTIVE Forum Second meeting

Janne Sinerma, AEIDL

10 February 2025



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Introduction to breakout sessions

This session will be divided into the 6 RURACTIVE Rural Development Drivers (RDDs):

- Sustainable multimodal mobility
- Local services, health and wellbeing
- Sustainable agrifood and ecosystem management
- Energy transition and climate neutrality
- culture and cultural innovation
- Nature based and cultural tourism

- In each breakout session, a RURACTIVE facilitator presents the **challenge statement(s) and questions** (general & MFF focused, shared with the participants beforehand) that will be discussed among participants.
- **Each breakout room will select rapporteurs**, who are asked to take notes and report back in the plenary discussion following.
- Open, facilitated discussion will follow, allowing attendees to raise any specific questions and offer their inputs regarding the challenge statement(s). (45')



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BREAK

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Plenary discussion

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Breakout Reporters

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Closing remarks

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