

ERP-Gathering Kielce

Number of the workshop 4: **Future of Rural Europe**

General challenges for the future: The group agreed on actual concerns and challenges on security, climate, democracy, rights, energy/foodpoverty insights and that strong preventive and reactive actions are needed.

Workshop discussions and responses to rural challenges:

- Lack of leaders: more animation and capacity building
- Existing divisions eg. rural-urban, farming-rural development, bigger vs smaller actors to
- Governments don't listen. Lobbies still dominate: local shall become a partner
- Depopulation. Young people to stay in rural areas: real opportunities, not only talk
- Essential services – Same taxes, same services, same return dilemma. Should essential services be public?
- Equal treatment: services, teleworking solutions, housing
- Funding flows: programmes and funding should better reach local areas and ensure that they stay in the local area. Better Inclusion of local actors in the programmes through partnership mechanisms. More funding to action, action research.
- Local economies, food: shorter chains, favorable energy solutions, increased cooperation at local level.
- Short-term thinking is not enough. Long-term solutions are to be looked at and preferably at all levels.
- One national policy does not fit all: diversity to be respected through flexible regulations and decentralisation schemes.
- Rural citizens matter

Our three proposals for governments & EU (acknowledging the diversity of rural areas)

- Involve and include rural, local: policies, programmes, funding, planning, implementing, evaluating wherever it brings added value to the society.
- There are functional economic, social, environmental aso. territories also at local level: take them onboard
- More decentralized, citizen and youth friendly solutions for rural areas

Good ideas, practices, processes

- We need investments for the future of local territories – the welcoming structures like decentralised smaller education units, kindergartens. teleworking, infra...
- Capacity building efforts should be increased. ERP organisations ERCA, PREPARE and ELARD would be good placed to act.