



**webinar series
2025**

A new architecture of EU policies and funds post-2027 – what place for local development? – part 3, 4 December 2025

Key points of the debate from the perspective of rural and local stakeholders

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Key concerns about the EC proposals:

- Centralisation of decision-making at national level – risk of losing the regional and local dimension
- Too much flexibility at MS level – can increase inequalities
- Needs of certain types of territories (especially rural) not explicitly safeguarded – competition from stronger players (farmers, urban interests...)
- EU area-based tools (LEADER/CLLD, Smart Villages...) not prioritised in spite of recognised success

Centralisation of decision-making at national level

- One programme per MS (although it has „national and regional” in name)
- A step back compared to current Cohesion Policy (national programming in rural development already from 2023-2027)?
- Key decisions not only about the amount of funding but eligibility conditions, performance indicators...
- Risk to break existing linkages between regional and local levels
- Partnership principle still mandatory – but how to enforce/monitor it?

Too much flexibility at MS level

- Requested by many stakeholders, including rural and local organisations
- Too much of a good thing?
- Need to safeguard common European values
- Capacity of national administrations & cooperation culture differ greatly between MS
- Risk of deepening imbalances

Needs of certain types of territories not safeguarded

- Notably rural (but also mountainous, islands, remote...)
- Legitimate concern
- Dilemma: a separate policy or horizontal across all policies?
- Ring-fencing (or spending target):
 - One-size-fits-all
 - Definition of „rural“
 - Monitoring & enforcement
- Administrators vs. „rural proofers“

EU area-based tools not prioritised

- LEADER – a „European success story“, in post-2027 mandatory in areas with specific disadvantages, no ring-fencing
- LEADER, CLLD, Smart Villages: underutilised potential, inconsistencies in provisions – a „mainstreaming failure“?
- Mandatory ring-fencing
- Other methods: higher EU co-financing rates, guidance/recommendations, capacity building...

Some thoughts

- Open discussion about EU policies: what should be supported and why?
- Open recognition of differences in MS capacity
- Focus on what rural/local areas have to offer, not why they need support



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