

# [A European interfund to finance the integrated development of rural regions](#)

Against the background of ongoing discussions about the EU's next financial framework, the European Committee of the Regions and the international organisation [Rurality-Environment-Development](#) (RED) met at a conference in Brussels on 19 March to talk about funding the integrated development of rural regions. They called on the European institutions to set up an interfund for rural development.

Pointing to the substantial development gap between rural and urban regions, **Guillaume Cros (FR/PES)**, vice-president of the Regional Council of Occitanie and Committee of the Regions rapporteur on the CAP post-2020, called on the EU to harmonise the operating rules of the Structural Funds through the common strategic framework so as to facilitate the planning and management of rural development and encourage integrated and regional approaches.

**G rard Peltre**, president of RED and of the European Countryside Movement, noted that it was crucial to recognise the diversity of rural regions and their importance in terms of achieving the EU's territorial cohesion objectives. However, recent figures showed a lack of funding for rural regions, which made it even more urgent to establish a functioning strategic and financial framework – a European Rural Agenda – to support the integrated development of rural regions. “We call for an interfund to be set up to promote the development of rural regions”, Mr Peltre announced.

**Franz Bogovitch**, MEP and vice-president of the [European Parliament Intergroup on Rural, Mountainous and Remote Areas \(RUMRA\)](#), observed that despite territorial cohesion being mentioned in the Lisbon Treaty, the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) could be used more effectively to reduce inequalities, for instance through an instrument funded under all EU policies.

In their statements and discussions the participants called for a new European political and the financial framework to support territorial cohesion measures that would help all regions while and also supporting integrated sustainable development of rural regions.

The speakers felt that such a framework should be established by implementing a European Rural Agenda and setting up an interfund for rural regions, as a practical response to the budgetary context and the need to optimise the use of funding across all EU policies. These instruments would also address the rural-urban imbalance and strengthen rural-agricultural cooperation. These proposals of the Rurality-Environment-Development and the European Countryside Movement have already been embraced by many European and national players.

**Further information:**

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