

# Closer to the rural citizen

ERP – people, communities, partnerships

And

LEADER/CLLD

## What is ERP?

People → NGO/Association → National organisations → National networking → National Rural Parliaments → European networks → European Rural Parliament

## What are we?

- A genuine rural people's and communities voice: communication, information, advocacy and policy work
- An informal network, platform, partnership (advocacy, projects, themes) and friendship
- Mostly voluntarily built with some project funding SPARCE, ROAD

[www.europeanruraparliament.com](http://www.europeanruraparliament.com)

## THE CONTEXT OF RURAL CITIZEN IN EUROPE/EU

Activity pyramid

Interest in (do I care?)

Should I know (EU)

NIMBYism and COMBYism



NOTBYism and COTBYism

If I am active...

Neoendogenous – 4th sector

Am I really listened to

Can I participate

Am I considered as partner

## REACHING OUT TO EU (rural) CITIZENS Oct 2017

Luc Van den Brande as Special Adviser on Outreach Towards Citizens. October 2017 (Venhorst)

- ‘Either we succeed in bringing the European citizens closer to Europe — **or** we will fail’
- ”...a new attitude, in line with the ‘**openness**’ acting with a mindset of ‘open government’, appealing to **citizens as an equal partner**”
- ”Members of the general public are concerned about global issues such as migration, terrorism, security and economic and social insecurity”
- ”Citizens perceive their lives to be in the hands of an ‘**alien**’ ruler”
- ”The EU must place **citizens at the centre of its political action**”
- ”**cooperation among EU institutions and other levels of governance public authorities that attempt to integrate citizens’ know-how into the decision-making (policy-making) process, including through social media platforms**”

Solutions: EU, ERP, LEADER/CLLD



## Context

EU, governments, regions, municipalities, national NGO's, LEADER groups, local NGO's, local people, consultant NGO's, research...

1. Where is the real contact and reach to rural people?
2. What is the reality of contact with rural people? Words vs action
3. Getting closer to its rural Citizens: How close? On what issues we want to get closer and why? What is it we can give?

# Solutions: EU, ERP, LEADER/CLLD



## EU (Van der Brande paper)

**A new generation of partnerships – “getting as close as possible people’s day-to-day concerns”**

- “trigger and foster a **new dialogue directly** with the people”.
- “The EU needs to fully recognise and exploit the know-how of civil society **representatives**”
- “**Regions** also play a growing role in rethinking governance, **(Right scale?)** for policy orientations and adequate delivery in many policy areas, as they are important actors and intermediaries in the outreach to citizens
- **Agenda-setting needs to be clearly bottom-up**, letting citizens co-decide in a reformed model that builds consensus from below
- **Horizontal civil dialogue** (TEU art11) ‘The institutions shall, give citizens and representative associations the opportunity to make known and publicly exchange their views in all areas of Union action
- **The vertical civil dialogue** (Art 11(2) TEU): maintain an open, transparent and regular dialogue with representative associations and civil society: Dialogues, initiatives, EDIC’s, **Connection to EP-** question-time
- The **fragmentary, lobbyist-dominated** character of vertical civil dialogue needs to be **replaced** and opened up to include input from the general public

# Solutions: EU, ERP, LEADER/CLLD

## EU: Van der Brande paper

- **"citizens must 'own'** the European project — their project — and they need to feel that they are welcome to take an active part in the policymaking process. Using respective languages and keeping it simple.
- Services, expertise, value creation, communication and governance of **European networks** provide an **important supportive role** to the EU institutions and to citizens.
- **Platforms:** (permanent discussing platforms, democratic innovation platforms Create a permanent discussion platform between the European Commission and citizens'.
- **Bottom-up, decentralised 'citizens' assemblies'** sustained as a collective process of reflection on the values that consolidate a community. Such assemblies could be organised in different **Member States or regions**, and also as **transregional** ones, with a view to bringing citizens' proposals together.
- Involve **'non-organised citizens'**, as well as organised movements, in order to discuss essential societal issues, with potential submission to public authorities for further development.
- Create **a European Foundation**, for a better understanding between the EU and its citizens supported by the EU, Member States, companies and private persons with animation activities.
- Other: communication campaign on EU and possibilities to participate and better use of social media.

# Solutions: EU, ERP, LEADER/CLLD



Getting closer to the citizen

## **LEADER/CLLD**

- Support bottom-up development place-based strategies
- Support to community/NGO and people friendly and inclusive strategies
- Simplified structures and financing (Earmarking?)
- Connecting and cooperating with communities and people's NGO's
- Cooperation with national and European actors making advocacy for rural people and communities

**As LEADER/CLLD** does not cover all of rural Europe and not all strategies will be community/people friendly

- Support the initiation and development of LEADER/CLLD in new countries and areas
- PREPARE has supported, informed and helped in countries with LEADER/CLLD in pre-accession countries and continues promoting it
- ERP has supported the development of LEADER/CLLD in common advocacy efforts and will do so in the future



# Solutions: EU, ERP, LEADER/CLLD



Getting closer to the citizen

## **Partnerships and participation**

- ERP sees clear advantages in a partnership between LEADER/CLLD-actors and community actors
- ERP sees that a good coverage of rural citizen's views, concerns may lead to potential policy suggestions or citizens (simplified) initiatives would come from a partnership between ERP co-initiating bodies (ELARD, ERCA, PREPARE) and EU institutions, supported by research and digital platform facilities. This would be a two-way communication process.
- The idea of an European Foundation seems interesting to follow-up

## **Financing tools**

- ERP welcomes easy and simplified financing tools for people as local developers and for close to day-to-day concerns (community infrastructure, wifi4U, local environmental issues).
- ERP welcomes the new ERASMUS ideas on funding permitting exchanges between community actors as well.