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**PRESS RELEASE**

### **Cuts to rural development budget unacceptable**

The Rural Coalition and Coalition of European Agriregions deem the recently proposed cut to rural development funding to be unacceptable and call on the policy-makers to review this approach ahead of the summit on 20<sup>th</sup> February. Europe's rural areas and rural communities face existential threats due to rural exodus and an increasing urban-rural divide and cutting this financial lifeline would make this situation even more dire.

The two groups that gather organisations representing rural actors and regions in the EU highlighted this during the 'Amplifying local voices: Addressing rural development in the CAP post 2020' event at the Representation of the Free State of Bavaria to the EU.

Hosted by MEPs Simone Schmiedtbauer (EPP, AT), Paolo De Castro (S&D, IT) and Jérémy Decerle (Renew Europe, FR), the event brought together representatives of rural local actors – farmers, forest owners, rural value chain actors, landowners, hunters and regional authorities – as well as EU decision-makers and representatives from civil society organisations.

Speakers drew attention to the importance of involving rural actors and local authorities in policy-making processes in order to develop successful bottom-up and community-led interventions tailored to local needs. The importance of creating synergies between EU rural development funds and the sustainable and active management of rural areas was highlighted. This is required to guarantee the long-term viability of Europe's rural areas, including generational renewal, and to address major challenges.

Speaking at the event, Jannes Maes, the President of CEJA said: *“Rural areas are the heart and soul of the EU. They are invaluable in their economic, environmental and social contributions and must not be left behind. In this regard, we cannot accept the cuts to the crucial rural development support. If policy-makers do indeed want to live up to their promise of preserving vibrant rural areas, they need to at least maintain the funding as well”.*

Olivier Allain, Vice-President of the Brittany Region in charge of agriculture, echoed: *“It is crucial to stress the importance of collaboration between rural stakeholders and agricultural regions when achieving common goals and adapting the policy framework to our needs. However, this cannot be done without a strong rural development budget in the CAP post 2020. This is the only chance for us to succeed when striving for dynamic rural areas.”*

The Rural Coalition and Coalition of European Agriregions further outlined their requests in an [open letter](#) published today.

ENDS

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### Coalition of European Agiregions

[Açores, Andalusia, Autonomous Province of Bolzano – South Tyrol, Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes, Baden-Württemberg, Bavaria, Bretagne, Castilla y León, Emilia-Romagna, Extremadura, Lombardia, Nouvelle Aquitaine, Pays de la Loire, Toscana, Wielkopolska]

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