



# Intergroup Newsletter

May 2021

## Overview

The Secretariat is happy to present you the activities carried out by our Intergroup and its members over the past month. In this second edition of the Newsletter you will find relevant information concerning:

- Upcoming events – **SAVE THE DATE!**
- SmartVillages Project by Interreg Alpine Space
- Reports: Silver SMEs Conference & CEMR event on the Long-term vision for rural areas
- MEPs' Corner
- Member's Corner
- Calendar

## Upcoming Events – **SAVE THE DATE!**

### □ **[NEW DATE] Webinar by the FREE Initiative – Rural Energy: Mind the Gap!**

The FREE initiative is organising a series of webinars, focused on informing Accredited Parliamentary Assistants (APAs) and members of the Intergroup on **key rural energy challenges** and potential solutions.

The first webinar will be hosted by **MEP Bogovic**. It will focus on filling in the rural energy data gap by presenting [a study on rural energy challenges](#) conducted across 10 EU Members

States. A panel discussion will follow to answer all your questions about the specific energy needs of rural areas!

[Register here](#)



□ **Event with EU40 on Promoting Regional Funding**

MEP Nienass will host a Roundtable event, together with EU40, on how to maximise the potential of the Community-led local development (CLLD) system developed by the European Commission. ENRD, ELARD, DG AGRI and DG REGIO will participate to the panel discussion.

[Register for the event](#)



## Intergroup News

### □ MEPs Isabel García Muñoz and Herbert Dorfmann join the Intergroup

We are delighted to inform you that MEP Isabel García Muñoz (ES, S&D) and MEP Herbert Dorfmann (IT, EPP) have become members of the Intergroup.



### □ New video on Smart Villages and Prospects for EU Rural Areas

The European Parliament Research Services (EPRS), the EP think tank, has released a [video](#) explaining the concept of Smart Villages. It summarizes the findings of their briefing on [Smart villages: Concept, issues and prospects for EU rural areas](#) published on March 1<sup>st</sup> 2021. More information is available on our [website](#).

### □ The SmartVillages Project by Interreg Alpine Space has been implemented for three years

Discover the Compendium of the Interreg Alpine Space SmartVillages project, which showcases the results after three years of implementation of the project. The Smart Village approach for mountain and rural areas is intended to unlock the potential of local players to make their region a more attractive place to live and work. See the full compendium [here](#).



### □ The European Commission launches the Atlas of Demography (AoD)

The [Atlas of Demography](#), launched on 29 April, is a new interactive knowledge [management tool](#) that enables policy-makers and citizens to observe, monitor and anticipate demographic challenges. It aims at

informing several policy areas – such as health, labour, education, access to services and amenities, territorial and cohesion policies, to name a few – with timely, robust, comparable demographic data and knowledge at the finest level of geographical detail (down to the level of a single municipality). Read more [here](#).





## EU Policy Update

### □ EESC - The future of Europe will depend on how we deal with rural areas

Europe's rural and urban territories are not developing evenly. It is critical to foster policies that curb this trend, ensure a fair and sustainable transition to a wellbeing economy in all areas and promote population rebalancing. This was one of the most important conclusions drawn from the debate on "[Towards a holistic strategy](#)



[on sustainable rural and urban development](#)", held by the NAT Section (Agriculture, Rural Development and the Environment) of the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) on 8 March and involving a wide variety of stakeholders and policy-makers. Read more [here](#).

## MEPs' Corner

### □ MEP Hannes Heide visits Schloss Eggenberg Brewery in Upper Austria



The Brewery Schloss Eggenberg exists since 1681 and has about 100 employees. Beside traditional brews the company also creates internationally known special beers. MEP Hannes Heide visited the brewery and was especially interested about the experiences of funding from the European Cohesion Policy. Breweries are an important factor to boost regional economic development, as they create jobs and support the regional restaurants,

pubs and hotels. The brewery invested in the last years in new production halls, machines and energy reduction, which was financially supported by the European Fund for Regional Development (EFRE). CEO Hubert Stöhr explained their experiences with cohesions funds and the high bureaucracy and complex access. Other main topics of discussion were sustainability and regional policies, but also the culture of beer und pubs.



□ **Participation of MEP Hannes Heide at an Interreg-Workshop on Quality Tourism and Sustainability in the Alpine region**

The Interreg project likes to develop a comprehensive and interregional concept for quality tourism in the Alps. The workshop with tourism consultant Mr. Richard Bauer took place at the Johannes Kepler University in Linz, Upper Austria. Tourism experts from the tourism regions St. Wolfgang,



Berchtesgadener Land and Wagrain-Kleinarl worked on answering the question, “*how can and should sustainable quality tourism look like and how could the criteria be put into concrete measures?*” The interactive workshop brought forward many insightful ideas and input, how sustainable tourism could look like in the future. [Read more here.](#)

□ **MEP Hannes Heide discusses with Commissioner Elisa Ferreira the new Cohesion Policy**

In an online discussion of the Austrian Renner Institute with Commissioner Elisa Ferreira, MEP Andreas Schieder, Vienna municipal councillor Peter Florianschütz and MEP Hannes Heide, it became once more clear that the European Cohesion Policy is a success story. MEP Hannes Heide



emphasised the need of flexibility, easy access, less bureaucracy, but also transparency of the new Cohesion Policy. Europe’s regions need a better social, digital, educational and public infrastructure to guarantee jobs and well-being. Brexit showed that the future of the European Union is decided in the regions, not in the urban areas. Hence, Europe must not leave any region behind. The people must “feel” Europe in the regions through projects funded by the cohesion policy.

□ **Read the article by MEP Engin Eroglu on “Advantages of Big Data AI for Smart Villages”**

The analysis and use of Big Data is increasingly becoming the focus of public attention. Big Data refers to data volumes that are too large, too complex, too fast-moving or too weakly structured to be analysed using manual and conventional data processing methods. Unfortunately, the term Big Data is still far too often associated with negative aspects such as fears of a lack of data protection or insufficient regulation (...). Find the full article [on our website!](#)

## Members' Corner

### □ **Euromontana – [Press Release](#) – Commissioner Suica at SILVER SMEs conference**

On 21 April 2021, Euromontana organised an online conference on the challenges and solutions to cope with ageing in rural Europe co-organised with the Provincial Government of Teruel, in the framework of the Interreg Europe [SILVER SMEs](#) project. Commissioner Suica and MEP Isabel García Muñoz welcomed the opportunities offered to rural areas under the new programming period. Read the full press release on our [website](#).



### □ **Euromontana – Publication – How to improve mountain grasslands?**

In April 2021, [OREKA MENDIAN](#) project published a [booklet of good practices](#) showcasing 31 inspiring examples for the sustainable management of mountain grasslands gathered across 18 European countries. These good practices will inspire farmers, breeders and other local actors to increase the biodiversity of mountain grasslands, tackled climate change impacts and better market their products, among many others.



### □ **ELARD – Paper – Rural Semester as a tool to deliver a truly holistic policy for rural areas**

On the occasion of the [Europe Day](#), ELARD highlights their paper on the idea of a Rural Semester. ELARD with some other actors were involved and developed the proposal for a Rural Semester together with the Jacques Delors Institute. The paper argues that the rural dimension should be included in the Rural Semester, and presents its content and required launch conditions. Read the full [document here](#).

## Events

We are always keen to share your news and actions, so feel free to reach out should you have anything to share! **Please let us know your events related to the Intergroup topics for the next newsletter!**

### Past Events

- **21 April – Euromontana – Conference on challenges and solutions to cope with ageing in rural Europe**

Commissioner Šuica reaffirmed the opportunities to tackle demographic change in rural and mountainous areas at the SILVER



SMEs conference organised on 21 April. The conference was held the same day as closure of the public consultation on the Green Paper on Ageing and just before the publication by the European Commission of its Long-Term Vision for Rural Areas in June. [Read the press release](#) and [discover the presentations and report of the event.](#)

- **4 May - CEMR event: A long-term vision for rural areas - What key priorities for local governments?**

On 4 May, CEMR held its event: A long-term vision for rural areas - What key priorities for local governments? They presented local perspectives on this issue from the governments with the most direct experience and interest: municipalities and regions. Local elected politicians, MEPs and EU officials exchanged and shared their views on how to make the most of Europe's rural areas. More information is available [here](#).



### Upcoming Members' Events – **SAVE THE DATE!**

- **27 May – EUROMONTANA – Webinar on Climate adaptation: what opportunities for mountain businesses?**

Euromontana is hosting the third webinar of their Smart mountains series on [“Climate adaptation: what opportunities for mountain businesses?”](#) on **27<sup>th</sup> May 2021** from 14.00 to 15.45 (Brussels time). Join their event to find out! [→](#)

[Programme](#)  [Registration form](#)





## Twitter

- We kindly invite you to follow our [Twitter handle](#) and to interact with our publications.



- We are proud as well to share with you the **most successful tweet of the month**. The tweet, sharing Euromontana's press release generated 1472 impressions and 34 total engagements.

