



European Leader Association
for Rural Development
Brussels, www.elard.eu

POLISH
PRESIDENCY
2025-2026



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Łagów, March 31st, 2025

Subject: Strengthening LEADER/CLLD in the post-2027 framework – request for a meeting

Dear Commissioner Hansen,

Thank you for your response to our letter and for your strong commitment to supporting rural areas and participatory local development. We deeply appreciate your recognition of the crucial role that LAGs and LEADER/CLLD play in fostering economic resilience, social cohesion, and democratic engagement in rural Europe. Your emphasis on cooperation, territorial approaches, and simplification aligns closely with our vision, and we value your openness to continued dialogue.

We have been closely following your exchanges with members of the European Parliament on the Vision for Agriculture and Food, and we are pleased to see that we share common ground on the importance of strengthening LEADER/CLLD in the future policy framework. Now is the time to turn these shared priorities into action.

Since our initial letter, we have further developed concrete recommendations on how to reinforce LEADER/CLLD as a key territorial governance tool within the post-2027 multiannual financial framework (MFF). In line with your priorities, these recommendations focus on:

- To make participatory rural development tools mandatory across all EU member states in the next multiannual financial framework (MFF), ensuring that leader/CLLD remains a core pillar of EU territorial policies.
- Ensuring financial stability for LAGs by securing a stronger and more predictable allocation for LEADER across multiple EU funds.
- Expanding LEADER/CLLD beyond the Common Agricultural Policy to fully integrate it into the cohesion policy, the Just Transition Fund, and digitalisation initiatives under the EU's strategic priorities.
- Simplifying the implementation of multi-fund CLLD by harmonising the regulatory framework across all EU funds, with unified rules for financial management, auditing, and reporting. This simplification would greatly reduce the administrative burden on LAGs and managing authorities, making multi-fund implementation more efficient, fair, and accessible across the EU
- Empowering LAGs as key territorial governance actors, enabling them to play a more structured role in rural crisis response, digital transformation, and the green transition. LAGs are also instrumental in fighting disinformation and strengthening democratic participation in rural areas -whether internal, coastal, insular, mountainous or remote. By fostering direct engagement between EU institutions and local communities, they contribute to countering euroscepticism and ensuring that rural citizens remain connected to the European project. Given the increasing spread of misinformation in rural and peripheral areas, supporting LAGs as trusted, community-based actors is essential to building resilience against disinformation





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Furthermore, we would like to highlight that LEADER/CLLD is not only vital for EU member states but also plays a crucial role in neighbouring and candidate countries. It serves as a tested and effective instrument for strengthening democratic governance, building local capacities, and fostering economic and social cohesion in regions undergoing transition. As the EU seeks to deepen its relationships with candidate and partner countries, reinforcing LEADER/CLLD within the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA) and other external funding mechanisms could further contribute to stability, democratic engagement, and sustainable development.

Given the alignment of our priorities, we would greatly appreciate the opportunity to meet with you and your team to discuss these recommendations in more detail. As active participants in the European Board of Agriculture and Food (EBAF), we also look forward to continuing our engagement in this forum and to the next meeting.

In parallel to our institutional advocacy, we are currently launching a Europe-wide petition to gather public and stakeholder support for these proposals. You may find the petition text here: https://elard.eu/petition_en/

We remain fully committed to working together to ensure that rural Europe receives the attention and resources it deserves. We look forward to your response and hope to arrange a meeting at your earliest convenience.

Yours sincerely,

Piotr Sadłocha
President of ELARD

