

StayOn_

A more inclusive, active
and creative world!

MANIFESTO OF THE EUROPEAN RURAL YOUTH ALLIANCE



stay-on.eu



BACKGROUND / CONTEXT

Across the diverse landscapes of Europe, rural areas in Greece, Ireland, Portugal, Italy, Poland, Slovenia, and Germany exhibit distinct challenges and opportunities. As the cradles of cultural heritage, reservoirs of natural beauty, and hubs of agricultural inventiveness, these regions are invaluable. However, they often wrestle with issues like depopulation, restricted access to modern technologies, and economic stagnation, which are part of broader challenges faced by rural areas in Europe.

The youth in these regions, although brimming with talent and ambition, frequently encounter hurdles towards employment, entrepreneurship and training. Here's an elucidation based on country-specific scenarios:

In Greece, despite its rich agricultural tradition, a common trend is the migration of young individuals to urban centers, driven by a perceived scarcity of opportunities in rural settings.

Ireland's rural communities, abundant in potential, have witnessed a consistent migration of youth to urban areas in search of better prospects.

Poland and Slovenia, endowed with extensive rural landscapes, require innovative solutions to retain and empower their youth amidst common challenges like demographic decline, low income levels, and limited economic opportunities.

Portugal, Italy, and Germany, each grappling with its unique rural challenges, are in search of avenues to rejuvenate their countryside through youth engagement, aligning with broader European efforts to invigorate rural areas by harnessing digital technologies and promoting rural entrepreneurship.

Given this panorama, the establishment of the European Rural Youth Alliance is not only timely but essential. It aspires to harmonize efforts across these nations, leveraging shared experiences and best practices to envision a brighter future for rural youth.

This alliance is "born" out of StayOn, a project financed by the EEA & Norway Grants Fund for Youth Employment.

PREAMBLE / INTRODUCTION

①

We recognize the vibrant tapestry of Europe's rural regions and young generation as the beacon of hope - activism, participation and creativity. We do so by listening to and taking seriously their needs and aspirations.

②

We believe in the transformative power of human potential and commit to uplift and empower rural youth. We do so by building relationships of trust and empathy trying to center their real needs

③

We connect communities with the purpose to equip young people with soft and hard skills to achieve their goals. We do so by crafting opportunities for learning, connecting and establishing channels to communicate.

④

We nurture in all our partnerships and communities the values of sharing and friendship. We do so through the ways in which we lead as well as participate with others.

⑤

We invest in flourishing European rural ecosystems. We do so by connecting stakeholders to create bottom-up opportunities and top-down awareness to motivate the youth to actively co-create our sustainable future.

⑥

We respect the wealth of diverse rural traditions passed down to us by our ancestors. We do so by integrating the culture elements in our programs and approaches.

⑦

We imagine an international community of doers that actively contribute to sustainable development. We do so by supporting community-led development, collaborative knowledge sharing and international cooperation.

⑧

We support progress, new technologies and innovation, and believe that when implemented by young people in rural communities, will improve the economic situation in regions and make a positive contribution to climate change.

FOUNDING PARTNERS

The European Rural Youth Alliance is proud to have been conceived by a consortium of visionary entities, each bringing its unique strengths, insights, and expertise to the table.

1 REZOS BRANDS ANONYMI EMPORIKI ETERIA IDON DIATROFIS

(Greece) Rezos Brand's R&D Department is actively engaged and dedicated to the training of young agriculturists, workers, students, and unemployed in an effective, rational, systematic, and well-coordinated manner, which will breed a new generation who will develop significant expertise, professional and competitive skills in agriculture and digital-related issues accompanied by environmentally friendly cultivating approaches. Being an expert in ICT and innovative pedagogies integration into education policy, offering ICT-based CPD and providing resources for teaching, learning and assessment, the department has been involved in various training related projects under different funding schemes. In the StayOn project, Rezos Brands is both coordinating and one of the appointed partners to implement the "Community-based development approach", a core implementation model activity that aims at fostering youth empowerment providing adequate skills for the rural labour market, such as digital skills, abilities to manage environmental impacts, and personal development.

2 MEATH COMMUNITY RURAL AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIP LIMITED (Ireland)

Meath Partnership is county-wide community local development company with charitable status, operating on non-profit basis since 2006. It is a dynamic organisation to deliver a range of rural, social and economic programmes at local level across County Meath.

Through these programmes, we provide support and assistance to private individuals and community groups active at local level through capital grant aid, technical assistance, guidance and mentoring, information and support, training opportunities and development initiatives. We are constantly updating and improving the range of services and supports we provide to meet the needs of our customers and clients. Our main mission is to provide the people of the county with the greatest possible engagement opportunities in the process of positive change. Related to Stay On project, Meath Partnership has provided numerous coaching sessions and workshops on CV Writing skills; soft skills; beauty care courses; driving courses; life skills and English lessons for refugees.

FOUNDING PARTNERS

3 CRESAÇOR - regional cooperative of solidarity economy (Portugal)

CRESAÇOR, as a regional solidarity economy cooperative, is strongly involved in local development and fighting all forms of social exclusion, and therefore seeks to develop an intervention based on the articulation of economic activities with the effective creation of employment for the most vulnerable groups, social cohesion, respect for the environment, the valorisation of cultural diversity and good governance for efficient management, taking on the territory as a whole, which enhances local development and effective social inclusion.

In the StayOn project, CRESAÇOR is one of the implementing partners, with the role of developing a “community-based development approach”, through personal development sessions, training skills in areas of interest to young people, as entrepreneurship, English, first aid, digital marketing, and others, and community dynamics.

4 ASSOCIATION ATIS (Italy)

Association Atis is an employment agency (Agenzia per il Lavoro, APL) founded in 2003 in Palermo in the northwest of the island of Sicily, Italy. More specifically, the organization promotes youth employment interventions aimed at young people at-risk.

Association Atis offers different types of services for youth, among which we mention: reception and initial advice, individual and group interviews, reconstruction of training and work experiences for CV writing, facilitation in the formal recognition of skills, guidance in the definition of a professional project, support in drafting a skills portfolio, promotion and scouting, monitoring of match between local supply and demand of labor, a variety of training courses aimed at skills assessment and development.

FOUNDING PARTNERS

5 REGIONAL GOVERNMENT OF SICILY - DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE (Italy)

The Department of Agriculture, represents the Regional Government's executive department responsible for developing and executing laws related to farming, forestry, rural economic development, and food.

Through the Program for Rural Development - Sicily 2014-2020, actions were carried out in favor of the following lines of intervention:

- encouraging lifelong learning and vocational training in agriculture and forestry, especially among youth;
- stimulating innovation, cooperation and development of the knowledge base in rural areas;
- strengthening the links between agriculture, food production and forestry, on the one hand, and research and innovation on the other, including improved environmental management and performance.

The Regional Government Of Sicily - Department Of Agriculture on Stay on project has taken on the role of partner responsible for vertical and horizontal youth mainstreaming in the project, dealing in particular about the creation of the "European Rural Youth Alliance".

6 THE POLISH FARM ADVISORY AND TRAINING CENTRE NOT FOR-PROFIT Sp. z o.o. (Poland)

The Polish Farm Advisory and Training Centre Not-For-Profit Sp. z o.o. is a private, not-for-profit company from Miastkowo, Poland. The organization aims at providing free of charge advisory services to farmers, training opportunities, fostering rural development, promoting the entrepreneurial spirit among youth in rural areas, and increasing general public's awareness about the environment protection . As a community catalyst partner in the StayOn project, the Polish Farm Advisory and Training Centre provided individual and group training for young people (NEETs) in the area of soft skills development, introduction to basic English language and digital skills, as well as familiarization with the local community.

FOUNDING PARTNERS

7 BB Consulting (Slovenia)

BB Consulting is a Slovene consulting company with a mission to recognize and develop the inner potential of companies, organizations, teams and individuals. In our 20+ year of experience, we have worked with multinational companies, small and family-owned businesses, as well as NGOs and public institutions facing growth and development challenges. We are also partners in national and international projects addressing leadership, sustainable development and societal issues.

As a culture manager partner in the project StayOn our core responsibility was to take care of knowledge transfer by implementing the train-the-coaches program & nurture partner relationships as the culture manager.

8 ECSF GmbH (Germany)

Established in 2018 as a competence center of Munich Business School, the ECSF GmbH focuses on bridging academic knowledge and practical applications. We provide impact advisory services, conduct advocacy through research, and offer capacity-building for social impact. Our involvement extends to various initiatives, including contracts, European projects, and services to private foundations. In the StayOn project, the ECSF GmbH plays a dual role. We are responsible for supporting project partners in their journey to foster social impact. Simultaneously, we conduct research on transnational collaborations, aiming to provide practical insights beneficial for project designers and managers, fund allocators, operators, and policymakers.

OBJECTIVES & GOALS

- ① **EMPOWERMENT: HARNESS THE HUMAN POTENTIAL OF RURAL YOUTH, PROVIDING THEM WITH PLATFORMS AND TOOLS TO MAKE MEANINGFUL CONTRIBUTIONS.**
- ② **COLLABORATION: FOSTER A CULTURE OF SHARING AND MUTUAL GROWTH AMONGST PARTNERS, CULTIVATING DEEP-ROOTED FRIENDSHIPS ALONG THE WAY.**
- ③ **SUSTAINABILITY: LAY THE GROUNDWORK FOR LONG-TERM IMPACTS OF POTENTIAL FUTURE INITIATIVES FOCUSED ON RURAL YOUTH.**
- ④ **ENGAGEMENT: ENGAGE A WIDE SPECTRUM OF STAKEHOLDERS, EXPANDING THE ALLIANCE'S INFLUENCE AND REACH.**

ACTIVITIES & INITIATIVES

1.
Follow-up Proposals: Adapt and refine initiatives based on feedback and evolving opportunities.
2.
Quarterly Newsletter: Share updates, chronicle success stories, narrate challenges, and spotlight opportunities for collective growth.
3.
Semester Meetings: Organize sessions for knowledge exchange, workshops, and brainstorming to nurture the momentum of the Alliance's endeavors.
4.
Engagement with the Impact Watch Platform: Regularly showcase milestones and achievements to enhance visibility and stakeholder engagement.
5.
Promote research and experimentation activities and proposals that take into account the scenarios highlighted by climate change in relation to the sustainable use of resources through the development of technologies related to energy from renewable sources, which should lead to the development with the conservation and securing of the various cultivars and breeds at risk of extinction and with the valorisation of functional and nutraceutical foods, and foods with sought- after dietary-nutritional and health characteristics.
6.
Promote a type of food production that is sustainable and respectful of the work of those who produce the food, that aims to encourage local food economies, reducing the distance between suppliers and consumers, waste, and dependence on societies that are distant from the places where food is produced
7.
Promote actions led by young people aimed at supporting the valorisation of all common agro-food productions, with particular reference to consolidated excellence (PDO, PGI, TSG, IGT, Slow Food, Traditional Food Productions, organic productions) also with a view to food and agri- tourism.

ACTIVITIES & INITIATIVES

8.
Relate and interact with the Observatory of Innovation in the agri-food sector, based on the use of a dedicated web platform and able to provide, promptly and with the necessary analytical levels, information and data of a structural and dynamic nature on the European agrifood system;
9.
Interconnect the heritage of knowledge, good practices and innovations in the agrifood and related sectors, accumulated at the national level, with the counterpart heritages of the other partners, an activity of strong strategic value that must promote, facilitate and valorize virtuous synergies that, feeding off each other, can produce pro-active proposals and actions aimed at valorizing and putting into practice the requests of this Manifesto;
10.
Support for activities aimed at the revitalization of rural areas, also through support for the start-up of new businesses not necessarily linked to the world of agriculture to create new jobs locally and avoid the depopulation of these areas;
11.
Support for active citizenship education for young people and the promotion of a sense of belonging to the EU to create a community capable of understanding the problems of territorial development and at the same time capable of having the useful tools to resolve these gaps

ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

- Partnership: Actively contribute and engage in the Alliance activities, with an emphasis on sharing and mutual respect.
- Coordination: Ensure smooth execution of the Alliance's strategies, always rooted in trust.
- Communication: Prioritize transparency and open dialogue between partners and stakeholders.

GOVERNANCE & STRUCTURE

- Central Coordination: A guiding team dedicated to directing the Alliance's potential future initiatives.
- Partner Representation: Equal voice for each partner, fostering an environment of friendship and collaboration.
- Feedback Mechanism: A structured loop to refine strategies, ensuring continuous evolution while also welcoming new members and partners who can make their contribution in line with the principles of the Manifesto

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COMMUNICATION & OUTREACH

- Digital Presence: Build a robust online identity, connecting with broader audiences and cultivating trust through transparency.
- Events and Workshops: Engage in and organize events aligned with the Alliance's goals, promoting friendship and networking.

FUNDING & RESOURCES

- Resource Mobilization: Secure resources for the sustainability and scalability of the Alliance's potential endeavors.
- Financial Management: Ensure transparent and trustworthy handling of funds to maintain stakeholder confidence.

MONITORING & EVALUATION

- Performance Metrics: Establish clear metrics to gauge the impact and success of the Alliance's potential endeavors.
- Regular Reviews: Assess strategies and recalibrate based on feedback and changing landscapes.

CONCLUSION

Guided by the core values of human potential development, sharing, friendship, and trust, the European Rural Youth Alliance aspires to re-envision the European rural landscape. By nurturing its youth, the Alliance dreams of a prosperous, sustainable, and interconnected rural Europe.

SIGNATORIES

REZOS BRANDS ANONYMI EMPORIKI ETERIA
IDON DIATROFIS (Greece)

ANGELOS REZOS Digitally signed by ANGELOS REZOS
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MEATH COMMUNITY RURAL AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT
PARTNERSHIP LIMITED (Ireland)

 Signed on 08-01-2024

CRESAÇOR - regional cooperative of solidarity economy
(Portugal)

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THE POLISH FARM ADVISORY AND TRAINING CENTRE
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