



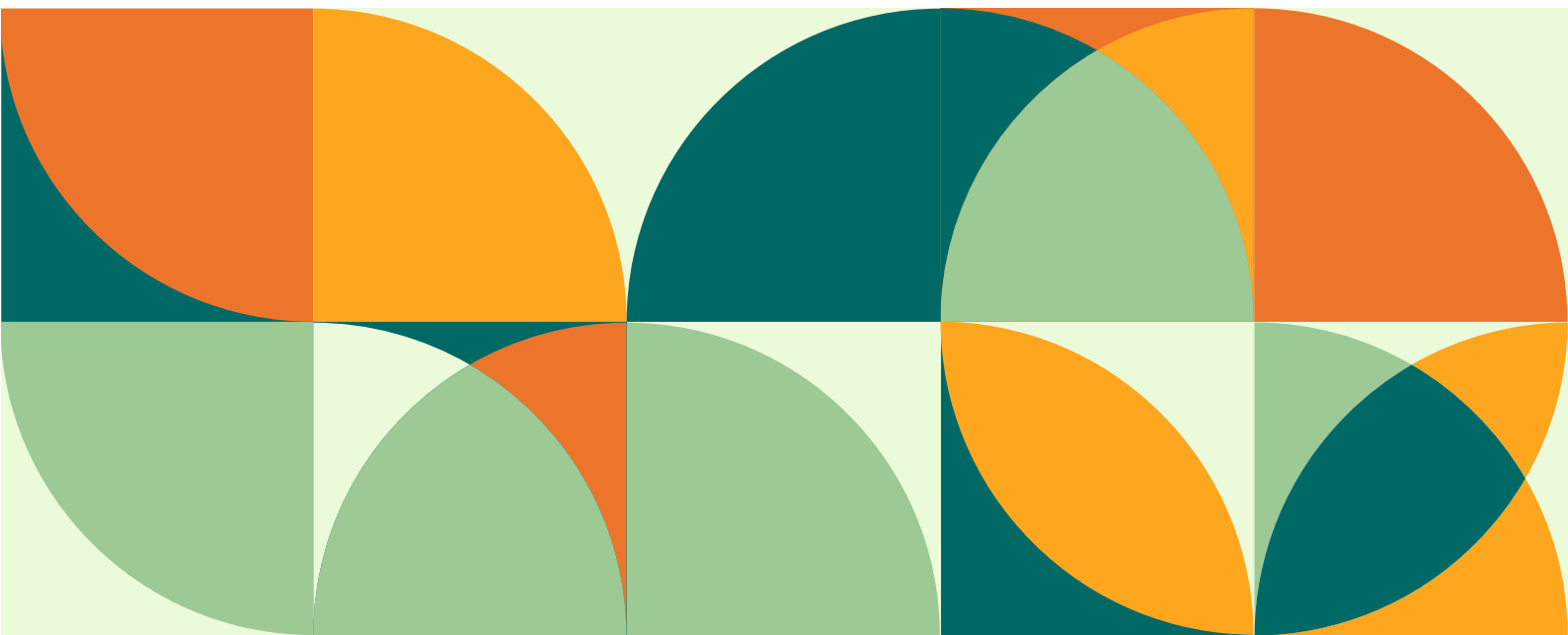
Coalition for Social Studies in Rural and
Agricultural Youth in Europe: Youth Employment

Assessing youth employability in agriculture and rural communities:

A comprehensive overview



Co-funded by
the European Union





Document information

Due date: 31/03/2026

Version: 20260318

Deliverable number	2.1
Nature	Document, report (R)
Dissemination level	Public (PU)
Work package	WP2: State of the art and desk research
Deliverable leader	Wageningen University & Research (WUR)
Contributing authors	Han Wiskerke, Alberto Alonso-Fradejas, Jolien Klok and Marije van Santen

Acknowledgement

This project has received funding from the European Union's EACEA under grant agreement No 101185214.

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1 Introduction

1.1 Background

Daily life in rural regions is often marked by limited economic productivity, weak career prospects, and declining infrastructure and public services. As a result, many residents—especially young, well-educated individuals—are leaving the countryside. This outmigration has created labour and skills shortages, further undermining rural economies.

According to Eurostat's 2023 *Rural Europe* publication, nearly 9 in 10 predominantly rural EU regions (355 of 406) recorded negative natural population growth between 2015 and 2020, alongside a decline in younger and working-age residents. Between 2021 and 2051, the population in predominantly rural regions is projected to decrease by an average of 3.2% per year. The share of EU farm managers under 35 fell from 7.3% in 2005 to 6.5% in 2020, while agricultural employment dropped from 6.4% to 4.2% of total EU employment over the same period.

At the same time, innovative initiatives led by young rural residents and social entrepreneurs are emerging across Europe. Social innovation is widely seen as a promising response to societal challenges, and policymakers increasingly support it. However, stronger enabling conditions, targeted support, and clear strategies are still needed to unlock its full potential in rural areas.

Finally, European Commission's Flash Eurobarometer 530 on Mental Health (EC 2023) highlights the broader social context: recent crises — including the pandemic, the war in Ukraine, the climate crisis, unemployment, and rising living costs — have affected mental health, with 44% of respondents reporting some impact and 18% reporting a large impact.

Against this background, the CORE Project was created to address the critical issue of agrarian and rural youth employment. CORE commenced with a work package aimed at analysing the current situation of youth employment in rural and agricultural areas, through different modes of data collection and analysis. In consultation with the CORE consortium, we focused on three lines of inquiry: a literature review, a PESTE analysis and a survey among agrarian and rural youth. In the next section we will describe the methodologies for these lines of inquiry and in the final section we will briefly outline the structure of this report.

1.2 Methodology

1.2.1 PESTE Analysis

A PESTE analysis was carried out during the CORE partner's kick-off meeting in Brussels on February 5th, 2025, with the aim to identify and discuss the current and near-future context and challenges for agricultural and rural youth employment at national and EU levels. In advance of the Brussels meeting, all partners prepared a brief PESTE document at the national (NAJK in the Netherlands, JLW in Austria) and EU (CEJA and RYE) levels. Second, during the Brussels meeting, we dedicated one full morning to a PESTE analysis workshop. Building on the briefs from each partner and using a World Café dynamic, we discussed the main PESTE challenges for agricultural and rural youth employment. Finally, we held a plenary presentation and discussion of the main PESTE challenges, including which laws or changing legal contexts (at the EU and/or national level) affect rural youth employment. The outcomes of the PESTE analysis served as input for the other two lines of inquiry by identifying which topics to further focus on in the literature review and to address in the survey.

1.2.2 Literature Review

The literature review was carried out by the CORE-research team at Wageningen University and was undertaken in the first months of the project (January – March 2025) and updated in February 2026. It is primarily a review of scientific literature on and linked to agrarian and rural youth employment in rural areas combined with a review of policy documents, mainly at EU-level, on and related to agrarian and rural youth employment. The literature review also served as input for the survey.

1.2.3 Survey

Both the literature review and the PESTE analysis provide an overview of general trends (at national and European level), key issues, relevant policies and some facts and figures (derived from Eurostat) related to agrarian and rural youth employment. However, in order to gain more insight into the jobs held by

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- 1) Political context: Pertains to political systems, state structure, governance, and policymaking, both formal and informal; 2) Economic context: Describes the country's/EU's economic structure, both formal and informal; 3) Socio-cultural context: Encompasses social traits, traditional values, and attitudes, with gender mainstreaming crucial for EUD; 4) Technological context: Covers technology availability and accessibility in rural areas and sectors, including competencies; 5) Environmental context: Addresses issues such as climate change at national/EU and global levels.
 2. The World Café method is a participatory discussion format designed to facilitate open, collaborative dialogue in large groups. It creates a relaxed, café-like setting where participants discuss a topic in small groups around tables. Typically each table focuses on a specific question or topic. After a set time, participants rotate to a new table, while the 'table host' remains to summarize the previous discussion. Ideas build progressively as groups expand on earlier conversations. Key insights are later shared with the whole group.

young people in agriculture and rural areas, the income strategies they employ, how they experience agrarian and rural policies and employment policies, what opportunities and threats they see for employment in agriculture and rural areas, and what knowledge and skills they will need in the near future, we conducted a survey among agricultural and rural youth in four European countries: Spain, Austria, the Netherlands, and Poland. A first long version of the survey was developed by the CORE-research team of Wageningen University in February and March 2025, after which the other CORE consortium partners were asked to identify the most important topics and questions and add other topics and questions they considered to be of high importance. Based on this feedback, a revised and more condensed version was developed, which was tested by all CORE partners at a monthly online meeting, primarily to see if all questions and answers were clear, if the flow of questions worked well and to record the time it took to complete the survey, as we aimed for a survey that could be completed in 10 to 15 minutes. This resulted in a few final changes. After that the questionnaire was translated, using DeepL, in four languages: Dutch, German, Polish and Spanish. The DeepL translation were proofread and corrected by native speakers and subsequently the original English version and the four translations were uploaded in Qualtrics, an online survey tool used by Wageningen University. The online version was then also tested by at least two persons in each country. This led to a few final modifications after which the survey was launched on the 23rd of July 2025. The survey was closed on the 16th of December 2025.

Potential survey respondents were informed about the survey through a variety of social media channels and mailing lists. The survey was also distributed at various events and networking meetings organised by the partners. CEJA organised a one-week targeted campaign on Instagram that reached more than 55.000 viewers, targeting rural youth and young farmers in the four focus countries. Young farmers from the Netherlands and Austria were contacted directly by NAJK and JLW. In Spain and Poland, young farmers were reached through CEJA's Member Organisations in those countries: ASAJA Joven, Juventudes Agrarias de COAG and UPA JOVE in Spain; and ZMW and ZZCNMR in Poland. Rural Youth Europe worked together with two of its members in Poland and in Spain in order to attract more responses to the survey. EPA!, the rural youth organisation in Spain, did an online campaign, calling their members to fill out the survey, while ZMW in Poland, a common member of RYE and CEJA, mainly shared the survey into their online communication channels.

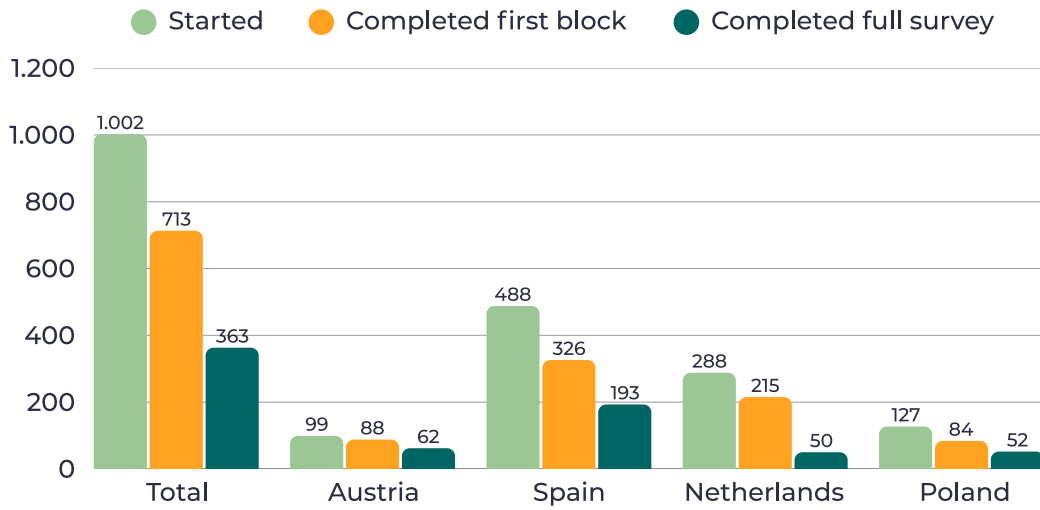


Figure 1.1. Number of survey respondents in total and per country

1.3 About the report

In this report we present and discuss the findings from two of the three lines of research: the literature review (chapter 2) and the survey (chapter 3). The PESTE analysis, which primarily served as input and first stepping stone for the literature review and the survey, is included in this report as Annex 1. In Chapter 4, we briefly summarize the main findings in the form of challenges for follow-up actions, which will be addressed in the next work packages of the project.

2 Literature Review

In this chapter, we briefly present and discuss the findings from literature research – both scientific literature and policy documents – on and related to agricultural and rural employment, primarily focused on young people but sometimes also with a broader focus. We have divided this into four main sections: 1) youth (un)employment and livelihoods in rural areas, 2) youth and agriculture, 3) youth and rural belonging, and 4) European policies and visions.

2.1 Youth (un)employment and livelihoods in rural areas

2.1.1 Unemployment of youth in rural areas

In 2023, the share of young people that are neither in employment nor education or training (NEET) is higher in rural areas (12.3%) compared to cities (10.3%) (Eurostat, 2024). However, there is a lot of variation between countries. For instance, in the Netherlands, the share of young NEETs is slightly higher in cities than in rural areas, but in Romania there are far more young NEETs in rural areas (Eurostat, 2024). NEETs deal with structural social exclusion, and they risk poverty and family dependency (Petrescu et al., 2022). However, “NEETs” as a concept has been criticised because of heterogeneity. The term young NEETs covers a wide variety of groups of people, which may differ in terms of short or long-term unemployment, disability, gender, educational level, et cetera. All of them have different needs (Mascherini & Ledermaier, 2016). Women are more likely to become NEETS, and the category of young people that are NEETs due to family responsibilities (including childcare) are mostly young women (Mascherini & Ledermaier, 2016). In rural areas there is limited access to good childcare facilities, low engagement of fathers in childcare and a shortage of part-time and flexible jobs (Costantini et al., 2023). Young women can also have more problems when returning to the job market because of traditional gender stereotypes that are more prevalent in rural areas (Simões & Erdogan, 2024).

2.1.2 Livelihoods of agrarian and rural households

Rural households in Europe exhibit considerable heterogeneity in size, composition, and livelihood strategies, shaped by demographic change and evolving policy frameworks. Across the EU, there has been a diversification of household structures over the past decade, marked by an increase in single-adult households and a relative decline in multi-generational family units. According to Eurostat (2024), single adults without children now represent the largest household category in the EU, followed by couples without children, while couples with children have decreased as a proportion of total households. While these patterns pertain to both urban and rural regions, rural areas within several Member States continue to exhibit comparatively larger average household

sizes and a higher prevalence of older household heads. The latter reflects youth out-migration and population ageing. While agrarian youth frequently move to urban areas for vocational or academic education and/or for work, it does not mean they leave agriculture altogether. They may still help their parents or other relatives during busy times, if they live close by, financially support them or build up financial capital to take over the farm as a full or part-time job in the future (White, 2020).

Household composition has direct implications for livelihood strategies. Smaller or ageing households often face labour constraints, which in turn influence farm structure and income diversification choices. A key feature of agricultural livelihoods in Europe is multifunctionality or pluri-activity, where households combine agricultural production with off-farm employment or non-agricultural self-employment. Empirical research proves that income diversification enhances income stability, resilience to market risks and long-term viability of the agricultural sector (Barnes et al., 2015). Younger and better-educated household heads are more likely to engage in diversified activities, while larger and more specialised farms rely predominantly on agricultural income streams.

Income strategies are further shaped by EU policy frameworks, particularly the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). During the 2023–2027 programming period, the CAP's rural development interventions have been designed to support farm diversification, generational renewal, and the development of short supply chains and rural services (European Commission, 2023). Measures financed through the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) have encouraged the development of agritourism, on-farm processing, renewable energy production, and the creation of small businesses. This has had a significant impact on broadening rural income bases. Despite the provision of such support, income disparities between rural and urban households persist in several Member States (Eurostat, 2024). In general, the means of subsistence for rural households in Europe are becoming increasingly defined by a decline in the size of household units, an ageing population, and diversified, multi-source income strategies.

2.2 Youth and agriculture

The shortage of young farmers and the ageing farming population in Europe, often referred to as the 'young farmer problem', is widely discussed in academic literature (Eistrup et al., 2019; Borda et al., 2023). Young unemployed people are less willing to work in agriculture: they perceive farming as a low-status profession and as something that is difficult to achieve (e.g. because of access to land, bureaucracy, etc.) and they perceive the agricultural sector as a vulnerable and risky sector (Consentino et al., 2023). However, Zagata and Sutherland (2015) found that there are considerable national differences regarding the number of young farmers. They argue that the shortage of young farmers is highest in countries or regions with a prevalence of small-scale farms and less so in

European countries and regions with a relative high share of large-scale farms. Hence 'the young farmer problem' is not uniform across Europe.

A systematic literature review about generation change in agriculture identified a number of structural and socio-economic barriers that constrain generational renewal in agriculture (Borda et al., 2023):

- An increasing reluctance amongst young people to assume control of family farms, often due to the perception that farming offers insufficient and unstable income prospects alongside demanding and uncertain working conditions.
- Limited access to land as high land prices and concentrated ownership structures restrict entry opportunities for new farmers.
- Younger farmers generally have weaker market bargaining power within agri-food value chains, reducing their capacity to secure favourable prices or contractual arrangements..
- Administrative complexity and regulatory burdens discourage entry and succession, particularly where compliance requirements are time-consuming and costly.
- Growing impacts of climate change – including increased production risks, extreme weather events, and long-term uncertainty – seem to further deter prospective successors by amplifying economic volatility and perceived livelihood insecurity in the agricultural sector.

In the sections below we will elaborate on the topic of access to land and also discuss several other topics that were found in the literature in relation to young farmers.

2.2.1 Access to land

Young farmers experience several barriers when they try to enter farming: one of the main barriers is access to land. It is difficult for young farmers to access land due to high land prices (Zagata & Sutherland, 2015). Glover and Sumberg (2020) point out that "almost by definition, youth are (in a narrow, strict sense) landless, even in households that do have access to agricultural land". Older large-scale farmers are also hesitant to sell their land due to the increasing value of their land and to avoid losing the CAP payments that are paid per hectare (Ingram & Kirwan, 2011). Small-scale farmers retain their land because of the limited benefits of selling and often retain the land for recreational use (Moragues-Faus, 2014). There are also considerable differences between member states in the EU: young farmers in old member states are able to buy larger farms, whereas young farmers in newer member states tend to own smaller farms (Zagata & Sutherland, 2015). Not only are land prices high; the start-up costs for setting up a new farm is also considerable and young farmers frequently lack access to credit (Eistrup et al., 2019). As a result, succession is the most common way to enter farming, but this often happens when the new farmer does not classify

as 'young' any longer (Zagata & Sutherland, 2015). Young women farmers can face additional troubles because of patriarchal inheritance patterns (Simões & Erdogan, 2024). Access to land should also be understood as a question of intergenerational land mobility: this includes better retirement policies, tax reliefs, guarantees or purchasing options for leases, stronger active-farmer definitions, and better land transparency through observatory-type tools and data harmonisation (CEJA, 2023a).

2.2.2 Knowledge, skill and employability

A second barrier for young farmers to enter the agricultural sector is a lack of knowledge and skills (EU CAP Network, 2025). Technological innovations are often to reduce labour costs, which ultimately means less farmers (and workers) are required and the future for young farmers can become more uncertain (White, 2020). While there is potential for new technological jobs to be created because of these innovations, young people will have to be able to access the right skills and knowledge required for such jobs (White, 2020). Working on a farm can be perceived as a unskilled job, but that is no longer true for agriculture nowadays: farmers require a broad range of skills (e.g. entrepreneurial skills, environmental knowledge) (Consentino et al., 2023). A key issue for young farmers in this respect is access to the right support architecture: tailored advisory services, mentorship and tutor networks, AKIS-based knowledge exchange, business-planning support, and better bridges between research, digitalisation and farm-level practice (CEJA, 2023b).

2.2.3 Entrepreneurship and innovation

There is also discussion among authors regarding the relations between youth and entrepreneurship and innovation. There is evidence that young farmers consider themselves as entrepreneurs, compared to older farmers (Zagata & Sutherland, 2015). There are some studies that found that look into the role of new farmers as potential innovators, but this has not been investigated in depth (Zagata et al., 2017). Milone and Ventura (2019) identify a new generation of farmers in Italy who run small and niche yet successful farms, with a strong focus on markets and building community. Organic farmers often skew younger in age as well, and early adopters are younger in age and the reason for making the change to organic production practices was less based on profit compared to later adopters (Läpple & Rensburg, 2011). Nevertheless, young farmers may engage with a diversity of value-added, sustainable and innovative business models, but there is no one-size-fits-all pathway: viable options may include organic farming, agroforestry, conservation agriculture, integrated pest management, precision agriculture, improved water management and other locally adapted approaches (CEJA, 2024).

2.2.4 Access to finance and investment

Access to finance and investment is a major structural barrier for young farmers (Pulkstenis, 2024). This challenge is closely linked to the wider generational renewal crisis in EU agriculture, where the ability of young entrants to access capital is decisive (DG Agri, 2025). Yet Fi-compass data repeatedly show that young farmers are two to three times more likely to have their loan applications rejected than farmers over 40, mainly because of perceived higher-risk profiles, limited capital and collateral, and in some cases insufficient business-planning support (Fi-compass, 2023). Fi-compass estimated a financing gap of around €62 billion in EU agriculture, including a substantial share linked to young farmers. This matters not only for installation and start-up, but also for environmental transition, climate adaptation and regulatory-compliance investments, which are often capital-intensive and poorly matched to conventional banking products. Young farmers have been therefore calling for a broader toolbox including installation aid, investment support, guarantee instruments, risk-sharing loans, tailored advisory services, more flexible repayment frameworks, and stronger cooperation with banks, public authorities, the EAFRD, the EIB and other dedicated financial instruments, so that sustainable and resilient farming becomes economically feasible in practice, rather than merely desirable in principle.

2.3 Youth and rural belonging

2.3.1 Rural idyll and rural dull

There is plenty of research on why youth migrate to urban areas or choose to stay local in their rural area. However, how youth identify with their rural home place and whether they choose to migrate is not a straightforward decision (Rönnlund, 2020). Pedersen and Gram (2018) found that rural youth have conflicting feelings of attachment. This contrast is named the 'rural idyll' and the 'rural dull': these ideas are not mutually exclusive, but rather encompass different aspects of rural living (Rye, 2006). In research, there are many positive aspects (the 'rural idyll') of the countryside named by rural youth: the richness of nature, how calm and not stressful it is, an active and strong community and a sense of belonging (Murtagh et al., 2023; Rönnlund, 2020; Sørensen & Pless, 2017). However, what youth at first consider positive about their local place during childhood, becomes more complicated when they grow up (Pedersen & Gram, 2018). The closeness of the community can start to feel restrictive, they feel that rural communities gossip too much, they struggle to find a romantic partner and youth feel that they cannot express themselves (Pedersen & Gram, 2018). Other negatives of living in a rural area for youth is the lack of social services, a limited labour market, and limited possibilities for recreation and culture (Pedersen & Gram, 2018; Rönnlund, 2020).

2.3.2 The Education/mobility imperative

The 'education-mobility imperative' refers to the need felt by rural youth that they have to move to a city to acquire education, and that there is no way around this (Sørensen & Pless, 2017). Other research also confirmed that youth tend to move away for educational opportunities (Pedersen & Gram, 2018; Rönnlund, 2020). This also differs between men and women: young rural women have higher educational and professional aspirations and tend to move to (sub)urban areas for studying and more qualified and well-paid jobs (Simões & Erdogan, 2024). Murtagh et al. (2023) found that suitable job opportunities are a problem in rural areas, and that career ambitions of youth in rural areas are focused on working in education, health care, community and rural development and farming.

2.3.3 Well-being and mental health

Research by Simões and Erdogan (2024) indicates that female rural NEETs exhibit the poorest psychological well-being compared to urban groups, largely due to their roles as family caregivers and their restricted participation in the job market. This vulnerability is mirrored in the agricultural sector of the UK and Ireland, where studies on young farmers reveal a significant lack of research regarding the specific drivers of mental distress and help-seeking behaviors (Rose et al., 2023). These young farmers face a relentless barrage of stressors, including unpredictable weather, public criticism, financial pressures, and the looming uncertainty of agricultural policy transitions. Furthermore, internal pressures such as animal and crop diseases, coupled with strained personal relationships, create a volatile environment for mental health. The situation is compounded by a deep-seated stigma surrounding mental health, often reinforced by "macho" stereotypes that discourage vulnerability. Help-seeking is further hindered by the poor accessibility of services in rural communities, long working hours, and a perceived lack of understanding from mental health professionals regarding the unique realities of farming. According to an Irish survey (Brennan et al., 2021), the most critical factors impacting wellbeing are overwhelming workloads, isolation, loneliness—including a lack of sexual relationships—and complex family challenges like childcare and illness.

For women in farming, these issues are intensified by misogyny; they frequently face derogatory comments about their appearance and relationships, while battling the stereotype that they lack the physical strength of their male counterparts. Consequently, many feel they must work significantly harder to gain respect in a field where multiple stressors often combine to undermine their resilience. A systematic scoping review on the health and wellbeing of women in farming (Wheeler & Nye, 2024) suggests that specific agricultural tasks and gender-related stressors disproportionately affect women's health; yet, the current body of literature is limited. There is a clear need for focused studies on neglected areas such as reproductive outcomes, domestic labor burdens, and the efficacy of existing support systems.

2.4 European policies and visions

2.4.1 Youth employment

The EU has several policies and budgets to address youth unemployment, because, according to the EU, being in employment helps young persons to lead an independent life, to avoid negative impacts later in life from being unemployed at an early age and to reduce costs at a societal level (European Commission, n.d.e). The EU has a broad Youth Employment Support communication, which includes improving vocational education, promoting partnerships for apprenticeship provision, etc. (European Commission, n.d.e). The Youth Guarantee is also part of this communication. This is an initiative started in 2013 to help young people with employment, education, apprenticeship and traineeship (European Commission, n.d.b). By 2019, 24 million young people registered in Youth Guarantee schemes started with employment or education (European Commission, n.d.b). However, research done on initiatives of the Youth Guarantee in Romania, Italy and Portugal found Youth Guarantee initiatives varied in terms of success and differences between rural and urban areas need to be better considered in Youth Guarantee plans (Petrescu et al., 2022).

Another policy instrument falls under the European Social Fund+, which requires member states to invest in youth employment, education and training, as well as improving access to employment (European Commission, n.d.d; Regulation 2021/1057, 2021). Member states that have an above average rate of young NEETs need to allocate at least 12,5% of their European Social Funds+ to support youth employment (Regulation 2021/1057, 2021). Furthermore, the NextGenerationEU budget also targets youth employment. This budget is a temporary recovery budget after the coronavirus pandemic (European Commission, n.d.a). There is €22 billion available to support youth employment from 2021 – 2027 (European Commission, n.d.e).

2.4.2 Common Agricultural Policy support for young farmers

Attracting and sustaining young and new farmers is one of the key objectives of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) of the EU: “a vibrant agricultural sector needs skilled and innovative young farmers to respond to societal demands, from quality food to environmental public goods” (European Commission, 2019). In the CAP, it is considered essential to continue supporting new farms, as young and new farmers face barriers such as accessing land and credit, they are more affected by price volatility (both for inputs and produce) and they need training in entrepreneurial skills and risk management (Regulation 2021/2115). For those reasons, the CAP provides a policy framework to support young farmers and to create good working and living conditions in rural areas (European Commission, 2019). CAP funds might not being adequate on their own to deal with the barriers that young farmers face (e.g. access to land and capital) (European Commission, 2021). Nevertheless, the CAP requires member states of the EU to spend at least

3% of their budget on supporting young farmers: young farmers can receive income support (an annual payment per hectare or lump sum), as well as start-up grants for young farmers setting up a farm, support for investments and some countries provide cooperation schemes (European Commission, n.d.c). However, this minimum remains insufficient: in its post-2027 CAP position, young farmers argues that generational renewal should become the primary political priority of the CAP, backed by support equivalent to 10% of the current direct-payments level, estimated at €30 billion over 2028–2034 (CEJA, 2025a).

In a fairly recent report from the EU CAP Network (2025a), the question is raised whether young farmer supports of the CAP are effective at stimulating generational renewal. It was found that young farmers are a large percentage of the farmers benefitting from advisory services, that young farmer support was more effective for generational renewal when focused on young people that already are connected to agriculture and that start-up support helped in some locations to rejuvenate the agricultural sector (EU CAP Network, 2025a). But the results were mixed, varied per geographical locations and there are limited insights on the effectiveness of young farmer support on generational renewal (EU CAP Network, 2025a). It was also found that other CAP measures can contribute to increasing land prices, hence offsetting the young farmer support measures of the CAP (Đurić et al., 2019). Therefore, current young-farmer instruments remain limited in scope, reach and timeliness. They do not sufficiently address structural barriers such as land, capital, knowledge, fair income and rural attractiveness; they are not always adapted to all sectors or legal forms; and delayed payments can undermine their effectiveness at the moment when support is most needed (CEJA, 2025a).

Zagata et al (2017) found that young farm successors of already existing farms received most of the young farmer support funds. While there is a lack of detailed evidence, the European Commission (2019) writes that new entrants seem to engage more in innovation, new business models and alternative and value-added farming. However, a research about new entrants in Italy found that such innovative new farmers do not feel supported by the young farmer funds, due to the complexity of administration required to access support and that the advisory services were not aligned with their entrepreneurial ideas (Milone & Ventura, 2019).

2.4.3 Visions for youth, rural areas and agriculture

In the context of European governance, visions serve as high-level conceptual frameworks rather than binding legal instruments. While they lack immediate legislative power or concrete, step-by-step enforcement measures, they function as essential strategic roadmaps that signal political priorities and long-term ambitions. By establishing a shared direction, these visions—such as the EU Youth Strategy and the Long-term Rural Vision—aim to align member states'

efforts toward common goals like generational renewal and social resilience. The following paragraphs outline the key EU visions that advocate for rural youth.

Aside from policy and budgetary support, the EU also has various visions that include rural youth. The European Union Youth Strategy 2019 – 2027 was based on a dialogue with young people, and includes the goal ‘moving rural youth forward’ (Council of the European Union, 2018). The targets of this vision are to ensure infrastructure, create jobs, promote active participation of youth in decision-making processes, provide access to high quality education, establish a positive image of rural areas and protect rural traditions (Council of the European Union, 2018).

Another vision that touches on rural youth employment and young farmers is the EU Long-Term Vision on Rural Areas (LVTRA). This vision highlights the importance of attracting young, new and female farmers, through improving land access and to account for their needs (European Commission, 2021). Also agricultural workers are referred to in this part of the vision. It also states that for rural areas to be socially resilient, all talents and diversity in our society needs to be tapped into, including young people (European Commission, 2021).

The recently published EU Vision for Agriculture and Food places a lot of importance on young farmers: “the future of food sovereignty in Europe in 2040 rests on the shoulders of young and new farmers of today” (European Commission, 2025a). It states that living and working conditions ought to attract more young farmers, and that financial support should be targeted towards farmers who need it most (as getting a loan from a bank remains difficult for farmers), including young farmers (European Commission, 2025a). The vision also wants to enable “the right to stay” of young farmers who wish to stay and farm in their territories (European Commission, 2025a). It also mentions young farmers as drivers of innovation and highlights the need to make farming attractive through better living and working conditions (European Commission, 2025a). This should not be reduced to the promotion of one specific farming model. Young farmers support a broad and pragmatic mix of viable pathways adapted to different territorial and farm realities (EU CAP Network, 2025b). This includes nature-oriented approaches such as agroecology, agroforestry, conservation agriculture and integrated pest management, but also technological and innovative tools such as precision agriculture, drones, satellite imagery and other solutions that help reconcile productivity, resilience and environmental performance.

Furthermore, the EU Strategy for Generational Renewal in Agriculture, published on 21 October 2025 (European Commission, 2025b), provides a more targeted framework for understanding what young farmers need in practice (European Commission 2025c). The Strategy proposes that all Member States establish their own national generational renewal strategies by 2028 as part of their national and regional partnership plans, and it introduces a broader ‘Starter Pack for Young Farmers’ combining setting-up support, investment aid and access to financial instruments. It also highlights farm transfer, taxation, succession, social protection, training, relief services and the need to make farming a viable and

fulfilling career, while setting an aspirational target to raise the share of young farmers in the EU by 2040. European young farmers welcomed these positive steps, especially the stronger recognition of land access, finance, knowledge and social conditions, as well as the attention given to succession, retirement, mental health awareness and young farmers' organizations (European Commission 2025c). At the same time, it was stressed that the strategy's credibility is weakened by the absence of a binding ring-fenced CAP budget for young farmers in the post-2027 legislative proposals: in CEJA's view, aspirational targets and political recognition must be matched by concrete financial commitments if generational renewal is to become a reality on the ground (CEJA, 2025b).

3 Survey

In this chapter we will present and discuss the results of the survey among agrarian and rural youth in Austria, Spain, the Netherlands and Poland. We will first present some data about the respondents (gender, education, area of residence); then about income, employment and household composition; next we will present aspects and issues related to agriculture, such as agricultural activities, policy support, sustainable practices and use of digital tools; and finally visions of agrarian and rural youth on employment, policies and rural belonging.

3.1 Characteristics of respondents

Questions about gender, education, and area of residence were asked at the end of the survey. As roughly 730 respondents completed the first block of questions and around 365 completed the entire survey (see Figure 1.1), the characteristics of the respondents apply only to the group that completed the entire survey.

Gender

In terms of gender ratio, more women than men participated in the survey (Figure A2.1)³. This is particularly true for respondents in Spain and Poland. In Austria, the ratio is roughly 50/50, while in the Netherlands, more men than women participated. This is most likely because in the Netherlands, it was mainly young people in agriculture – i.e., those with (partly) income from agriculture – who completed the survey (see also Table 3.4). Among young farmers in the Netherlands, there are more males than females.

Education

Looking at the educational level of the respondents, almost half have a university degree, and a third have vocational training (Figure A2.2). What is particularly striking is that half of the respondents from Poland have secondary school as their highest level of education, while in the Netherlands almost 90% have vocational training as highest level of education.

Area of residence

When asked to classify their area of residence, the majority of respondents identified it as predominantly rural or remote rural. In Poland, however, almost half of the respondents classified their area as urban or predominantly urban, which differs considerably from the overall average and from those of the other three countries. As the definitions of 'urban' and 'rural' can differ from country to country, or even between regions within a country, we also asked respondents how long it takes them to travel by car to the nearest hospital under normal traffic conditions (see Figure A2.4) as an indicator of remoteness. This shows that 57% of the respondents need less than 30 minutes to get to a hospital. There are some differences between countries, with 55% of the respondents in Spain

3. Table numbers starting with A2 can be found in Annex 2.

needing more than 30 minutes. While travel time to the nearest hospital was used as an indicator for remoteness, some respondents commented that this does not say anything about access to a hospital by public transport or about the quality of health care facilities, as travel time to hospitals that offer the full breadth of modern treatment may take (much) more than one hour by car.

3.2 Income, employment, and household composition

The data presented in this section reflect the composition of the respondent population by income, employment, and household composition. The differences between, for example, countries or between agricultural and rural youth (i.e., those with or without income from agriculture) do not indicate actual differences between countries or groups, but only differences within the group of respondents.

Primary source of income

When looking at the group of respondents regarding their primary source of income (Table 3.1), we see that one third has agriculture as their main source of income. This is much higher in the Netherlands, with 74% of the respondents having agriculture as the primary source of income. Among Spanish and Polish respondents this is much lower (around 13%). This very likely reflects the different kinds of organisations and channels through which respondents were mobilised, e.g., via NAJK and agricultural high schools (vocational training) in the Netherlands and via RYE and national rural youth organisations in Spain and Poland. Another striking difference is family support as primary source of income: 33% in Poland versus 8% or less in the other three countries.

Table 3.1. Primary source of income (percentages in *italics* differ at least 10% from the total average)

	Total	Austria	Spain	Netherlands	Poland
No. of respondents	747	89	346	225	87
Agriculture (self-employed)	19,3%	23,6%	11,0%	<i>33,3%</i>	11,5%
Agriculture (waged)	14,2%	6,7%	2,3%	<i>40,4%</i>	<i>1,1%</i>
Non-agriculture (self-employed)	5,6%	3,4%	9,2%	1,8%	3,4%
Non-agriculture (waged)	37,8%	<i>53,9%</i>	<i>48,3%</i>	<i>16,0%</i>	35,6%
Family support	9,5%	5,6%	8,4%	3,6%	<i>33,3%</i>

	Total	Austria	Spain	Netherlands	Poland
Basic income support for sustainability	0,3%	0,0%	0,3%	0,0%	1,1%
Social benefits	1,7%	2,2%	2,3%	0,4%	2,3%
Agri-environmental subsidies	0,1%	0,0%	0,3%	0,0%	0,0%
Savings	2,7%	0,0%	3,5%	1,3%	5,7%
Other	8,8%	4,5%	14,5%	3,1%	5,7%

In Austria 54% of the respondents have non-agricultural waged labour as primary source of income. Many young farmers in Austria have not yet taken over the farm and therefore earn their main income from another job. Due to the small-scale, family-run agricultural sector, many farmers in Austria have to take on another job to get by financially.

Secondary sources of income

This brings us to the importance of secondary sources of income (Table 3.2). About 75% of the respondents also have a variety of secondary sources of income, with 33% if the Spanish respondents having no secondary income sources and only 14% of the Polish respondents without secondary income. Family support and savings are the most important, followed by waged and self-employment in and outside agriculture. Polish respondents differ quite a lot from the ones from the other three countries with relatively high percentages for non-agricultural self-employment, family support and savings as secondary sources of income.

Table 3.2. Secondary sources of income (percentages in *italics* differ at least 10% from the total average)

	Total	Austria	Spain	Netherlands	Poland
No. of respondents	731	86	342	216	87
Agriculture (self-employed)	15,2%	25,6%	9,1%	23,6%	8,0%
Agriculture (waged)	10,1%	17,4%	2,0%	22,7%	3,4%
Non-agriculture (self-employed)	10,4%	10,5%	7,9%	7,9%	26,4%
Non-agriculture (waged)	12,4%	16,3%	13,5%	11,6%	6,9%
Family support	21,8%	14,0%	20,5%	18,1%	43,7%

	Total	Austria	Spain	Netherlands	Poland
Basic income support for sustainability	0,5%	0,0%	1,2%	0,0%	0,0%
Social benefits	4,1%	5,8%	4,1%	4,2%	2,3%
Agri-environmental subsidies	3,0%	4,7%	4,1%	1,9%	0,0%
Savings	19,7%	11,6%	16,1%	19,9%	41,4%
Other	6,8%	4,7%	5,8%	7,4%	11,5%
None	25,6%	19,8%	33,0%	20,8%	13,8%

Respondents that have non-agricultural income – self-employed and/or waged – as primary or secondary source of income, work in a wide variety of economic sectors, ranging from tourism and hospitality services to sales and marketing, education, health care and construction work. This large variety of jobs holds true for all four countries.

Household composition

Regarding household composition (Table A2.1) there are mainly similarities between countries; there is a large diversity of households, with extended household most common in all countries and shared household least common. Only in the Netherlands there is a relatively low percentage of couple households and a relatively large percentage of family households compared to the average. Among the Polish respondents a relatively high percentage lives in an extended family household. This may be due to the lower average age of Polish respondents (23 years) compared to the overall average age (28 years) of the respondents.

Household's net income satisfaction

The survey respondents were also asked to evaluate their total household's net income on a 5-point scale ranging from very insufficient to very good (Table 3.3). This shows that on average 31% of the agrarian and rural youth qualify it as (very) insufficient, 44% as satisfactory and 25% as very good. But there are considerable differences between countries. In Spain and Poland 48% respectively 33% of the respondents find their households net income (very) insufficient, in the other two countries this is around or below 10%. In Austria and the Netherlands 40-45% of the respondents consider their household's income to be (very) good, compared to only 8.5% in Spain.

Table 3.3. Household's net income satisfaction (percentages in *italics* differ at least 10% from the total average)

	Total	Austria	Spain	Netherlands	Poland
No. of respondents	746	89	346	224	87
Very insufficient	5,0%	0,0%	9,0%	2,2%	1,1%
Insufficient	25,7%	6,7%	39,3%	9,8%	32,2%
Satisfactory	44,1%	47,2%	43,1%	44,6%	43,7%
Good	20,1%	29,2%	7,2%	36,6%	19,5%
Very good	5,1%	16,9%	1,4%	6,7%	3,4%

No big differences in income satisfaction were found in relation to area of residence (from urban to rural), level of education and the share of income from agriculture in the household's income, except the difference between no income from agriculture and a 75-100% share of agricultural income in the household's income. Of the respondents with no agricultural income 37% consider their household's income to be (very) insufficient, while this holds true for 19% of the respondents whose household's income largely (76-100%) relies on agriculture. Among the latter 33% rate their income as (very) good, while this is only the case for 20% of the respondents with no agricultural income. This could imply that there is a slight tendency towards being more positive about household income with an increment of the share of agricultural income in the total households income. However, country effects may also play a role here as most respondents from Spain and Poland have no income from agriculture (Table 3.4) and in those countries respondents are relatively more negative about their income compared to respondents from Austria and the Netherlands (Table 3.3).

Share of agricultural income in household's income

The share of agricultural income in the household's annual income related to area of residence shows that 70-90% of the respondents from (predominantly) urban areas have no agricultural income, while slightly more than half (52-55%) of the respondents from (remote) rural areas has no agricultural income. The household's income of 22-25% of the respondents living in (remote) rural areas relies largely (>50%) on agriculture. This shows that people living in (remote) rural areas rely partially or largely in agriculture as a source of income.

Table 3.4. Share of agricultural income in household's annual income (percentages in italics differ at least 10% from the total average)

	Total	Austria	Spain	Netherlands	Poland
No. of respondents	713	88	326	215	84
No agricultural income	44,9%	<i>30,7%</i>	<i>63,5%</i>	<i>10,7%</i>	<i>75,0%</i>
1 - 25%	18,4%	28,4%	13,5%	23,3%	14,3%
26 - 50%	<i>10,2%</i>	14,8%	7,1%	16,7%	1,2%
51 - 75%	10,8%	10,2%	8,3%	18,1%	2,4%
76 - 100%	15,7%	15,9%	<i>7,7%</i>	<i>31,2%</i>	7,1%

3.3 Agriculture: activities, policy support, sustainability, digital tools and seasonal workload

In this section we present some findings related to agriculture: the agricultural activities, the financial support that farmers do (not) receive, which sustainable agricultural practices are implemented and why (not) and if digital tools are used in agriculture and why (not). Important to mention that the set of survey questions that are presented in this section were only answered by those respondents who indicated that they have (some) income from agriculture. Respondents without agricultural income skipped these questions. This also means that the number of respondents is a lot lower and that comparisons between for example countries become less telling due to very low reliability.

Agricultural activities

Regarding agricultural activities we see a large variety of activities among the respondents (Table 3.5). Percentages in some countries deviate quite strongly from the average, which point to national differences in agricultural activities, yet keeping in mind the disclaimer about small numbers of respondents for some countries (especially Poland and Austria). Forestry is clearly an important agricultural activity in Austria, due to the fact that 48% of the country's land area is covered by forest. The category 'other' is quite high in Austria and Spain, and this largely refers to viticulture (in both countries) and olives (Spain).

Table 3.5. Agricultural activities (percentages in italics differ at least 10% from the total average)

	Total	Austria	Spain	Netherlands	Poland
No. of respondents	271	49	83	122	17
Arable farming	47,2%	<i>53,1%</i>	<i>51,8%</i>	<i>35,2%</i>	<i>94,1%</i>
Dairy	33,2%	24,5%	10,8%	54,9%	11,8%
Horticulture (outdoor)	10,3%	10,2%	13,3%	8,2%	11,8%
Horticulture (indoor/ greenhouse)	2,2%	4,1%	1,2%	1,6%	5,9%
Livestock (meat, eggs)	42,2%	55,1%	<i>42,2%</i>	<i>41,0%</i>	17,6%
Forestry	11,4%	51,0%	<i>4,8%</i>	<i>1,6%</i>	0,0%
Aquaculture	0,7%	2,0%	<i>1,2%</i>	<i>0,0%</i>	0,0%
Other	18,8%	24,5%	<i>28,9%</i>	<i>11,5%</i>	5,9%

Financial support

Farmers in general are entitled to different forms of financial CAP support. Additionally there are also specific support measures for young farmers. Table 3.6 shows which support measures are available and which share of the young farmers have (not) received CAP support during the last year. There are some differences between countries (e.g. more Austrian young farmers receiving more general CAP support and dedicated CAP support for young farmers compared to their colleagues in the other three countries), but the general trend is quite similar. The survey results also suggest that the current support architecture is not fully reaching or satisfying respondents. Close to 40% of respondents report that they do not receive EU-funded support, although most non-recipients are aware of such programmes. Among those who answered the sufficiency question (Table 3.7), around 45% disagree that current financial support for young farmers is sufficient. This indicates that the issue is not only the existence and sufficiency of CAP instruments, but also their accessibility, adequacy and practical relevance.

Table 3.6. Support received during the last 12 months (percentages in italics differ at least 10% from the total average)

	Total	Austria	Spain	Netherlands	Poland
General CAP support: direct payment (BISS, CRIS, Ecoschemes, coupled support for certain sectors)	57,5%	73,9%	55,4%	51,6%	64,7%
General CAP support: rural development support (support for disadvantaged areas, investment support, cooperation, financial instruments)	32,5%	58,7%	33,7%	23,8%	17,6%
General CAP support: other	2,2%	4,3%	0,0%	3,3%	0,0%
CAP support targeted to young farmers: Complementary income support for young farmers - Pillar 1	13,1%	26,1%	10,8%	11,5%	0,0%
CAP support targeted to young farmers: Installation / start-up aid - Pillar 2	9,0%	28,3%	9,6%	1,6%	5,9%
CAP support targeted to young farmers: Young farmer top-up for investment support - Pillar 2	1,9%	4,3%	1,2%	0,8%	5,9%
CAP support targeted to young farmers: Cooperation measures	0,7%	2,2%	0,0%	0,8%	0,0%

CAP support targeted to young farmers: Other	0,4%	2,2%	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%
Support for agriculture other than from the CAP	4,5%	6,5%	3,6%	4,9%	0,0%
I did not receive financial support from EU-funded support programs, but I am aware of these programs	25,7%	19,6%	28,9%	24,6%	35,3%
I did not receive financial support from EU-funded support programs and I am not aware of these programs	12,7	4,3%	10,8%	17,2%	11,8%

Table 3.7. Level of agreement with the following statement: “The current financial support for young farmers I receive is sufficient” (percentages in italics differ at least 10% from the total average)

	Total	Austria	Spain	Netherlands	Poland
No. of respondents	135	35	40	53	7
Strongly disagree	11,1%	2,9%	<i>30,0%</i>	<i>1,9%</i>	<i>14,3%</i>
Disagree	33,3%	17,1%	27,5%	43,4%	71,4%
Neutral	44,4%	57,1%	30,0%	50,9%	14,3%
Agree	9,6%	22,9%	7,5%	3,8%	0,0%
Strongly agree	1,5%	0,0%	<i>5,0%</i>	<i>0,0%</i>	0,0%

Sustainable farming practices

The survey results show that a large variety of farming practices are being implemented by young farmers (Fig. 3.1). Crop rotation, cover cropping and use of renewable energy are the most common practices (implemented by more than 35% of the respondents), followed by a large set of practices that were implemented by 25-30% of the respondents. There are quite a few differences between countries (see table A2.6), which may partially be due to national differences in agricultural activities (Table 3.5). The comparison between countries shows that young farmers in Austria adopt sustainable farming practices more frequently and to a greater extent than young farmers in other countries.

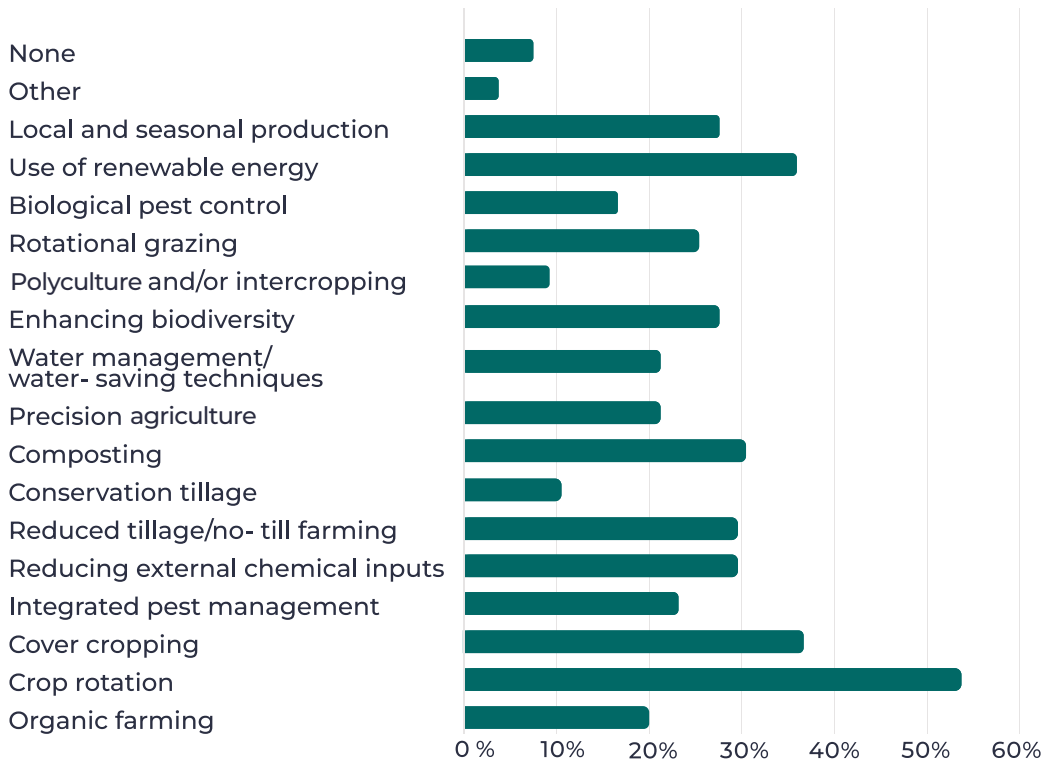


Figure 3.1. Implementation of sustainable farming practices (n=192) see also table A2.6)

The respondents were also asked to indicate what motivates them to implement sustainable farming practices (figure 3.2) and what prevents them from doing so (figure 3.3). Regarding motivations the respondents were asked to select the three most relevant ones and rank them in order of importance. This shows that implementation of sustainable farming practices is primarily driven by economic benefits, followed by government support and environmental concerns. Societal pressure and market demand are also relevant for (more than) 30% of the respondents. Reasons that were mentioned under the ‘other’ category are soil health, human health and ideology.

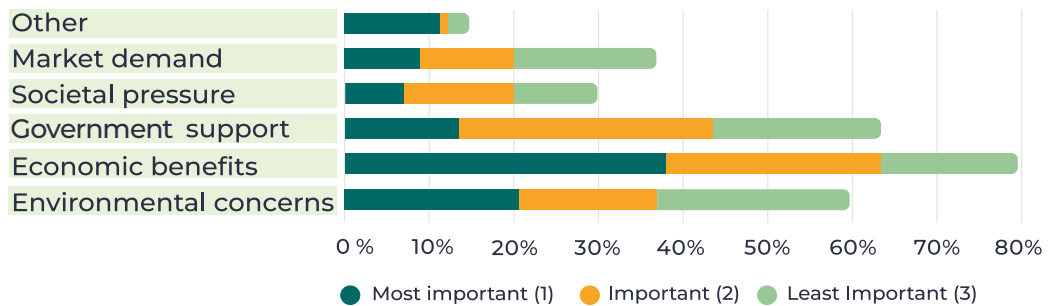


Figure 3.2. Motivations for implementing sustainable farming practices (n=156)

Regarding the reasons that prevent young farmers to (further) implement sustainable farming practices, the respondents were asked to select the five most relevant reasons and rank them in order from most (1) to least (5) important (Fig. 3.3). The results point to a variety of interlinked economic reasons that prevent the (further) implementation of sustainable farming practices: lack of financial resources and expected low return on investment, likely due to the combined effect of low demand and low premium price for sustainable products and high labour costs. Regulatory or bureaucratic challenges were also frequently (in total by 50% of the respondents) and imply insufficient institutional support for sustainable farming. While insufficient knowledge or training is of lesser importance, it is still considered to be a relevant reason for almost 40% of the respondents.

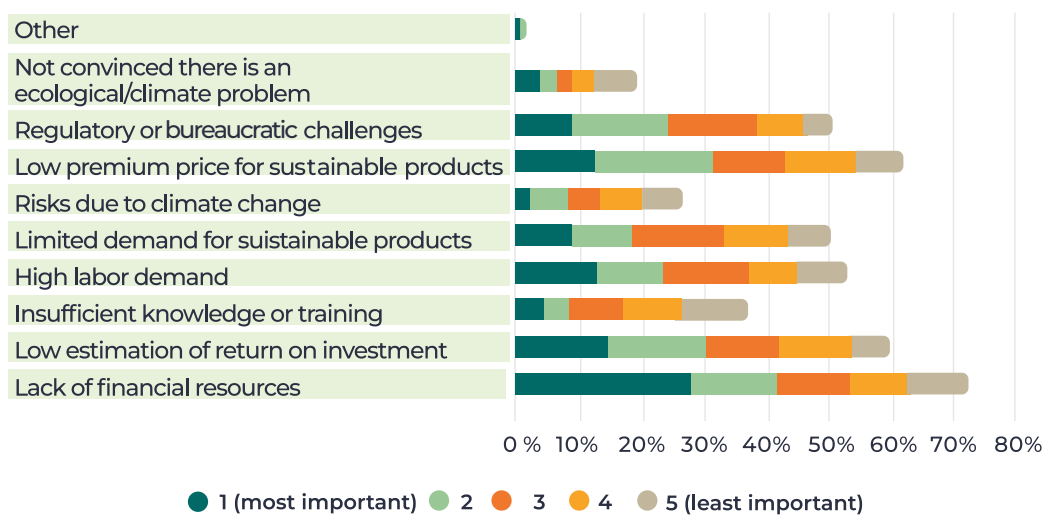


Figure 3.3. Reasons that prevent implementation of sustainable farming practices (n=150)

Digital agricultural tools

Digital agricultural tools, such as drones, crop sensors and robotics, have been promoted as important for the future of sustainable farming. The survey shows that these tools are used by 32% of the respondents (n=182) and the overall 32/68 division between users and non-users is largely the same for most countries, except for Poland, where none of the respondents is using digital tools. As only 12 respondents for Poland answered this question, it is impossible to draw any conclusions.

The respondents using digital agriculture tools were asked to indicate what motivates them to use these tools. Two reasons prevailed: economic benefits (87%) and labour saving opportunities (79%). Environmental concerns came forward as the third reason (34%), but primarily as the least important of the three most relevant reasons that could be selected. As only 47 respondents answered this question, it is important not to draw too firm conclusions from it.

A larger group of respondents answered the question about the main reasons that prevent the implementation of digital agricultural tools (Fig. 3.4) and this shows that lack of financial resources or high initial costs are mentioned most often and also as most important reason, followed by the low estimation of return on investment. In addition to these economic reasons, three other reasons are mentioned by close to 40% of the respondents. So while economic benefits are seen as the main benefit of implementing digital tools, the lack of financial resources prevents many from implementing them. As a result, farmers unable to afford these investments may find themselves caught in a downward spiral.

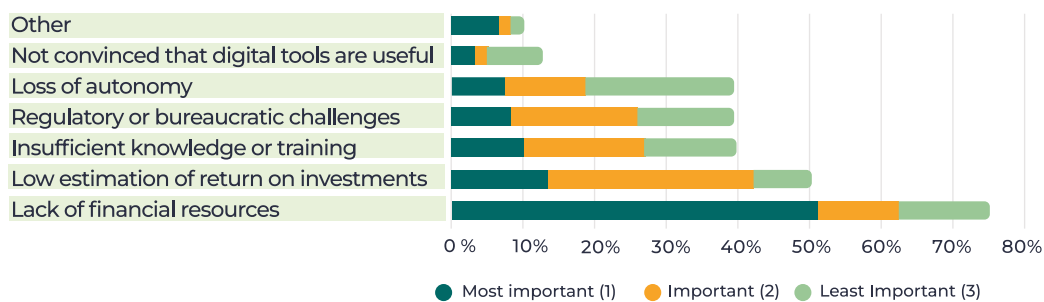


Figure 3.4. Reasons that prevent implementation of digital agricultural tools (n=137)

Impact of EU’s sustainable agricultural transition policy

The final topic for this section is the expected impact of the EU’s sustainable agricultural transition policy on future agricultural prospects. Table 3.8 shows that about a quarter of the young farmers expect this to be positive and close to half to be negative. Difference between countries are small, with a slight tendency to a more negative expectation in Spain and Poland.

Table 3.8. The expected impact of the EU’s sustainable agriculture transition policy on own future agricultural prospects (percentages in italics differ at least 10% from the total average)

	Total	Austria	Spain	Netherlands	Poland
No. of respondents	159	41	48	59	11
Very positive	3,1%	<i>0,0%</i>	<i>6,3%</i>	<i>1,7%</i>	<i>9,1%</i>
Somewhat positive	22,6%	31,7%	12,5%	28,8%	0,0%
No impact	15,1%	12,2%	6,3%	20,3%	36,4%
Somewhat negative	27,7%	34,1%	29,2%	20,3%	36,4%
Very negative	19,5%	14,6%	<i>27,1%</i>	<i>16,9%</i>	<i>18,2%</i>
Don’t know	11,9%	7,3%	<i>18,8%</i>	<i>11,9%</i>	0,0%

3.4. Perspectives on workload, employment, and policies

The last block of questions address issues of workload, employment opportunities and policies related to employment opportunities. These questions were answered by both agrarian and rural youth.

Workload

Respondents were asked to consider three statements regarding workload (Fig 3.5). This shows that most (65%) of all respondents agree that their work pressure is seasonal. The majority (57%) also indicates feeling overworked during high season peaks and slightly less than half (46%) of the respondents experiences this a threatening work-life balance. There are some minor differences between countries, but the general trend in all four countries is the same as the average trend.

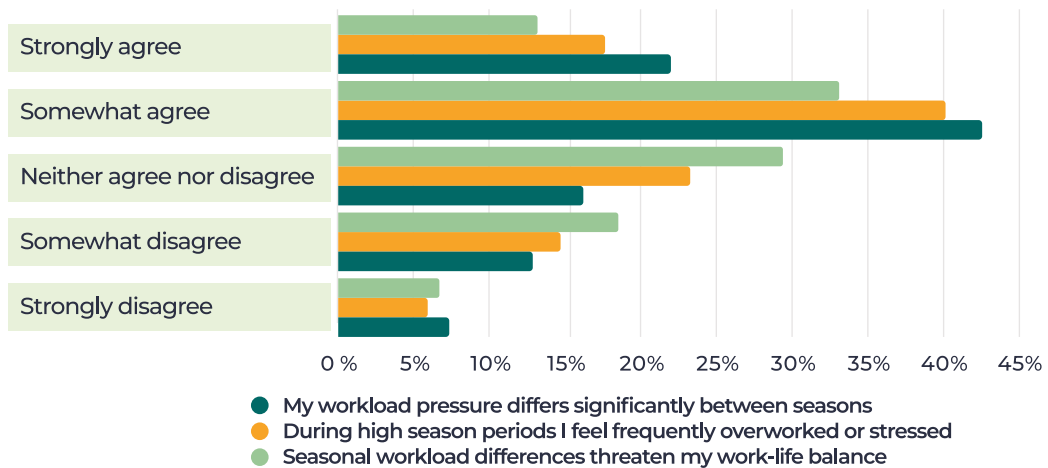


Figure 3.5. Statements about workload (n=461)

Confidence in keeping stable employment

About half of the respondents indicate that they are (very) confident in maintaining stable employment (including self-employment) in the next 5. Respondents in Austria are much more confident that the average, while respondents in Poland are the least confident (Table 3.9). This may also be explained by the fact that Polish respondents are less satisfied with their income (table 3.3) and rely more on financial support from their families and savings as income sources (tables 3.1 and 3.2). Another difference that we see is that confidence in keeping stable employment increases with a higher share of agricultural income in the total household’s income. This may be due to a strong work ethic and entrepreneurial spirit among young farmers, which gives them confidence that you can maintain a stable income one way or another.

Table 3.9. Confidence in maintaining stable employment in the next five years: total and country percentages (percentages in italics differ at least 10% from the total average)

	Total	Austria	Spain	Netherlands	Poland
No. of respondents	370	63	197	57	53
Not all confident	12,4%	<i>1,6%</i>	<i>17,3%</i>	<i>1,8%</i>	<i>18,9%</i>
Not confident	20,3%	4,8%	27,4%	17,5%	15,1%
Neutral	17,6%	15,9%	11,2%	21,1%	39,6%
Confident	31,9%	39,7%	28,4%	47,4%	18,9%
Very confident	17,8%	38,1%	<i>15,7%</i>	<i>12,3%</i>	7,5%

Table 3.10. Confidence in maintaining stable employment in the next five years related to the share of agricultural income in the household's income (percentages in italics differ at least 10% from the total average)

	Total	0%	1-25%	26-50%	51-75%	76-100%
No. of respondents	328	235	51	24	34	38
Not all confident	12,3%	<i>15,7%</i>	<i>11,8%</i>	<i>0,0%</i>	<i>11,8%</i>	<i>0,0%</i>
Not confident	20,4%	23,0%	15,7%	25,0%	14,7%	13,2%
Neutral	18,1%	20,0%	13,7%	20,8%	20,6%	7,9%
Confident	31,4%	26,8%	37,3%	33,3%	32,4%	50,0%
Very confident	17,8%	14,5%	<i>21,6%</i>	<i>20,8%</i>	20,6%	28,9%

Rural policy challenges

Based on the literature review (chapter 2) and the PESTE analysis (Annex 1) the respondents were asked to indicate on a 4-point scale (from not important to very important) how important they consider a number of policy challenges to be. Figure 3.6 shows that most of the policy challenges presented to agrarian and rural youth are perceived as (very) important. The most important policy challenge identified is the loss of public services and facilities, the one identified as least important is discrimination with regards to gender, ethnicity, country of origin and/or rurality. But even that challenge is still identified as important or very important by 58% of the respondents.

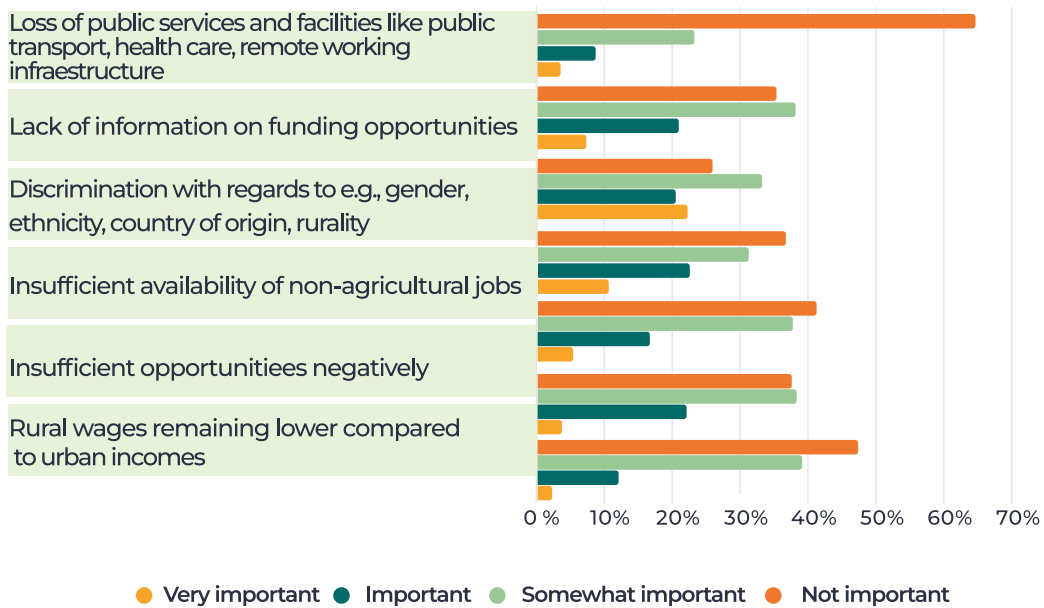


Figure 3.6. Importance of rural policy challenges (n=371; see also tables A2.6 and A2.7)

The importance of these rural policy challenges also differed according to country (see table A2.7). In general the Spanish respondents, followed by the Polish respondents, are much more inclined to consider all of these policy challenges (much) more important than the agrarian and rural youth in Austria and The Netherlands. This may have to do with more services and education opportunities close-by in those countries. Differences in importance of these rural policy challenges were sometimes also related to the share of agricultural income in the household’s income (see table A2.8), which point to differences between rural youth and agrarian youth. For example, discrimination is considered not to be important for 40-50% of the respondents for whom the share of agricultural income in the household’s income is above 25%. For rural youth (no agrarian income) only 9% consider this to be not important, while 70% consider it to be a (very) important policy challenge.

Career development skills

Agrarian and rural youth were also asked about the skills they need or consider important to advance their career. Business management skills and digital skills are most frequently mentioned as important and very important skills to have or acquire and hardly as not important. There are some differences between countries (see table A2.8), but these seem to be primarily related to differences between agrarian and rural youth (see table A2.9). In Austria and the Netherlands the share of agrarian youth (income partially or fully reliant on agriculture) is higher compared to the other two countries. This means for example that in Spain and Poland sustainable agriculture skills are more frequently mentioned as not or somewhat important, while in the other two

countries these are more often considered to be (very) important. Technical skills are more often mentioned as important among agrarian youth and the same holds true for business management skills. Technical skills are important for farmers as the more you can do yourself, the less you need to depend on external expertise and this helps to save costs. Digital skills are important for all and there is no difference between agrarian and rural youth, as in many, if not all, professions digital tools are part and parcel of everyday work. Having digital literacy is a precondition for any kind of job, whether self-employed or employed.

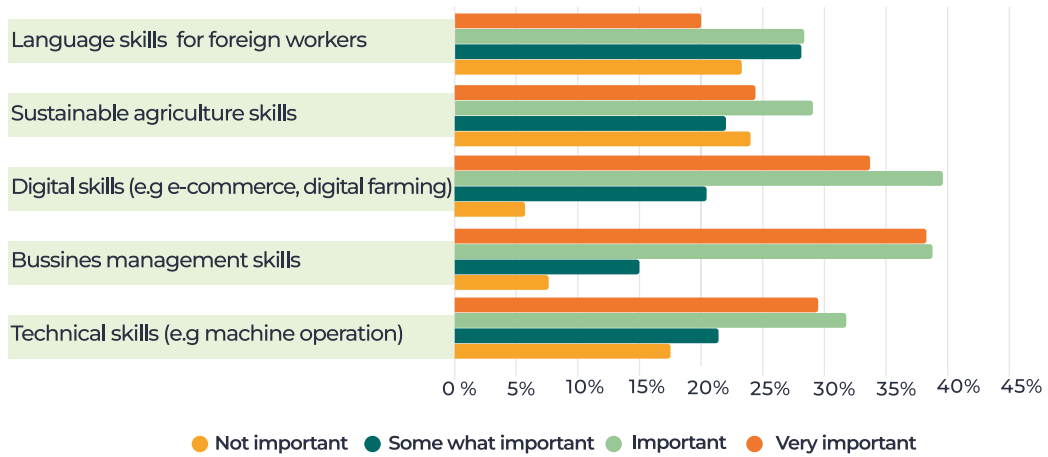


Figure 3.7. Importance of career development skills (n=363; see also tables A2.8 and A2.9)

Policy objectives fostering employment opportunities

In the survey eight different policy objectives were listed and respondents were asked to indicate if these objectives would help to enhance employment opportunities in rural areas. As figure 3.8 shows a large majority agrees that all of these objectives will support employment opportunities.

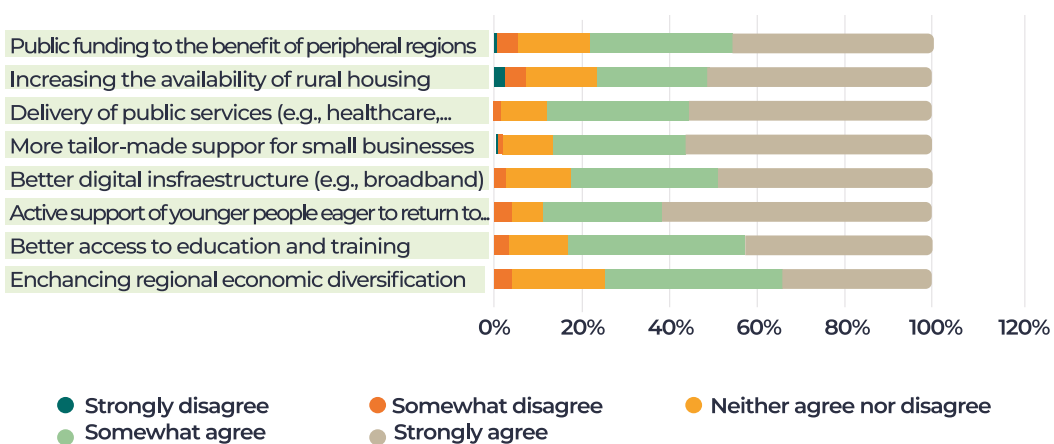


Figure 3.8. Importance of career development skills (n=363; see also tables A2.10)

For almost all policy objectives, respondents from the Netherlands indicated that they agreed less than those from the other three countries, and that they more often disagreed with the policy objectives aimed at promoting employment opportunities in rural areas. This is possibly linked to the fact that Dutch agrarian and rural youth have indicated that they are relatively positive about their income (table Complementary income support for your farmers - Pillar 1) and future employment opportunities (table 3.9). The challenges in Dutch rural areas are different from those in the other countries, especially Spain. For example, Dutch agrarian and rural youth do not necessarily want more housing in rural areas. A large proportion actually see further house-building in rural areas as an obstacle; they often expect this to have a negative impact on agriculture, or conversely to attract extra people 'from outside' to rural areas, who have less affinity with agriculture and their local area. Furthermore, you can see that digital infrastructure is not regarded as a key policy objective either; this is linked to the fact that it is often felt that this is already fairly well established in rural areas in the Netherlands.

Own rural area

Based on the literature review (chapter 2) and the PESTE-analysis (annex 1), we presented the respondents with a number of statements and asked whether these applied to their own rural region. Responses were given on a five-point scale ranging from 'strongly disagree' to 'strongly agree'. For the sake of clarity, we have combined 'strongly disagree' and 'disagree', and similarly for 'agree' and 'strongly agree' (Table 3.11). The overall results indicate that the majority of the respondents agree with all statements, implying that they consider them applicable to their own rural region. There are, however, large differences between countries. What emerges from table 3.11 is very much in line with the literature review and the PESTE-analysis, namely the importance of (affordable) housing, availability of and access to public services, and availability of jobs is key to maintain community vitality and liveability and to keep young people in rural areas. In all countries, respondents state that the countryside is increasingly being rediscovered as an attractive place to live; therefore, the potential to 'rejuvenate' rural areas exists, provided that a number of key conditions relating to housing, employment and public services are met. Respondents in the four countries clearly differ in opinion about the contribution of international labour migration to rural community vitality and liveability, as the responses to the last statement in table 3.11 show.

Table 3.11. (Dis)agreement with statements about own rural area (percentages in italics differ at least 10% from the total average)

		Total	Austria	Spain	Netherlands	Poland
No. of respondents		360	59	196	55	50
Not so much the quantity but the insufficient quality of rural employment makes younger people leave	Disagree	12,3%	16,9%	9,7%	21,8%	6,0%
	Neutral	20,9%	18,6%	18,5%	34,5%	18,0%
	Agree	66,9%	64,4%	71,8%	43,6%	76,0%
Lack of housing makes younger people leave	Disagree	25,6%	28,8%	26,0%	25,5%	20,0%
	Neutral	19,4%	33,9%	15,3%	18,2%	20,0%
	Agree	55,0%	37,3%	58,7%	56,4%	60,0%
Loss of public services (e.g. healthcare, education, public transport) makes younger people leave	Disagree	10,1%	18,6%	3,1%	25,9%	10,0%
	Neutral	16,8%	25,4%	10,3%	27,8%	20,0%
	Agree	73,2%	55,9%	86,7%	46,3%	70,0%
Rural areas are increasingly rediscovered by younger (urban) people as attractive places to live	Disagree	11,4%	16,9%	9,2%	16,7%	8,0%
	Neutral	21,2%	32,2%	17,3%	18,5%	26,0%
	Agree	67,4%	50,8%	73,5%	64,8%	66,0%
Rural job prospects increasingly depend on commuting opportunities and facilities for urban dwellers	Disagree	9,8%	11,9%	2,6%	40,7%	2,0%
	Neutral	19,8%	25,4%	13,8%	35,2%	20,0%
	Agree	70,4%	62,7%	83,6%	24,1%	78,0%
Extra jobs in rural areas are key to preserve community vitality and liveability	Disagree	5,0%	1,7%	1,0%	22,2%	6,0%
	Neutral	12,5%	13,6%	6,1%	27,8%	20,0%
	Agree	82,5%	84,7%	92,9%	50,0%	74,0%
International labour migrants contribute positively to our rural community vitality and liveability	Disagree	21,4%	30,5%	10,2%	46,3%	28,0%
	Neutral	24,2%	37,3%	16,3%	31,5%	32,0%
	Agree	54,3%	32,2%	73,5%	22,2%	40,0%

Rural discontent

At the end of the survey, respondents were presented with three statements regarding the interest shown in and appreciation of the countryside by politicians, the government and city dwellers. This shows that there is a great deal of discontent among rural and agrarian youth and that they feel the countryside is not recognised or appreciated, or at least not sufficiently so (Fig. 3.9). In particular, attention and support from politicians and government bodies are essential, as there is a need for structural (policy) measures regarding employment and quality of life (see, for example, Table 3.11) to ensure

that rural areas remain (or become) attractive places for young people to live and work. In relation to these propositions, we also examined differences between countries, between agrarian and rural youth, and in terms of living environments along the urban-rural continuum.

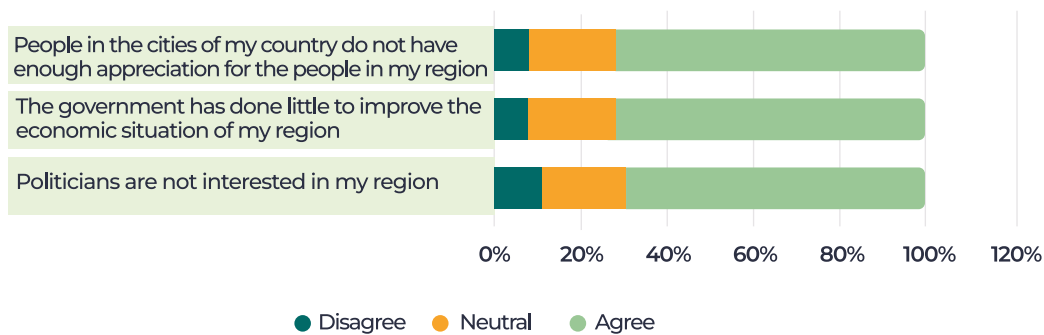


Figure 3.9. Expressions of rural discontent (n=360)

The largest differences emerge when comparing countries (Table 3.12). Rural discontent is high in Spain, especially regarding the interest of politicians and role of the government. A similar pattern can be seen in The Netherlands, but Dutch agrarian and rural youth additionally express that urban dwellers do not appreciate the people in rural areas. This reflects a very strong feeling among agrarian and rural youth about the lack of political interest in and governmental support for rural regions, as well as a prevailing discourse in both mainstream media and social media about the disconnection between the city and the countryside for the last 10 years. This is mirrored by strong support for populist political parties in rural areas. In Austria, and to a lesser degree in Poland, there seems to be less distrust in politicians and the government compared to Spain and the Netherlands.

Table 3.12. Expressions of rural discontent per country (percentages in italics differ at least 10% from the total average)

		Total	Austria	Spain	Netherlands	Poland
No. of respondents		360	60	196	54	50
Politicians are not interested in my region	Disagree	11,7%	35,0%	3,1%	11,1%	18,0%
	Neutral	18,9%	36,7%	8,7%	18,5%	38,0%
	Agree	69,4%	28,3%	88,2%	70,4%	44,0%
The government has done little to improve the economic situation of my region	Disagree	8,1%	20,0%	3,1%	1,9%	20,0%
	Neutral	18,6%	41,7%	6,6%	25,9%	30,0%
	Agree	73,3%	38,3%	90,3%	72,2%	50,0%
People in the cities of my country do not have enough appreciation for the people in my region	Disagree	7,8%	13,3%	4,1%	7,4%	16,0%
	Neutral	20,1%	28,3%	16,0%	7,4%	40,0%
	Agree	72,1%	58,3%	79,9%	85,2%	44,0%

4 Challenges for agrarian and youth employment

Based on the literature review, the PESTE analysis and the survey, eight interrelated challenges stand out for agrarian and rural youth employment at national and EU level:

1. Access to land, farm transfer and entry opportunities. Entry into farming continues to be constrained by high land prices, concentrated ownership structures, and late or insufficiently supported farm succession. This limits self-employment opportunities in agriculture and slows down generational renewal in rural areas.

2. Access to finance, investment and innovation. Young people face persistent difficulties in accessing loans, guarantees and start-up capital, not only for setting up or taking over a farm, but also for investing in digitalisation, modernisation and sustainable production. Existing support is often perceived as insufficient, difficult to access, or not timely enough to match young people's needs.

3. Fair income, profitability and economic resilience. Many young people perceive agriculture and rural employment as economically insecure. Fluctuating incomes, high investment and labour costs, low returns on sustainable products, and weak bargaining power in the value chain reduce the attractiveness of farming as a long-term career. In Austria, for example, the importance of off-farm work among respondents also points to the continued need to combine agricultural and non-agricultural income sources.

4. Policy, administrative and transition uncertainty. Changing rules, complex procedures, permit delays and fragmented multi-level governance create uncertainty for long-term planning and business development. At the same time, young farmers are expected to contribute to environmental and climate transitions whose costs and risks are often felt more immediately than their economic benefits.

5. Gaps in knowledge, education, advisory support and mentoring. Agrarian and rural youth need broad skill sets, including business management, technical, digital and sustainability-related competences. However, access to tailored advisory services, mentoring, career guidance and lifelong learning remains uneven, especially in areas where distance, weak local provision or limited connectivity make participation more difficult.

6. Limited career pathways and entrepreneurship beyond farming. For non-agrarian rural youth, the challenge is not only a lack of jobs, but also a lack of diverse and attractive career pathways that match their qualifications and interests. Seasonal, precarious or informal work remains common in some rural

sectors, while support for entrepreneurship beyond farming is often too weak to create a broader and more resilient rural labour market.

7. Rural attractiveness, public services, housing and connectivity. Youth employment cannot be separated from wider living conditions in rural areas. The survey confirms the central importance of affordable housing, public services, education, transport and digital connectivity for retaining young people. At the same time, national contexts differ: in the Netherlands, for instance, further housing development is not always seen positively, as it may create tensions with agriculture and local identity.

8. Workload, wellbeing, social conditions and recognition. Seasonal work pressure, long working hours and difficulties in maintaining a healthy work-life balance remain major concerns, particularly in agriculture. These pressures interact with mental health challenges, gendered burdens, social isolation and a broader feeling among many rural youth that their regions and livelihoods are not sufficiently recognised, valued or supported by public authorities and wider society.

Annex 1 PESTE analysis

The main aim of the PESTE analysis, carried out in the beginning of 2025 by members of the CORE consortium, was to identify and discuss the current and near-future context and challenges for agricultural and rural youth employment and life projects at national (Austria and The Netherlands) and EU levels. PESTE is an acronym for a strategic evaluation framework to identify the contexts – in particular external risks, opportunities and trends – for an organization, economic sector or social domain. The acronym stands for:

- **Political context:** the political systems in terms of state structure, governance, and the policy-making process, both formal and informal.
- **Economic context:** the country's/EU's economic structure, both formal and informal.
- **Socio-cultural context:** the social characteristics of the country/EU, including traditional values and attitudes. A gender-focused analysis is particularly relevant for EUD, as gender mainstreaming is required across all interventions.
- **Technological context:** the availability of technology in the country's/EU's rural areas and economic sectors, and to accessibility, both in economic terms and in terms of the necessary hard and soft competencies.
- **Environmental context:** the environmental issues at the national/EU and global levels (e.g., climate change).

The main takeaways from the partners' PESTE analyses for Austria (JLW), the Netherlands (NAJK), and the EU (CEJA and RYE) level are summarized below in table A1. and further explained in the sections after the table.

Table A1. Summary of the PESTE analysis

	Austria	Netherlands	EU
Political context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decision-making spans the EU, national, provincial, and municipal levels. Youth and farmer institutions (JLW/Landjugend; Chamber of Agriculture) train, build networks, and advocate. The analysis cites the CAP 2023–2027 and Austrian rural and agricultural strategies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The government does not make clear choices, fuelling uncertainty and stagnation. Unclear policies and legal barriers stall permits and block innovation and expansion. Nitrogen legislation and other targets (WFD 2027, climate 2030, nitrogen 2035) intensify pressure. Progressive farmer organizations and the government remain in conflict, which deepens uncertainty. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EU institutions and processes (EP committees, DG AGRI) shape policy, alongside stakeholder forums such as EBAF and the Strategic Dialogue. CAP 2023–2027 anchors action on generational renewal and rural development. The Rural Pact and other instruments (cohesion funds, youth employment measures, and the Just Transition) provide additional support. Shifting rules, limited access to funding information, and rural youth distrust in institutions remain key challenges.
Economic context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agriculture still employs many rural residents, while tourism, crafts, digital services, and renewables create jobs. Young farmers face volatile incomes and struggle to access land and finance (high land prices; reliance on loans and grants). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High land prices keep young farmers out. Sustainability requirements raise costs and raise competitiveness concerns. Some young farmers consider leaving the sector or moving abroad; labour shortages and the cost of automation add pressure. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concentrated land ownership limits access to land, and many young people struggle to secure financing and credit. Rural areas often offer fewer and lower-paying jobs, driving outmigration, even as services, tourism, renewables, and remote work diversify opportunities. Informal work and a lack of tailored support continue to weaken prospects for young rural entrepreneurs.

	Austria	Netherlands	EU
Socio-cultural context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young people leave rural areas, and rural communities age. • Farms rely on seasonal labour, creating integration challenges. • Many young people view farming as physically demanding and financially uncertain. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fewer young people are taking over farms; the analysis frames the sector’s future as a societal and political choice. • Society values food production but also criticizes farmers and pressures them regarding environmental impacts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rural areas age as young people migrate to cities. • Some sectors rely on migrant labour. • Rural residents face gaps in transportation, housing, healthcare, and childcare, and women face additional barriers and gender-selective outmigration. Limited training in entrepreneurship and digital/innovation skills also restricts participation.
Technological context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technological context Farmers increasingly use precision tools (e.g., GPS guidance, drones, smart irrigation), but smaller farms often cannot afford them. • Rural broadband remains uneven, especially in remote areas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dutch agriculture leads in innovation, but permitting and regulation hinder adoption and leave investments underutilized. • With an aging population and labour shortages, farmers need robotics and precision farming for efficiency and sustainability—if authorities allow it. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High costs and training needs slow the adoption of smart and precision farming across the EU. • Broadband gaps still limit the digital transition; Smart Villages and CAP support help, but unevenly. • Rural areas lag cities in digital skills; digital platforms can support entrepreneurship and remote work, but uptake varies.
Environmental context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate change (heat and weather variability) pressures farming, alongside soil and biodiversity concerns. • Rural areas expand renewable energy, and farmers show interest in organic and regenerative practices. • Farmers and policymakers balance environmental goals with economic viability. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate, nitrogen, and nature goals place strong pressure on the sector; current policies risk a “standstill.” • The transition remains complex, and young farmers have little room to implement sustainable changes given current constraints. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extreme events and water stress from climate change threaten farming and rural livelihoods. • EU sustainability ambitions for emissions, biodiversity, and resource use require incentives that keep farms viable. • Renewable energy expansion in rural areas creates opportunities and risks, so policies must protect agricultural and environmental resources.

Political context

Austria (JLW). JLW highlights how Austria's party landscape shapes rural and agricultural employment through distinct priorities: the ÖVP is agrarian-friendly, supporting rural development and family farming through subsidies and CAP mechanisms; the SPÖ emphasizes social welfare, fair labor conditions, and stability in rural development; and the FPÖ criticizes EU agricultural policy and adopts a more protectionist stance, while lacking concrete long-term modernization strategies and often overlooking issues such as climate adaptation and rural economic diversification. Politically, decision-making occurs at multiple levels (EU, national, provincial, and municipal), and youth organizations and institutions (JLW, Landjugend Österreich, and the Austrian Chamber of Agriculture) serve as key actors in training, networking, and policy advocacy, including collaboration with government on subsidies and training. The main policy references include CAP 2023–2027, the Austrian Vision 2028, and a National Strategy for Rural Development focused on sustainability, competitiveness, modernization, diversification, agri-tech investment, and access to finance for young entrepreneurs.

The Netherlands (NAJK). The core political message centers on uncertainty and stagnation: the government fails to make clear choices, thereby creating a sense of stagnation. Unclear policies and legal barriers stall permit issuance, hindering innovation and expansion. Regulations and legislation, especially nitrogen legislation, hinder expansion and sustainability efforts, while pressure from water quality targets (WFD 2027), climate goals (2030), and nitrogen targets (2035) intensifies. Progressive farmer organizations and the government maintain a conflictual relationship, further increasing uncertainty.

EU level (CEJA). CEJA emphasizes EU governance and policy processes affecting young farmers: the European Parliament (notably AGRI and EMPL) and DG AGRI play central roles. The analysis highlights new or reinforced stakeholder structures, including the European Board on Agriculture and Food (EBAF, established in December 2024) and the Strategic Dialogue on the Future of EU Agriculture (launched in 2024). The EU CAP Network plays an important role in knowledge-sharing and in improving the implementation of CAP-funded rural development programs. The analysis describes stakeholder representation as crowded: CEJA serves as a key advocate for young farmers, alongside organizations such as COPA-COGECA, EFFAT, EuroCommerce, FoodDrinkEurope, and IFOAM. CAP 2023–2027 serves as the major policy anchor, and the analysis notes that it dedicates €8.5 billion to generational renewal through grants and direct payments, as well as access to loans and land mobility schemes. The analysis summarizes the Strategic Dialogue's conclusions, which call for more targeted socio-economic support for young farmers (especially small and mixed farms) and propose a Temporary Just Transition Fund. CEJA also anticipates the EU Strategy for Generational Renewal in Agriculture, which was published in October 2025.

EU level (RYE). RYE focuses on institutions (EP committees, DG AGRI, EBAF, Strategic Dialogue) but places greater emphasis on broader rural governance and participation tools, including the Rural Pact and its Coordination Group. It frames CAP 2023–2027 primarily through rural development and “Jobs and Growth in Rural Areas” (Objective 8), highlighting Pillar II measures (business creation and diversification, LEADER, and basic services) as tools to support rural viability and slow depopulation. It also stresses non-CAP instruments: cohesion policy (ESF+ and ERDF), the Youth Employment Initiative and the European Youth Guarantee, and the Just Transition Fund. Key political challenges include constantly changing regulations that undermine planning reliability, limited access to information on funding opportunities for rural youth and small municipalities, and growing distrust in political institutions among rural youth, as illustrated by Youth Survey 2024 figures comparing rural and urban respondents’ views and voting behavior.

Economic context

Austria (JLW). The Austrian rural economy remains strongly agricultural (about 13% of the rural workforce is in farming), alongside growing non-agricultural activities (rural tourism, crafts, and digital services). Emerging opportunities include agro-tourism, e-commerce, and renewable energy projects. JLW notes a minimum wage “around €1,700 gross per month,” while agricultural incomes may fall below this due to volatile market prices, even as support schemes aim to stabilize incomes. Access to land and finance is a major barrier: high land prices (e.g., €32,000 per hectare in 2022) make entry difficult; low-interest loans and startup grants exist, but financial constraints persist for many young farmers.

The Netherlands (NAJK). The economic narrative centers on the limited viability of young farmers. High land prices restrict access to farmland, with older farmers and investment firms portrayed as advantaged buyers. Sustainability requirements raise production costs and intensify competition with countries that have less strict regulations and lower land prices. More young farmers are considering moving abroad or leaving the sector because of better economic conditions, fewer regulations, or less societal pressure elsewhere. NAJK also highlights labor shortages and the high costs of automation and labor for young farmers.

EU level (CEJA). CEJA describes EU rural employment as still heavily agricultural but increasingly diversified (tourism, renewable energy, rural services), with remote work and the digital economy seen as potential mitigators of rural–urban migration driven by limited well-paid rural jobs. CEJA highlights wide variation in minimum and living wages across member states, with rural wages often lower than urban levels. Structural barriers to entry in farming include large-scale land ownership that limits access, and CEJA presents land rental and cooperative models as alternatives. CEJA links generational renewal to land mobility and calls for tax incentives and retirement schemes to ease intergenerational transfer.

Limited access to credit is a recurring constraint, with CAP and European Investment Bank-type financing programs noted. CEJA pushes for stronger financial incentives, including higher direct-payment top-ups for young farmers.

EU level (RYE). RYE focuses on EU rural youth employment beyond farming, noting limited opportunities tied to declining businesses and economic activity, while also highlighting diversification into tourism, renewable energy, and services. RYE repeats the theme that better-paid work is often missing in rural areas, fueling “brain drain,” while remote work may offer partial relief. It also raises concerns about informality in rural labor markets, which causes job insecurity and weak social protection. For entrepreneurship and innovation, RYE points to limited financial capital, insufficient digital infrastructure and skills, and a lack of targeted business-support programs tailored to young rural entrepreneurs.

Socio-cultural context

Austria (JLW). The Austrian analysis highlights rural demographic realities: about 40% of the population lives in rural areas, but youth outmigration is common due to limited career prospects, contributing to community aging. Non-EU (and other non-local) seasonal labor is important to agricultural workforces, yet integration challenges include language barriers and access to services. Farming is widely perceived by youth as physically demanding and financially uncertain, though the document also notes a “push” toward sustainable and digital agriculture that may appeal to more tech-oriented young people. Despite these socio-cultural challenges, Austria has the highest number of young farmers in the EU.

The Netherlands (NAJK). Fewer young people are choosing farm succession because farming is becoming less attractive amid regulatory changes and uncertainty. The analysis frames the issue as a societal and political choice—whether the Netherlands wants to retain young farmers—and warns that without supportive policy, the sector risks disappearing. Social appreciation is described as mixed: food production is valued, but farmers face criticism for environmental impacts, alongside growing societal pressure and activism.

EU level (CEJA). CEJA highlights aging and migration trends: rural areas face an aging population, and youth migrate to cities, while farming demographics skew older (the average farmer age was 57 in 2020), with only 6.5% of farmers under 35 and a very small share of women farmers under 35 (4.2%). It notes the growing role of migrant workers in labor-intensive sectors and emphasizes persistent social inclusion gaps in housing, services, and community support. CEJA also stresses that people often view agriculture as demanding, financially unstable, and with limited career prospects, and that society undervalues farming despite its role in food security and sustainability. The analysis identifies gender barriers (land ownership, business creation, leadership) and presents limited access to vocational training and innovation-oriented skills (entrepreneurship, digital farming) as constraints on youth participation.

EU level (RYE). RYE similarly emphasizes demographic decline and youth outmigration, but it adds detail on gender-selective migration (young women leave rural areas more than young men), the “invisible labor” of women, and women’s comparatively limited access to services, organizations, infrastructure, and technology. People often perceive rural areas as unattractive due to weak infrastructure and fewer cultural and leisure services, while rural residents experience systematically worse access to basic services (public transportation, housing, healthcare, childcare, and elder care). It provides examples of longer distances to schools and health services for rural, especially remote, residents compared with city residents, and it describes specific housing barriers in tourist rural regions (investors and urban buyers compete for housing, poor housing conditions require renovation, and communities lack public housing). Education and training gaps include limited access to nonformal learning and apprenticeships, weak recognition of these opportunities, insufficient exposure to entrepreneurial, digital, and innovation skills, and a lack of mentors who live and work successfully in rural areas.

Technological context

Austria (JLW). The Austrian analysis describes growing use of GPS-guided tractors, drones, and smart irrigation, but notes that smaller farms struggle with costs; EU and national grants partially support access to technology. JLW describes broadband as inconsistent, especially in remote mountainous areas, and notes government initiatives to improve connectivity.

The Netherlands (NAJK). Technology is a major strength and necessity (i.e., “Dutch agriculture leads in innovation”), yet the central constraint remains political: authorities hinder innovation by withholding permits, leaving investments underutilized. With an aging population and labor shortages, NAJK portrays robotics and precision farming as crucial for efficiency and sustainability, “provided they are allowed.”

EU level (CEJA). CEJA highlights uneven adoption of smart farming and precision agriculture across the EU, with high costs and training gaps as key barriers. It frames precision tools as capable of reducing waste and optimizing yields, but notes that limited rural broadband constrains the digital transition. The analysis presents Smart Villages and CAP funds as responses, though coverage remains uneven. It links technology to rural “brain drain,” noting that tech-skilled youth often leave for cities, and argues that weak digital-skills training in agricultural education limits uptake. Mechanization reduces demand for manual labor while increasing the need for tech-related skills, making upskilling and lifelong learning essential.

EU level (RYE). RYE treats digital infrastructure as foundational to both farming and the broader rural economy, noting limited broadband and uneven progress despite Smart Villages and CAP support. It notes that basic digital skills are

improving in rural areas but remain well below those in cities (a 15% gap). It frames e-commerce and digital platforms as opportunities for rural entrepreneurs, though uptake remains slow. RYE also highlights innovation pathways such as agritourism and food processing, and links the rise of green and circular economy initiatives to new rural jobs in renewable energy, sustainable forestry, and waste management.

Environmental context

Austria (JLW). JLW identifies climate pressures (higher temperatures and unpredictable weather), soil erosion, and biodiversity loss as threats to farming. It describes rural renewable energy development (solar, wind, and biogas) and notes that farmers are increasingly shifting toward organic and regenerative agriculture to meet sustainability targets. JLW frames the political sensitivity as a tension between sustainability goals and economic viability and portrays younger farmers as more open to climate-friendly innovation, while older generations often prioritize conventional agricultural methods.

The Netherlands (NAJK). NAJK portrays environmental policy as highly consequential: the sector faces strong pressure to meet climate, nitrogen, and nature restoration goals, and the analysis warns that these policies could put agriculture in “a complete standstill.” While it presents the sustainability transition as necessary, it describes the requirements as high and the transition as complex, leaving young farmers with limited room to implement sustainable initiatives. NAJK concludes that without flexibility and a realistic, feasible environmental policy, the sector risks shrinking.

EU level (CEJA). CEJA identifies climate change as one of the biggest threats to young farmers, highlighting more frequent droughts, floods, and extreme weather, and underscoring water access as a growing issue. It frames the CAP as promoting sustainability measures but notes implementation and farm viability challenges. It also points to EU Green Deal and Farm to Fork pressures for lower emissions, biodiversity conservation, and sustainable resource use. Young farmers support a broad mix of nature-positive and climate-adaptation practices, but their uptake depends on economic incentives, workable policy design, and a toolkit that can include soil management, biodiversity measures, conservation agriculture, water-saving practices, precision agriculture and other locally adapted solutions.

EU level (RYE). RYE links climate change to the declining attractiveness of farming (through productivity impacts and heightened uncertainty from extreme events) and also frames sustainability needs as a source of new rural employment in conservation and agroecology. It places strong emphasis on renewable energy in rural areas, describing rural territories as central to current and potential hydropower, onshore wind, and solar PV generation, while warning that stakeholders must preserve agricultural and environmental resources throughout renewable energy development to ensure a sustainable green transition.

Annex 2a. Survey Results (tables)

This annex includes tables and figures with survey results that are referred to in chapter 3.

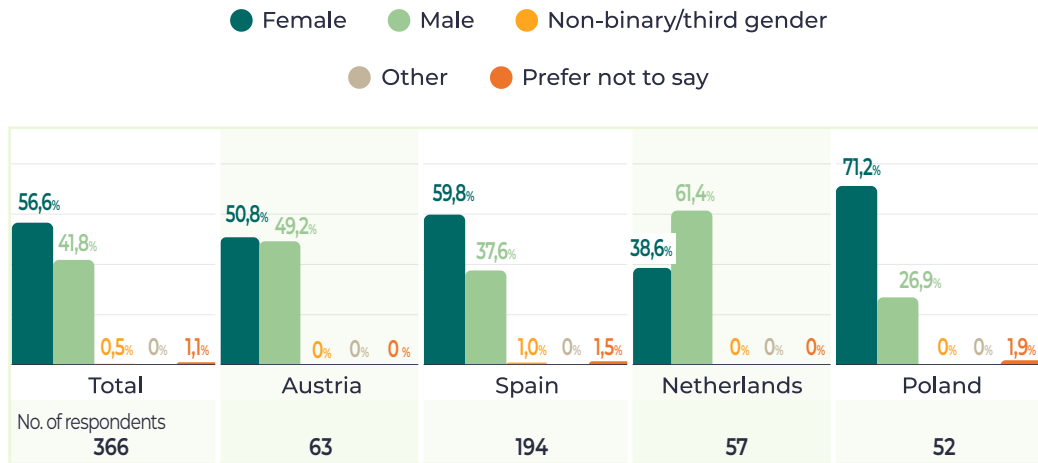


Figure A2.1. Gender ratio of respondents

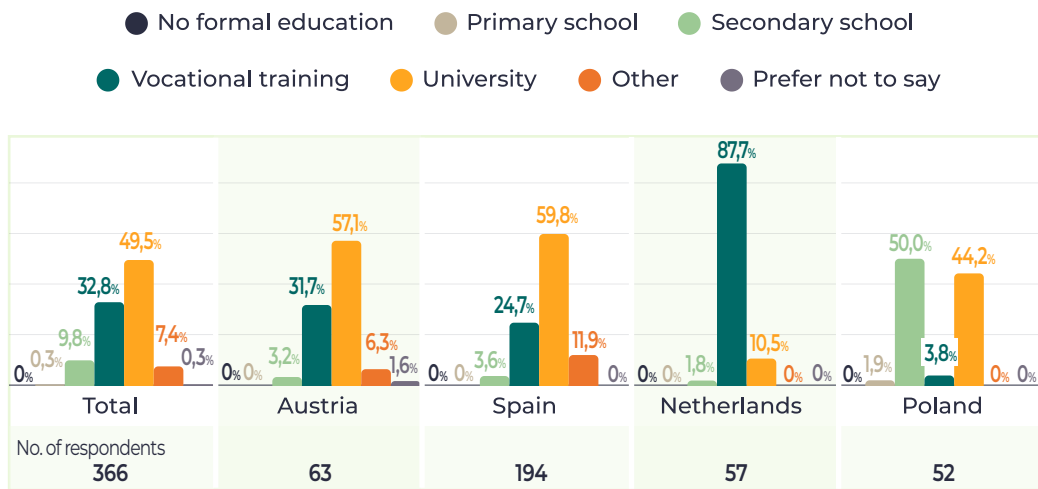


Figure A2.2 Education level of respondents

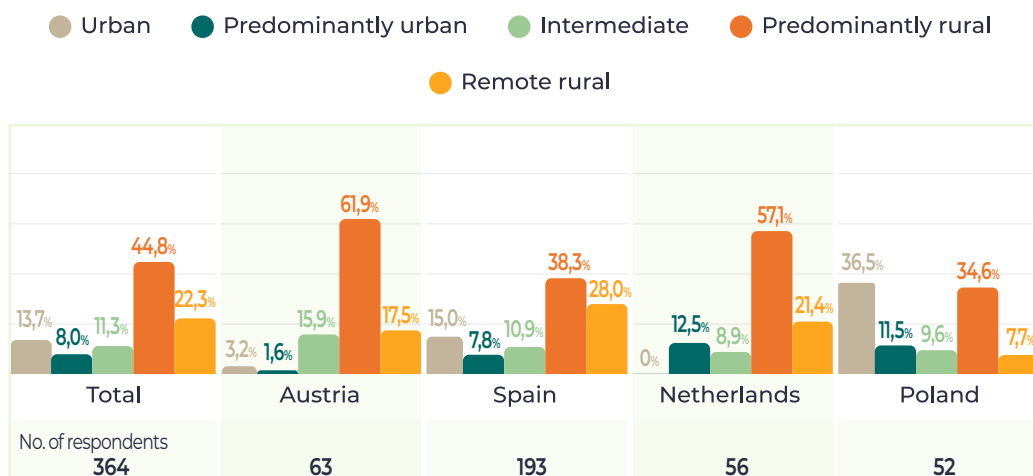


Figure A2.3. Area of residence

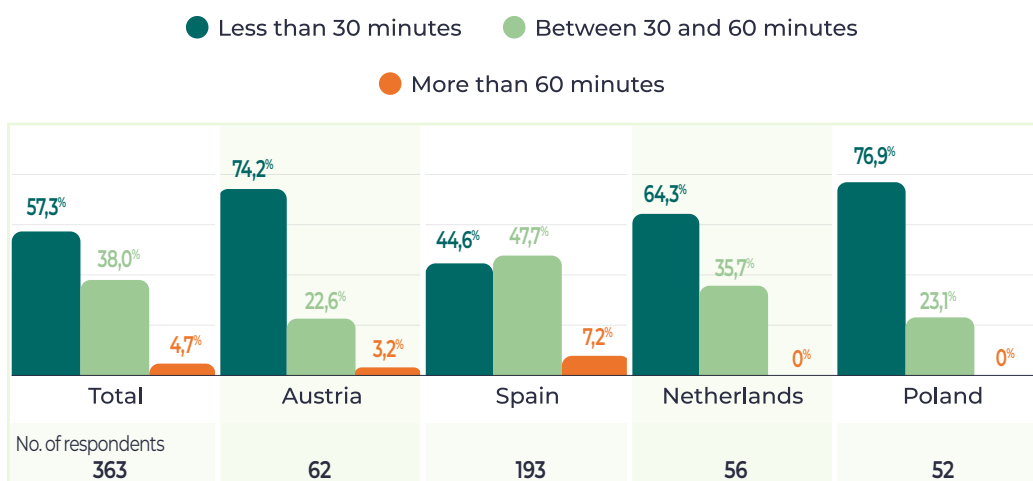


Figure A2.4. Travel time by car (under normal traffic conditions) to nearest hospital

Table A2.1. Household composition (percentages in *italics* differ at least 10% from the total average)

	Total	Austria	Spain	Netherlands	Poland
No. of respondents	743	88	347	221	87
Single household (living alone)	13,6%	15,9%	15,3%	10,4%	12,6%
Couple household (living with a partner, no children)	21,3%	27,3%	27,7%	11,3%	14,9%

	Total	Austria	Spain	Netherlands	Poland
Family household (living with a partner and children)	20,9%	11,4%	16,7%	32,1%	18,4%
Extended family household (living with parents, grandparents, and/or other family members (incl. children))	36,9%	43,2%	30,5%	40,3%	47,1%
Shared household (living with non-family housemates)	7,4%	2,3%	9,8%	5,9%	6,9%

Table A2.3. Importance of rural policy challenges according to country

		Total	Austria	Spain	Netherlands	Poland
No. of respondents		368	61	197	58	52
Rural wages remaining lower compared to urban incomes	Not important	2,2%	3,3%	1,0%	5,2%	1,9%
	Somewhat Important	12,0%	6,6%	9,7%	24,1%	13,5%
	Important	39,0%	39,3%	29,6%	51,7%	59,6%
	Very important	46,9%	50,8%	59,7%	19,0%	25,0%
Seasonal work peaks and lows affecting rural job opportunities negatively	Not important	3,8%	8,3%	1,5%	10,5%	0,0%
	Somewhat Important	21,4%	36,7%	11,7%	47,4%	11,8%
	Important	37,8%	41,7%	31,5%	29,8%	66,7%
	Very important	37,0%	13,3%	55,3%	12,3%	21,6%
Insufficient opportunities for education, skills or training	Not important	4,9%	13,3%	1,0%	12,3%	1,9%
	Somewhat Important	16,2%	25,0%	12,3%	22,8%	13,5%
	Important	37,6%	36,7%	28,2%	54,4%	55,8%
	Very important	41,2%	25,0%	58,5%	10,5%	28,8%

		Total	Austria	Spain	Netherlands	Poland
No. of respondents		368	61	197	58	52
Insufficient availability of non-agricultural jobs	Not important	10,2%	11,7%	3,6%	35,1%	5,9%
	Somewhat Important	22,3%	38,3%	14,3%	29,8%	25,5%
	Important	31,0%	36,7%	26,0%	28,1%	47,1%
	Very important	36,5%	13,3%	56,1%	7,0%	21,6%
Discrimination with regards to e.g., gender, ethnicity, country of origin, rurality	Not important	22,0%	43,3%	14,3%	39,3%	7,8%
	Somewhat Important	20,1%	11,7%	19,9%	25,0%	25,5%
	Important	32,8%	28,3%	35,7%	25,0%	35,3%
	Very important	25,1%	16,7%	30,1%	10,7%	31,4%
Lack of information on funding opportunities	Not important	6,8%	18,3%	3,0%	8,8%	5,8%
	Somewhat Important	20,5%	30,0%	16,2%	28,1%	17,3%
	Important	37,7%	36,7%	31,5%	49,1%	50,0%
	Very important	35,0%	15,0%	49,2%	14,0%	26,9%
Loss of public services and facilities like public transport, health care, remote working infrastructure	Not important	3,6%	5,0%	0,0%	14,3%	3,9%
	Somewhat Important	8,5%	16,7%	2,0%	19,6%	11,8%
	Important	23,1%	36,7%	9,2%	35,7%	47,1%
	Very important	64,7%	41,7%	88,8%	30,4%	37,3%

Table A2.4. Importance of rural policy challenges according to share of agricultural income in household's income

		Share of agricultural income in household's income				
		0%	1-25%	26-50%	51-75%	76-100%
Rural wages remaining lower compared to urban incomes	Not important	1,7%	4,0%	9,1%	0,0%	5,1%
	Somewhat Important	9,8%	8,0%	22,7%	20,6%	15,4%
	Important	36,8%	44,0%	18,2%	47,1%	46,2%
	Very important	51,7%	44,0%	50,0%	32,4%	33,3%

		Share of agricultural income in household's income				
		0%	1-25%	26-50%	51-75%	76-100%
Technical skills (e.g. machine operation)	Not important	23,7%	10,2%	9,1%	9,1%	0,0%
	Somewhat Important	22,0%	20,4%	9,1%	27,3%	18,4%
	Important	29,3%	36,7%	59,1%	21,2%	36,8%
	Very important	25,0%	32,7%	22,7%	42,4%	44,7%
Seasonal work peaks and lows affecting rural job opportunities negatively	Not important	1,7%	6,1%	9,1%	11,8%	2,6%
	Somewhat Important	15,4%	24,5%	31,8%	29,4%	44,7%
	Important	38,0%	38,8%	40,9%	35,3%	39,5%
	Very important	44,9%	30,6%	18,2%	23,5%	13,2%
Insufficient opportunities for education, skills or training	Not important	0,9%	6,1%	27,3%	11,8%	10,5%
	Somewhat Important	14,2%	22,4%	18,2%	20,6%	18,4%
	Important	32,6%	40,8%	22,7%	47,1%	55,3%
	Very important	52,4%	30,6%	31,8%	20,6%	15,8%
Insufficient availability of non-agricultural jobs	Not important	5,2%	8,2%	22,7%	20,6%	26,3%
	Somewhat Important	17,6%	18,4%	36,4%	23,5%	42,1%
	Important	30,9%	36,7%	22,7%	35,3%	23,7%
	Very important	46,4%	36,7%	18,2%	20,6%	7,9%
Discrimination with regards to e.g., gender, ethnicity, country of origin, rurality	Not important	9,0%	32,7%	50,0%	44,1%	43,2%
	Somewhat Important	20,6%	28,6%	13,6%	11,8%	16,2%
	Important	37,8%	26,5%	9,1%	29,4%	24,3%
	Very important	32,6%	12,2%	27,3%	14,7%	16,2%
Lack of information on funding opportunities	Not important	3,8%	14,3%	9,1%	11,8%	7,9%
	Somewhat Important	16,6%	24,5%	36,4%	17,6%	28,9%
	Important	36,2%	38,8%	31,8%	50,0%	39,5%
	Very important	43,4%	22,4%	22,7%	20,6%	23,7%

		Share of agricultural income in household's income				
		0%	1-25%	26-50%	51-75%	76-100%
Loss of public services and facilities like public transport, health care, remote working infrastructure	Not important	0,9%	8,2%	9,1%	6,1%	7,9%
	Somewhat Important	5,6%	14,3%	13,6%	12,1%	13,2%
	Important	18,0%	30,6%	40,9%	30,3%	23,7%
	Very important	75,5%	46,9%	36,4%	51,5%	55,3%

Table A2.5. Importance of career development skills according to country

		Total	Austria	Spain	Netherlands	Poland
No. of respondents		363	59	195	57	52
Business management skills	Not important	7,5%	6,8%	10,3%	0,0%	5,9%
	Somewhat Important	15,0%	3,4%	18,6%	14,0%	15,7%
	Important	39,1%	35,6%	36,1%	56,1%	35,3%
	Very important	28,5%	54,2%	35,1%	29,8%	43,1%
Digital skills (e.g., e-commerce, digital farming)	Not important	5,6%	3,4%	5,2%	5,3%	10,0%
	Somewhat Important	20,6%	8,5%	23,7%	21,1%	22,0%
	Important	40,0%	49,2%	33,0%	54,4%	40,0%
	Very important	33,9%	39,0%	38,1%	19,3%	28,0%
Sustainable agriculture skills	Not important	24,1%	10,2%	30,4%	7,0%	35,3%
	Somewhat Important	22,2%	23,7%	18,6%	33,3%	21,6%
	Important	29,4%	30,5%	25,3%	42,1%	29,4%
	Very important	24,4%	35,6%	25,8%	17,5%	13,7%
Language skills for foreign workers	Not important	23,3%	41,4%	20,5%	22,8%	13,7%
	Somewhat Important	28,3%	34,5%	28,2%	31,6%	17,6%
	Important	28,5%	5,2%	30,3%	42,1%	33,3%
	Very important	19,9%	19,0%	21,0%	3,5%	35,3%

Table A2.6. Importance of career development skills according to share of agricultural income in household's income

		Share of agricultural income in household's income				
		0%	1-25%	26-50%	51-75%	76-100%
Technical skills (e.g. machine operation)	Not important	23,7%	10,2%	9,1%	9,1%	0,0%
	Somewhat Important	22,0%	20,4%	9,1%	27,3%	18,4%
	Important	29,3%	36,7%	59,1%	21,2%	36,8%
	Very important	25,0%	32,7%	22,7%	42,4%	44,7%
Business management skills	Not important	10,8%	0,0%	13,6%	0,0%	0,0%
	Somewhat Important	18,6%	10,2%	13,6%	6,1%	2,6%
	Important	35,5%	32,7%	45,5%	54,5%	50,0%
	Very important	35,1%	57,1%	27,3%	39,4%	47,4%
Digital skills (e.g., e-commerce, digital farming)	Not important	6,1%	4,1%	4,5%	9,1%	0,0%
	Somewhat Important	20,0%	22,4%	18,2%	15,2%	21,1%
	Important	36,1%	34,7%	54,5%	45,5%	52,6%
	Very important	37,8%	38,8%	22,7%	30,3%	26,3%
Sustainable agriculture skills	Not important	33,8%	2,0%	18,2%	12,1%	5,3%
	Somewhat Important	17,7%	34,7%	13,6%	30,3%	26,3%
	Important	25,1%	30,6%	36,4%	42,4%	36,8%
	Very important	23,4%	32,7%	31,8%	15,2%	31,6%
Language skills for foreign workers	Not important	17,2%	33,3%	27,3%	36,4%	31,6%
	Somewhat Important	25,0%	41,7%	40,9%	18,2%	34,2%
	Important	31,9%	10,4%	31,8%	33,3%	26,3%
	Very important	25,9%	14,6%	0,0%	12,1%	7,9%

Table A2.7. Level of agreement with policy objectives aimed at enhancing employment

		Total	Austria	Spain	Netherlands	Poland
No. of respondents		363	60	195	57	51
Enhancing regional economic diversification (supporting the development of different economic sectors)	Strongly disagree	1,9%	3,3%	0,5%	5,3%	2,0%
	Somewhat disagree	2,2%	0,0%	0,0%	10,5%	3,9%
	Neither agree nor disagree	21,2%	35,0%	8,7%	35,1%	37,3%
	Somewhat agree	40,5%	43,3%	37,9%	45,6%	41,2%
	Strongly agree	34,2%	18,3%	52,8%	3,5%	15,7%
Better access to education and training	Strongly disagree	0,3%	0,0%	0,0%	1,8%	0,0%
	Somewhat disagree	2,8%	6,7%	0,5%	8,9%	0,0%
	Neither agree nor disagree	13,9%	25,0%	6,7%	21,4%	19,6%
	Somewhat agree	40,2%	45,0%	32,5%	53,6%	49,0%
	Strongly agree	42,9%	23,3%	60,3%	14,3%	31,4%
Active support of younger people eager to return to their rural place of birth	Strongly disagree	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%
	Somewhat disagree	3,9%	6,7%	0,0%	10,7%	8,0%
	Neither agree nor disagree	7,2%	10,0%	1,0%	16,1%	18,0%
	Somewhat agree	26,9%	33,3%	15,9%	48,2%	38,0%
	Strongly agree	62,0%	50,0%	83,1%	25,0%	36,0%

		Total	Austria	Spain	Netherlands	Poland
No. of respondents		363	60	195	57	51
Better digital infrastructure (e.g., broadband)	Strongly disagree	0,3%	0,0%	0,5%	0,0%	0,0%
	Somewhat disagree	2,2%	3,3%	0,5%	7,1%	2,0%
	Neither agree nor disagree	15,0%	11,7%	4,6%	42,9%	27,5%
	Somewhat agree	33,2%	46,7%	28,9%	35,7%	31,4%
	Strongly agree	49,3%	38,3%	65,5%	14,3%	39,2%
More tailor-made support for small businesses and rural entrepreneurship in a broader sense	Strongly disagree	0,6%	1,7%	0,0%	1,8%	0,0%
	Somewhat disagree	0,8%	1,7%	0,0%	3,6%	0,0%
	Neither agree nor disagree	11,3%	16,7%	4,1%	16,1%	27,5%
	Somewhat agree	31,2%	48,3%	22,1%	42,9%	33,3%
	Strongly agree	56,1%	31,7%	73,8%	35,7%	39,2%
Delivery of public services (e.g., healthcare, childcare)	Strongly disagree	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%
	Somewhat disagree	1,7%	1,7%	0,5%	5,4%	2,0%
	Neither agree nor disagree	10,8%	25,0%	0,5%	19,6%	23,5%
	Somewhat agree	31,8%	38,3%	18,5%	51,8%	52,9%
Delivery of public services (e.g., healthcare, childcare)	Strongly disagree	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%
	Somewhat disagree	1,7%	1,7%	0,5%	5,4%	2,0%
	Neither agree nor disagree	10,8%	25,0%	0,5%	19,6%	23,5%
	Somewhat agree	31,8%	38,3%	18,5%	51,8%	52,9%
	Strongly agree	55,8%	35,0%	80,5%	23,2%	21,6%

		Total	Austria	Spain	Netherlands	Poland
No. of respondents		363	60	195	57	51
Increasing the availability of rural housing	Strongly disagree	2,2%	1,7%	0,5%	5,4%	5,9%
	Somewhat disagree	5,0%	8,3%	0,5%	14,3%	7,8%
	Neither agree nor disagree	16,0%	26,7%	6,7%	28,6%	25,5%
	Somewhat agree	25,1%	33,3%	17,4%	37,5%	31,4%
	strongly agree	51,7%	30,0%	74,9%	14,3%	29,4%
Public funding to the benefit of peripheral regions	Strongly disagree	0,8%	0,0%	0,0%	1,8%	3,9%
	Somewhat disagree	3,6%	8,3%	0,5%	12,5%	0,0%
	Neither agree nor disagree	16,9%	21,7%	8,7%	32,1%	25,5%
	Somewhat agree	32,6%	36,7%	27,7%	33,9%	45,1%
	strongly agree	46,1%	33,3%	63,1%	19,6%	25,5%

Annex 2b. Survey Results (answers to open question)

At the end of the survey, respondents had the opportunity to comment on specific survey topics or questions or to add a remark about an issue that was important to them but not covered by the survey. Below are the answers to this open question.

“Sometimes in rural areas, the most difficult thing is access to housing, developable land, and construction facilities.”

“Access to housing. Improvements in healthcare (closure of medical clinics and overcrowding NO APPOINTMENTS available within 15 days at the nearest health centres)”

“I currently live in an urban environment, but I have lived in rural areas for several years. However, my income prevents me from investing in my own transport or buying or renting a place to live where I would like to live, which is in a rural area.”

“In addition to employment and public service coverage, another major obstacle preventing young people from staying in the village is the lack of leisure options available. Apart from bars and restaurants, there are practically no entertainment options (outside of specific days or seasons).”

“As a housewife, I believe there should be greater recognition of domestic work and, therefore, more financial support for this profession. In reality, we are the ones who sustain the entire rural system: care, food, cleaning and tidying, preserving traditions... among other things.”

“I think that when talking about housing (or the lack thereof), we should also talk about the reason behind it. In my area, there is no shortage of housing, but there are far too many second and third homes (half of the houses in my village belong to people who only live here for 15-20 days a year).”

“Where I live, they have taken away our health centre but have converted the hospital on the outskirts of town into a health centre/hospital, making it difficult for elderly people to see a doctor as it is not within walking distance and if you do walk there, it takes half an hour or more, which is unfeasible for an elderly person. And the hospital is not even used to its full capacity as they do not hire enough staff

and half the hospital is intended to be a health centre. The contracts they give you in this town are completely rubbish. You work 60 hours a week and the contract is for eight or ten hours a week... They pay five euros or less per hour... And yet they complain that young people are leaving the town. In my case, I'm talking about the hospitality industry."

"The future belongs to the people, but many people are still unaware of this."

"Teleworking is a way for highly educated people to live in our villages, but not all companies are willing to facilitate it. Tax breaks for companies that facilitate teleworking for employees living in rural areas would be a good way to encourage people to settle in villages."

"As for income, there is a high labour cost for low profitability in agriculture."

"In my region, public transport is scarce and poor, which greatly limits activities.."

"There are rural jobs that remain stagnant, such as shepherding, where the work continues to be very demanding, and bureaucratic tasks are becoming increasingly demanding."

"There are few jobs available, and those that are available are precarious and unstable. If you don't have contacts and someone to pull strings for you, you have practically no opportunities. I've lived in Barcelona all my life and moved to the countryside a couple of years ago, and unfortunately, the job situation is the hardest thing for me to deal with. Otherwise, I love living here. I've been able to buy a flat and become independent, but I don't have any luxuries or a job. I've started studying for the civil service exams because I don't see any other way out."

"Taxation must be adapted to rural areas and incentives must be given to companies in cities to encourage teleworking in villages. That is key."

"The lack of political mobility to promote employment, liveability and services in rural Galicia. As well as the poverty mentality of the elderly here in Galicia, which is what is destroying rural areas."

"They constantly forget our villages."

"Drastic tax reduction for people residing in rural areas."

“The lack of political mobility to promote employment, liveability and services in rural Galicia. As well as the poverty mentality of the elderly here in Galicia, which is what is destroying rural areas.”

“Extensive livestock farming should be encouraged and assistance provided to help people start from scratch. Local products should also be given greater value and a fair price, in line with today’s prices.”

“If we orient rural life towards those who come at weekends and towards tourism, we lose our essence and the liveability of our spaces.”

“If we want to revitalise rural areas, we must remove bureaucracy and excessive legislation from agriculture and livestock farming, as well as promote the consumption of local products and pay a fair price for them. It is also important to reduce the tax burden on the self-employed and SMEs, regardless of the sector, so that villages have a little bit of everything and small businesses can be set up to provide services and employment.”

“I am from a village in Segovia, and I have been in León for 15 years, 13 of which I have spent living in a village, by choice, because I was lucky enough to find a house to rent, something that has not happened again in the 13 years I have been here; only once has another house been put up for rent. Every day, lots of people ask about houses to rent or buy, many families, young people who would like to live in this or other villages in the area... There are many empty houses, falling into disrepair, yet there is no supply. The villages are also dying because they are letting the houses fall into disrepair without being lived in. Since the pandemic, several young couples have bought land or houses in this village, and we have gone from having one child in the village to more than 15. Before, you hardly saw anyone on the street... now there is life, activities are organised and it is a pleasure because people interact with each other, something that did not happen years ago. Most of the young people who have come to live here, I would say 90%, work in the city, as it is not far away, so I think you should also consider that option in the survey. The same is not true in my village in Segovia, which is a little bigger, where, in addition to agriculture and livestock farming, there is industry, different job options and much more housing available to rent. Compared to years ago, many more young people are now staying to live in the village than before; something is changing.”

“I am from a village with a population of 3,500. Coming to study in the city was a challenge because of the resources my family had to allocate for it. Now I live in that same city and see from the outside how the lack of public transport is increasingly isolating them, the

existing work is precarious and there is no investment to improve basic infrastructure such as telecommunications, health, banks, sports... That is why young people flee (we flee) to cities where we encounter other types of precariousness. We are at a dead end. I hope that one day I will be able to return to my village; it would be the greatest gift. It is hard to see your loved ones grow old and not be able to enjoy them as much as you would like."

"I think it is important to highlight the clear inequality that exists between academic knowledge from cities and their universities, and the empirical and practical knowledge and development of rural areas, which is often linked to academic study but less valued. People from the city try to tell us how to manage the land, but they do not know what they are talking about and are usually wrong."

"I live in Madrid, but I go back to my village whenever I can, and my goal is to live in my village."

"Lately, policies have been focused on cities, and the worst part is not that, but that they want us in rural areas to comply with the same rules and laws. Free train and bus tickets, when we don't even have those means of transport in rural areas. Industries only in big cities."

"It is clear that the sector is facing various limitations and that further sustainability measures are necessary. Many farmers are willing to take steps in this direction, but market developments are lagging behind. To make the transition feasible, it is important that sustainable working practices are actually rewarded. Without a fair revenue model, it will be difficult for many farmers to make the necessary investments. Farmers are entrepreneurs at heart and will be more inclined to make the switch when sustainability not only has social value but also contributes to a better return. Technological innovations currently play a limited role in dairy farming, with the exception of automation in the barn, such as milking, feeding and manure robots. These technologies mainly improve the work process, but contribute only to a limited extent to further sustainability."

"It is not important how quickly I can drive to the hospital myself, but rather when help arrives – i.e. the ambulance or helicopter."

"The upcoming EU financial perspective will cause even more young people to leave rural areas, large commercial farms will go bankrupt, and no one will want to live in the countryside anymore. And it will not matter whether there is a doctor or a hospital nearby. If agricultural production is not profitable in the EU (and it is already unprofitable), no one will want to live in the countryside."

“There is a hospital about 30 mins from me however, they have bypass protocol for anything that could be surgical. They do not offer the modern treatment I require so I have to travel 1 hour 10 to a hospital to get the care I require”

“The dignity of rural communities is important to value. Sometimes we feel like we are the “playground” of people that lives in urban areas. The city hall don’t invest at all in anything for the town, but they organize Hunting sessions every month with people that are foreigners, because the mayor is a hunter... It’s really sad ”

Annex 3. References

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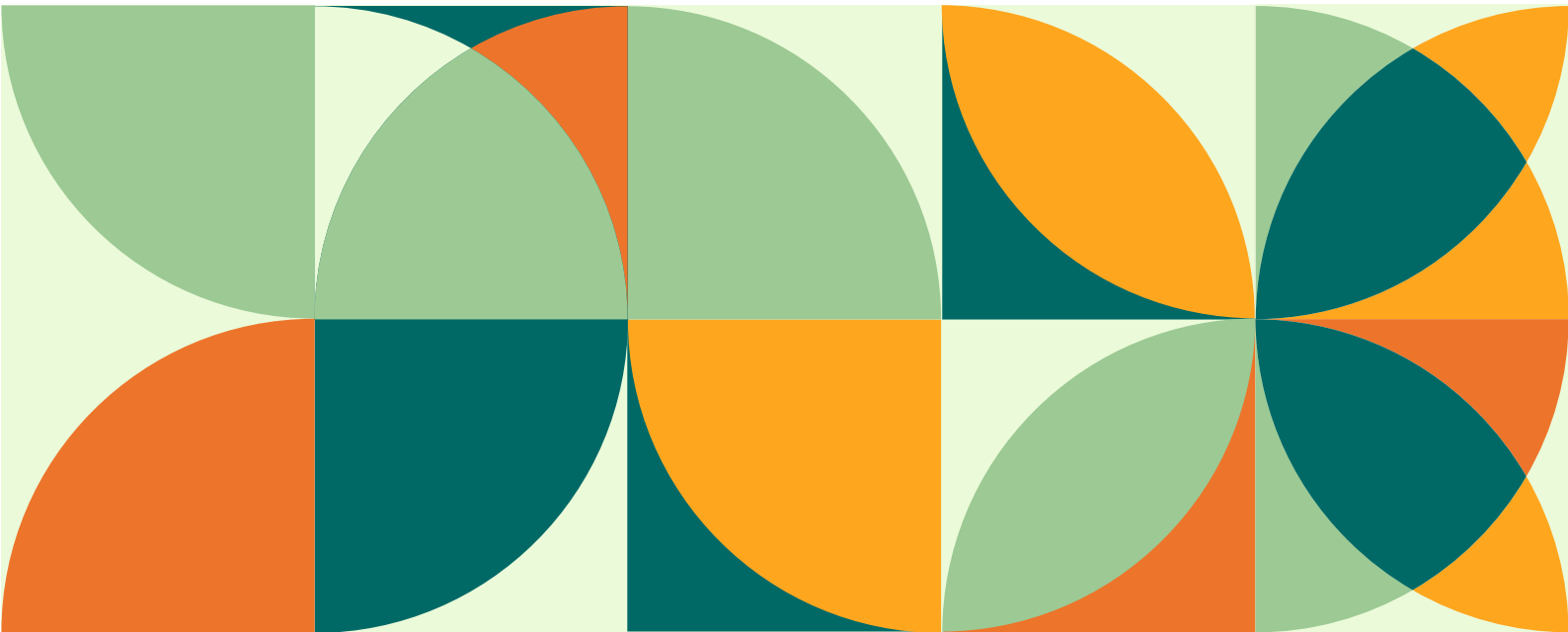
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Coalition for Social Studies in Rural and
Agricultural Youth in Europe: Youth Employment



Project number: 101185214

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