One of the ways to make rural areas attractive to young people is to ensure accessibility. Public transportation and roads in a good condition are essential for the mobility of rural inhabitants. Rural areas, where there is less incentive for the private sector to invest in the broadband provision, remain less well connected than cities, and the take-up of ultra-fast broadband is significantly behind Europe 2020 targets.

5. We demand the increase of public and private investments for the broadband expansion and physical infrastructure that connects rural areas, to ensure equal access to public services and support entrepreneurship.

6. We demand the development of local digital strategies capable of closing the divide between urban and rural areas and preventing a further intergenerational gap in the use of digital tools, through fundraising, volunteering, and networking.
Accessibility and Quality of Public Services

There is an imbalance between the accessibility and quality of public services in rural areas. Public services, such as health care, education, social support and government administration, are being concentrated in urban centres of Europe, preventing an equal access. High-quality opportunities that would meet people needs are getting more distant. Public institutions face a lack of ability to develop digital solutions and to innovate. It is one of the cause of peoples’ migration.

7. We ask for the empowerment of local decision-making institutions through multiple financial tools which enable the creation of local development strategies, high quality job opportunities in public services, and which equalise regional and urban living conditions, making rural areas attractive.

8. We demand the support of place-based policies and decision-making processes to strengthen local governance over public service development.

Civic Engagement and Political Awareness

Many young people struggle to see the potential in rural areas and rural youth activism is weak. There is a lack of confidence in the ability to make changes and to be heard by local, regional and national authorities. Youth engagement is focussed on recreational and sport activities instead of civic or political activities. Activism with the lack of support and information about civic engagement and political awareness raising activities lead to short term and non-sustainable impact.

9. We want youth to be empowered by the provision of consistent political and social inclusion, and adequate support at a national and regional level.

10. We demand transparent decision-making processes at all levels, especially on urgent policies, including climate change actions, international relations and solidarity, which are directly affecting the young generations.

The European Rural Parliament (ERP) is a long-term campaign that expresses the voice of people in rural Europe and promotes self-help and action by rural people, in partnership with civil society and governments. The ERP Youth movement serves as a platform for young people to ENGAGE in the rural development process, to CONNECT organisations and professionals across Europe and to EMPOWER advocating their needs to multi-level stakeholders.

Find out more: www.europeanruralparliament.com
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