

## Seminar on

### LINKING RURAL DEFINITIONS AND POLICIES FOR COORDINATED RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Warsaw, 7 April 2017

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#### Background and purpose

The OECD together with the Polish Ministry of Development held a seminar on **“Linking rural definitions, policy and coordinated rural development”** on 7 April 2017 in Warsaw Poland. The seminar brought together comparative expertise from OECD countries (Italy, Sweden and Finland) on how different rural definitions have been used to structure policy responses and also how they have combined EU policies for coordinated approaches to rural development. A wide range of participants from various Ministries (Economic Development, Agriculture and Rural Development, Family, Labour and Social Policy, Environment Protection) attended the event along with representatives of Central Statistical Office, Agency Foundation of Assistance Programmes for Agriculture, academics from the Polish Academy of Sciences and range of NGOs (Foundation for the Development of Polish Agriculture, European Fund for Development of PL Rural Areas, Forum for Rural Areas Activation) .

How rural areas are thought about and defined has important policy implications. The OECD’s work in this area has long remarked on the fact that while administrative boundaries are often a convenient way of collecting and analysing data, they may conceal important functional connections between territories (e.g. overlapping urban and rural areas) that are more useful for policy purposes. To this end, many OECD countries have established new definitions and indicators to better understand rural areas and structure policy responses – from distance to services to functional labour markets – these new analytical frameworks have great potential to improve quality of life in rural communities.

The seminar is part of the OECD project **“Rural Policy Review of Poland”** which is focussed on providing integrated approaches to rural development. It looks at how policies can better support development opportunities in rural areas including the expansion of non-agricultural employment, the diversification of rural economies and value-added activities, and mechanisms to improve service delivery. The report will examine both medium and long term challenges facing rural Poland and will provide policy analysis and recommendations.

*Session 1. Diagnosis of key issues facing Poland's rural development (presentation by OECD Secretariat)*

**Presenters:** Enrique Garcilazo, Chiara Allegri and Tamara Krawchenko (OECD)

Enrique Garcilazo, Chiara Allegri and Tamara Krawchenko (OECD) provided a diagnosis of the key rural development issues in Poland, along with comparative OECD benchmarking. This included a profile of rural Poland (demographic and labour market trends); an overview of the rural economy; an assessment of the key enablers of growth and development and; an assessment of quality of life in rural areas. While Poland's economy shows very strong performance overall, regional disparities present an important threat to sustainable development. It is found that, while productivity levels in Polish rural regions are 'catching up' to the OECD rural average, when compared to Polish TL3 regions there is a lack of 'catching up' in GDP per capita.

The analysis also finds a low concentration of population in Poland compared to OECD averages and the settlement structure is rather dispersed. **This settlement structure can make the delivery of services and infrastructure more difficult and costly.** The data confirms that that population decreases have been strongest in predominantly rural regions, while peri-urban areas receive most of the internal migration flows. Poverty rates are higher in rural areas and in farming households. **The analysis finds that labour productivity is low in rural areas and that land fragmentation and small farms are important bottlenecks to productivity in agriculture.**

In terms of the key enablers and bottlenecks, OECD analysis confirms that **human capital is a key enabler of growth at the regional level.** For example, educational attainment is lower in Polish rural areas; infrastructure gaps remain between rural and urban regions, particularly for sewage and water infrastructure, and; there is hidden unemployment, particularly in the agricultural sector. **Creating jobs in tradable activities will be a key strategy in order to diversify the rural economy in Poland.** It was remarked that the final report will take into account the diversity of development potential in Polish regions, functional linkages with the local centres of growth (medium and small cities) and areas at risk of exclusion.

In discussion, the impacts of the diffusion-polarisation model were noted. Poland's [Strategy for Responsible Development](#) focusses on medium & small towns and rural areas and is based on the assessment that diffusion has not fully delivered and that, as a result, the state should also address the challenges of the areas different than just big drivers of growth. **The competitiveness of agriculture is a critical issue for rural regions and there is a need for economic diversification and non-agricultural development.**

In discussion it was noted that it is important to consider the quality of education and not just the quantity (in terms of educational attainment). The Polish Academy of Sciences recently completed a study on [youth in rural areas](#) which finds that the quality of education is lower in rural areas in terms of the kind of studies people complete. Education is a key driver to help find new sources of economic activities of the rural population.

The need for increased **collaboration between businesses and educational institutions was stressed**. It was concurred that rural areas need “education, education and education”.

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Sabrina Lucatelli (Dept. for Cohesion Policy, OECD peer reviewer, Italy) highlighted the importance of demographic trends in Poland. She discussed the challenges facing service delivery in areas that are facing population decline – **education and health services being of foremost importance**. She noted that Italy is investing strongly in some regions and then losing people; it is critical to address **education, services and jobs to ensure that demand and supply factors are targeted jointly** (see for example Italy’s [Inner Areas Initiative](#)). Accessibility issues are critical.

The discussion confirmed the importance of foreign migration and also hard infrastructure for rural areas. It was further remarked that Poland’s development dynamics are higher than the OECD average and it was questioned how much is this influenced by EU funds and programmes. It was also noted that rural areas in Poland are more diversified in terms of income and wealth than the urban parts of the country and that there are a **range of incomes that are not reflected in public statistics**. The “grey economy” economy plays a much larger part in rural than in urban areas.

### **Session 2. Rural definitions – presentations of approaches and moderated discussion**

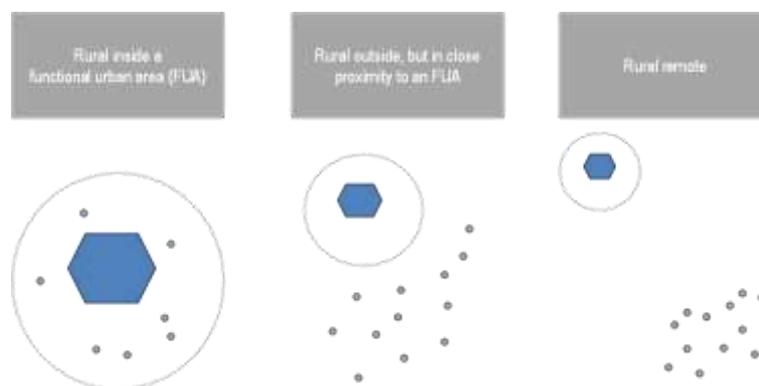
Presenters: Enrique Garcilazo (OECD); Wanda Chmielewska-Gill, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development; Mariusz Stefan Migas, Farm Economics, Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development.

Enrique Garcilazo (OECD) opened the session with a **presentation about why rural definitions are important for policy making**. It was noted that the change from rural to urban is not dichotomous (with some exceptions) and often involves mixed approaches (urban/rural); in some cases it is an abrupt change, in others it is not. The OECD has moved to idea of “functionality” based on commuting patterns in order to better target policies and facilitate international comparison. Administrative borders are still however important—e.g. for political accountability.

It is important that national definitions are up to date – e.g., until recently, Chile had not updated its definition for many years. It was noted that globalisation has led to places being better connected in terms of internet and value chains and this has strengthened relations between urban and rural spaces. OECD work has found that it can be useful to have integrated definitions across Ministries in order to combine programming. For example, in [Chile](#), subsidies were targeted to rural areas and so schools were placed near the urban borders to take advantage of this (thus defeating the policy’s intention).

It was noted by the OECD that there are **advantages and disadvantages to various definitions** (e.g., dichotomous and categorical versus continuous). Many countries are moving towards getting information to a smaller scale and working with the building blocks of grid cells. There is more info at smaller scales that are useful to define demographic processes. It is useful to use this to target administrative areas. **The OECD in broad terms regards three types of rural areas: rural inside a functional urban area, rural close to cities, and rural remote.** The majority of the rural population in the OECD lives close to an urban area. For example, according to OECD taxonomy—which is designed for international comparisons—approximately **26% of the OECD population lives in a predominantly rural region and among these, 80% live close to a city.** Many countries are now adopting definitions that help understand **urban-rural linkages**. For example, Mexico is undergoing a change in how they classify territories – they have defined 57 urban-rural systems and they have also classified 124 urban and rural subsystems.

The OECD’s three category typology for rural areas



The [second presentation by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development \(Wanda Chmielewska-Gill\)](#) described the Ministry’s definition which is based on administrative boundaries: rural areas are both rural gminas and rural parts of rural-urban gminas. For territorial instruments, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development uses the broader definition that states that rural areas are rural gminas, rural-urban gminas and also towns with a population up to 5,000 inhabitants and urban municipalities excluding towns with a population above 5,000. This was done because the functions of towns and rural areas are homogeneous. These two instruments are used to provide support for start-ups for farmers who wish to leave farming and for basic services and village renewal.

For the EU programme LEADER different definitions are used (e.g. towns up to 20,000 population). For Local Development Strategies eligibility for funding requires joint application by 2 gminas or more with a population between 30,000-150,000. This was changed based on an evaluation of the previous programme; it was determined that some Local Action Groups (LAGs) were too small and thus inefficient. Finally, the definition of a farmer in Poland is: one must own a farm anywhere on the territory of Poland which is a minimum of 1 hectare in size.

The third presentation by Mariusz Stefan Migas, Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development, European Commission, discussed the European Union's changing definition and its impact on rural policy. **At the European level** there are a lot of differences in terms of the types of regions. It was noted that **there has been a policy shift over time from direct support and export subsidies to green payments and rural development**.

**EU regulation has no legally defined rural areas**; there is no binding definition. For example, by Belgium-Wallonia's definition 85% of the territory is rural. In order to ensure a harmonised application of the typologies and allow for cross-referencing from other acts and programmes, Eurostat has launched a legislative initiative called "[Tercet](#)", which aims to integrate the typologies into the [NUTS Regulation](#). In terms of the future of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), it was noted that [consultations](#) have been launched and that the issue of definitions is being examined. Participation in the engagement process is encouraged.

The fourth presentation by Monika Stanny, Director of [Institute of Rural Development and Agriculture](#) noted the need for agreement on rural definitions in Poland. She provided a history of the evolution of how rural areas have been thought about and defined within both academic and policy communities. Researchers often work with administrative definitions because of how the available data is organised--this presents a limitation on the one hand, and an opportunity on the other, since administrative divisions are rarely changed. The Institute of Rural Development and Agriculture are in the process of writing to the Council of Ministers to request a change in the definitions of rural areas that could better account for the diversity of rural gminas. It was noted that the variables for analysis should be suited to the purpose. Every typology is debatable. For examples, the OECD's typology is useful for international comparisons, but in contrast it is not very detailed.

The Institute of Rural Development and Agricultural together with the Foundation of European Fund for Polish Rural Development jointly conducted [in-depth studies of spatial differentiation of rural areas in Poland](#) from the point of view of socio-economic development. Subsequent stages of analyses are conducted under a programme entitled "**Rural Areas Development Monitoring**". The principle objectives of the studies are to diagnose current differentiations, analyse the dynamics of changes under way, as well as shed light on differing development scenarios depending on local conditions. In order to develop a scale for measuring socio-economic development level, 11 variables were compiled, composed of: community spatial accessibility; degree of economy de-agrarization; the characteristics of the agricultural sector; the characteristics of the non-agricultural sector; labour market; local public finance; demographic trends; social cohesion; education; societal activity and living conditions.

In discussion the purpose and utility of a legal definition of rural area was questioned. It was noted that different definitions are needed to tackle different policies. What is critical is transparency about the definitions in question. It was remarked that there is **a need to adopt an integrated approach and to agree on target areas and link this to policy domains**. It was noted that Polish definitions lack a criterion of ‘size of town’ in order to be a city (unlike other European countries). She further noted that, for policy, population density is not the most important element... it is the functionality of whether a place is rural or urban.

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### Session 3. Linking definitions to policy – international examples

Presenters: Anne Sormunen, Manager of International Affairs, Regional Council of Central Ostrobothnia, Finland; Christell Åström, Ministerial Adviser at the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Finland; Sabrina Lucatelli, Coordinator, Italian Committee for Inner Areas, Italy.

Anne Sormunen, Manager of International Affairs, Regional Council of Central Ostrobothnia, Finland opened the session with a presentation on development in [Central Ostrobothnia](#) where there are less than 70,000 people and an average of 13 inhabitants per sq. kilometre. Despite the fact that the region is home to more animals than people, it has managed to be productive. The region is home to multiple industrial sectors and has a diversified economy; it was profiled in the OECD’s recent report on [Northern Sparsely Populated Areas \(NSPA\)](#). The region has a high birth-rate but also a large aging population. Current success is dependent on the chemicals industry and a few other clusters along with an international harbour (Russian maritime trade is important for the logistics sector). The region strives to have strong growth and wellbeing and to be a knowledge and services based region.

Central Ostrobothnia has developed the concept of a **“Bio valley”** which combines chemical expertise with agriculture and forest industries – as an effort to circulate knowledge into multiple sectors. There are also efforts to enhance wellbeing in the region. Finland is facing structural change with more independent regions and weaker municipalities. The **region is working on a strategy to ensure that people can participate in development processes and to engage the third sector in the health and services sector**. Young people are extremely important and efforts are made to include them in decision making. Unemployment for young people in Europe is rising and it is important to give the message that young people are part of the future. The region is part of [the P-IRIS InterReg Project](#) with partners from Norway and Spain, Italy and Croatia which aims to make innovation system more accessible in rural areas (presently the innovation system in Finland is concentrated in major cities).

The second presentation by Christell Åström, Ministerial Adviser at the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Finland provided an overview of rural development policy in Finland and policy definitions.

Rural policy in Finland came into being in the 1970s when there was a large movement of people from rural areas to cities. **In 2000, the law of the rural policy committee institutionalised rural policy in Finland. Rural policy is a national policy that is part of the regional policy** (there is also a separate archipelago policy and an urban policy). **The aim of rural policy is a prosperous countryside that makes good use of resources.** There is a combination of broad and targeted rural policy – the broad entails sectoral policies and the narrow element entails programmes oriented to overall development

**Finland works through networks and partnerships at different levels.** In 2016, a [Rural Policy Council](#) was established by the government with a mandate to 2020—it provides a national strategic view on rural policy which is guided by nine ministries. The council **coordinates national policies across Ministries and creates guidelines. It is chaired by the Ministry for Rural Development.** There is also a Secretariat and thematic networks which are very broad – e.g. local democracy, healthcare, infrastructure and healthy environment. The rural policy network includes many hundreds of people.

In 2013, a **new definition** was launched based on spatial data (250 sq. meters grid cells). It analyses territories based on multiple variables which are organised into seven classifications. **95% of the Finnish land area is rural** – but there are very different kinds of rural areas. More detailed classifications are required for policy purposes. There is an ongoing project that looks at functional areas and growth zones which is a synthesis of commuting and services areas (groceries, speciality shops and other). From this basis, it is possible to analyse functional areas and where people are living their daily lives. Another element of this is the classification of growth areas – these are corridors linked by transport connections. It will help rural and urban policy by showing where the national linkages are ongoing. It will also help determine which areas are successful and which face ongoing challenges.

The third presentation by Sabrina Lucatelli, Coordinator, Italian Committee for Inner Areas, Italy described Italy's Inner Area's Strategy policy which was established 3 years ago. The purpose of the strategy is to:

- Improving the quality of life and economic wellbeing of inhabitants in order to restore their rights to Citizenship
- Promote a sustainable and effective use of untapped natural and cultural resources
- Reduce social costs caused by depopulation
- Strengthen key local development factors

**Inner areas are defined as areas that are located far away from services.** Italy is losing population in some areas and these places have common characteristics: strong demographic pressure, small municipalities, strong culture and they are not just mountainous areas. The Department for Development together with the Central Bank and the Universities and the Ministry of Agriculture spent one year studying and analysing these areas for a variety of perspectives. A polycentric structure emerged from this analysis and it was found that services are located to different extent in various municipalities. Therefore, the policy focusses on cities and municipalities that provide the most important services for the country and its regions. Core services were categorised according to

the distance to the poles that provide the services. From this, belt areas, intermediate areas, and so on were determined. It was found that, like in Poland, intermediate and belt areas are growing and this puts a lot of pressure on the reorganisation of services, land use, pressure on land, pressure on agriculture. The inner areas are about 25% of total population and 60% of surface. And it is about 52% of municipalities and 70% of them are mountains.

The national strategy, which has a strong territorial policy, has one main objective: to **reverse demographic trends**. Implementation draws on a mix of structural funds and national funds (e.g., can be used to purchase a car for doctors and national funds can pay the doctor's salary). The strategy also restructures the education system. It is important to think about the schooling system in rural areas and to adapt the organisation of the schools. The same national rules should not be applied to urban and rural schools (e.g. the requirement that only schools with 400 students qualify to have a director). The legislation needs to consider territorial specificity. The national government works directly with regions that have volunteered to take part in the process together with municipalities and other actors. A local strategy is developed in each region. Own regional resources funds, EU funds, social funds and national funds are drawn on to establish a comprehensive approach coordinated by the Italian Presidency of the Council of the Ministers in the Department for Cohesion Policies. There is an **inter-ministerial group for each area** that is the operational group – the group **travels around the country in order to work with local mayors and people**. This is one of the most important innovations. One of the key figures that are used to determine areas needed for investment is the number of minutes it takes to have a response from an ambulance. The local strategy ends with an agreement between the state, the region and the municipalities and then projects are implemented. In each strategy there is a maximum of 15 indicators for assessment on progress.

In discussion, it was remarked that a **strong focus on a reduced number of indicators is a good approach**. Participants remarked on the importance of the approach in Italy which seeks deeper dialogue with the local and regional levels and chooses a certain group for priority interventions.

It was asked **what Finland is doing to retain young people** and how success is measured. In Finland, the youth retention project is still being undertaken—its impacts have not yet been assessed. There is **regional marketing emphasizing high quality of life and good service for young families and children**. Finland is investing in families and developing municipalities so that services for young families provide **strong financial incentives to remain in those areas**. One municipality in Central Ostrobothnia gives a bonus to parents if they have a child if they stay in the region until the child is 10 years old.

Participants asked about **what institutions were involved in developing the Finnish typology** for rural areas. The classification was led by the Ministries of Agriculture and Forestry and Economy and Employment. The Finnish Environment Institute carried out the work. Other institutes and universities were also involved.

A question was posed to the panellists regarding **how socioeconomic innovation is defined**. Christell Astrom remarked that in her region, many products or services can be categorised under

this label including the virtual learning environment (especially musical pedagogy) and ways to reduce health and social expenses. The region is investing in wellbeing, wellbeing services and advancing sports and culture as a way of challenging the health system. More investments are being made in wellbeing, as opposed to just the traditional health system.

Sabrina Lucatelli remarked that in Italy the concept of innovation is broad and includes not just industrial innovation but also **innovation at the community and local levels**. One of the most important indicators is monitoring the association of municipalities. It was noted that there are tensions around land use and its accessibility by the younger generations. Many young people want to be engaged in agriculture but there are real barriers to accessing land. Territorially based solutions for these people are required.

In terms of **the implementation and assessment of the Inner Areas Strategy**, **Sabrina Lucatelli** noted that these policies take time. The national strategy was produced in one year and following this the agreement with Cohesion policy was negotiated together with the regions. This produced a more complex process but was critical because many policies are regionally driven in the country. It was important to build an alliance with regions and with the European Commission. The Inner Areas Strategy commenced by selecting areas, determining activity, gaining commitment from a mayor to lead the joint municipal initiative and then forming a partnership among them. Once the vision is decided, projects are elected depending on the results. Normal rules for EU funds are respected.

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On the issue of national coordination it was noted that **coordination in Finland is led by a lead Ministry together with 9 additional Ministries and there is a network of actors that go all the way down to thematic networks**. It is a **highly networked model**. Finland allocates EU funding to participate in programmes and there are no national funds for regional development – just business development **In Italy there is coordination at three levels**. Italy has a flexible model—the relationships can evolve according to need and it is a totally voluntary strategy

It was remarked that a **critical issue for Poland is the policy mix. The idea of a Rural Council was welcomed.**

**Session 4. Combining EU policies for coordinated approaches to rural development**

Presenters: Alexandra Helgesson of the Ministry of Enterprise and Innovation, Sweden; Georgios Mathioudakais, Unit for Conception and Consistency of Rural Development, Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development, European Commission.

Alexandra Helgesson of the Ministry of Enterprise and Innovation gave an opening presentation on approached to rural development in Sweden. At the national level Sweden practices collective government decision; no minister can make decisions alone and all decisions pass through all

ministers to read and comment on in their respective areas of competence. There is **strong devolution of competencies to local government in Sweden**. Decisions are taken by directly elected county councils. In the past 20 years there has been a shift from country administrative boards towards county councils which are focussed on ensuing equal access to care. On the local level Sweden has 290 municipalities with elected assemblies with differing population.

The [Swedish Agency for Growth Policy Analysis](#) has its own rural classification which is close to the OECD one – but that better reflects Sweden’s rural landscapes. Sweden is one of the most decentralised countries in the OECD with a high share of subnational government spending by municipalities. **Municipalities are responsible for more than in most other countries and have a right to levy taxes**; they deliver child care, elderly care and care for disabled persons, education of primary and secondary level and rescue services. There is increasing demand for welfare and social services which is driven by population growth, migration and population aging.

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Sweden has a [Strategy for Sustainable Regional Growth and Attractiveness](#) which focusses on employment, the environment and attractiveness. There are 4 priorities areas: innovation and business development; attractive environments and accessibility; provision of skills; and international cooperation. Every country develops a long term regional development strategy for urban and rural areas. The regions have partnerships for the implementation of rural development programmes. The forum for sustainable regional growth and activeness 2014-2020 is the most important implementation tool. It meets four times a year on the key themes, but there is a lot of flexibility to address current issues.

The forum tackles long term issues and strategic current issues. It was noted that rural Sweden is doing quite well – there is a rural parliamentary committee with all political parties to develop a policy for sustainable rural development. They have developed a proposal to the parliament with the objective for rural policy and a model of government and more efficient measures. They had 75 suggestions in 8 different areas. It is critical to adopt a **horizontal approach to tackle these issues**.

**Georgios Mathioudakais, Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development, Rural Development II, European Commission** offered reflections on the presentations by Finland, Italy and Sweden. Member states have the possibility to adapt through the principle of subsidiarity or flexibility. In the old programming period one needed to have a demarcation line between the funds. In the past there were project criteria for rural roads (up to five km was rural, beyond was regional) in contrast to the new programing period where programming framework is more consistent.

It was remarked that digitisation is very important for globalisation and that agriculture is the only sector that has not been internationalised so far. **Agriculture is tied to land, however 5G connections provide the opportunity for rural businesses to profit off of internationalisation and globalisation.**

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*Do we need a rural development policy”? If regional policy worked well, would not all of those questions that rural areas face be addressed by well-designed regional policy?*  
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**In discussion** it was posed “**do we need a rural development policy**”? If regional policy worked well, would not all of those questions that rural areas face be addressed by well-designed regional policy? Do we need a rural policy and what does that really mean for education, health, transportation, labour market attachment and so on? It remarked that we need a rural development policy that works well and in complementarity with other policies of the European Union. It was noted that **20% of Common Agricultural Policy funds go to rural development and this has become a good excuse for many policymakers to treat this funding as a rural development programme and to segment these issues.**

It was noted that it is **important to encourage the member states to shift to complementarity and synergies between various EU funds of cohesion and agri policies.** The objective should be to leave this dichotomy and the boundaries between the policies and to undertake policies that fit the territory. For example, Italy managed to do this by combining different policies. **Poland is one of the countries that has decided to transfer part of the rural development money to the first pillar. This is a legitimate choice, but this is backed by consideration that other policies are covering the needs in the other areas.**

In discussion, it was noted that, for a long time, **the idea of a rural development fund led to a lack of investment more generally in rural areas.** The Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development was an agricultural directorate and **most of the Ministries of member states are Ministries of Agriculture who tend to be more interested in purely agriculture.** On the utility and differences between rural and regional policy, it was noted that **what is really needed is good local development policy.** The removal of sharp lines between European funds was recommended and even more – bringing them as much as possible to align the rules. It was further noted that in the current system some programme interventions can create overlaps.

A representative from Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development offered further examples of **complementarity between the first and second pillar of EU funds.** There are similar eligibilities for fruit and vegetables and meat and other sectoral products that can be under either pillar of CAP (and also for promotion activities). Another example is LEADER which, for the first time in 2014-2020, is open to other funds.

Mrs Ewa Malik-Kapler, Ministry of Economic Development of Poland, noted that they are working on policies for marginalised areas. They are presently preparing pilot studies for 6 areas (3 marginalised area and 3 that are losing functions). The Ministry is thinking functionally and not dividing between urban and rural. The conversation about combining EU tools and instruments has been useful in this regard. **Sabrina Lucatelli** remarked that **rural development policy cannot solve all problems in rural areas**—it is critical to think about **services** (education, health) and **employment** together with other issues.

Closing the session, Joanna Held from the Ministry of Economic Development thanked participants for their lively engagement and stimulating debate and remarked that some innovative ideas for the future were offered worth further consideration. Enrique Garcilazo, OECD, thanked all participants and noted that many useful comments were made that would help in the final drafting of the “Rural Policy Review of Poland” report.

*Many thanks to all for their participation!*



### **Biographies of Speakers:**

**Alexandra Helgesson** works as an economic analyst at the Economic Analysis Secretariat at the Ministry of Enterprise and Innovation in Sweden. At the Ministry there are four ministers, the Minister for Enterprise and Innovation, the Minister for Infrastructure, the Minister for Housing and Digital Development and the Minister of Rural Affairs. Among other things Alexandra works with issues related to a new strategy for Swedish Food production, the Swedish Rural Development Programme and the development of a new rural policy. Alexandra studied Agricultural Economics at The Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences in Uppsala and has long experience from the Dairy sector before she started at the Ministry.

**Anne Sormunen** is manager of international affairs in Central Ostrobothnia region. Region situates in western coast of Finland. Rich in natural resources and beauty, Central Ostrobothnia is a highly productive northern region with successful connections to international trade. Previously during 10 years Anne Sormunen was chief executive officer of a national growth company program called Venture Cup and thus is familiar with national innovation system. She has also worked in business management consulting, ICT development, export industry and been a theatre producer. She has multidisciplinary educational background from various universities

**Chiara Allegri** is a consultant in the Rural and Regional Development Programme of the Regional Development Policy Division of the OECD. Prior to joining the OECD she has conducted research on regional cohesion at the University College of London. Her areas of interest span from regional inequalities to migration patterns, wellbeing and bottom-up development processes. She holds two Masters degrees, in Local Economic Development from the London School of Economics and in Spatial, Transport and Environmental Economics from the Vrije Universiteit of Amsterdam.

**Christell Åström** works as a Ministerial Adviser at the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry in Finland. She is also the Secretary General of the national Rural Policy Council, which is led by the minister of Agriculture and Environment. The Council assists the Government in cross-sectoral and strategically important rural policy issues. The Council leads the work and creates the guidelines for the national rural policy. Christell has been working with rural development and rural policy issues on both local and regional level before she started in her current job.

**Enrique Garcilazo** is the Head of Unit for the Rural and Regional Development Programme within the Regional Development Policy Division at the OECD. His work has mainly focused in the areas of regional competitiveness, measuring the performance of regions and understating the key factors for growth at the regional level and their impact to aggregate performance. He obtained a doctoral degree from the University of Texas at Austin at the LBJ School of Public Affairs.

**Mariusz-Stefan Migas** is the Head of Farm Economics Unit of European Commission Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development. He is an economist and holds an MBA from Open University.

**Monika Stanny** is the Director of the Institute of Rural Development and Agriculture, Faculty of Sciences and Humanities and Social Sciences of the Polish Academy of Sciences. The Institute takes

an interdisciplinary approach to the study of rural areas including economics, sociology, demography, ethnography, education, geography, etc. Dr. Stanny has published widely on such topics as the spatial differentiation of rural development in Poland, social and economic development and the implementation of Cohesion policy.

**Sabrina Lucatelli** is a Policy Coordinator for the Italian Presidency of the Council of the Ministers in the Department for Cohesion Policies. She is also the Italian Delegate at RDPC/WPRUR. She previously worked at the OECD as economist for the Directorate for Food Agriculture and Fisheries and the Economics Department. Sabina graduated from Rome University and undertook a Master of Science degree in Agriculture Economics at the Catholic University of Milan and a High Diploma in Rural Development at the University College Cork. She has been implementing important evaluation activities that assess how Rural Development Policy and Regional Policy impact rural areas in Italy and on the development policies for rural areas of less developed countries. Her works include papers and articles on the relationship between agriculture and the broader regional economy; local development issues; and rural development, including basic services provision and rural-urban partnerships.

**Tamara Krawchenko** is a policy analyst in the Rural and Regional Development Programme of the Regional Development Policy Division of the OECD. She has worked for both federal and provincial governments in Canada and for a number research institutes and universities in Canada, Ukraine and Kyrgyzstan as a professor and researcher. Her multi-disciplinary research has covered a wide range of topics—from community capacity building and rural development, to the governance of land use, intergenerational equity and public finance. Tamara holds a PhD in public policy from Carleton University and degrees in public administration, history and political science from Dalhousie University.