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ENASP contributes to EC consultations “Long Term Visions for Rural Areas” and “Roadmap EU Strategic Framework for Health and Safety at Work [2021-2027]”

The European Network of Agricultural Social Protection Systems has recently contributed to two consultations by the European Commission. The consultation about rural development called [“Long Term Visions for Rural Areas”](#) is supposed to help the European Commission in assessing the needs of rural areas all over Europe in order to formulate a strategy to improve life in rural areas and to collect ideas on how to achieve this. The [“Roadmap EU Strategic Framework for Health and Safety at Work \[2021-2027\]”](#) consultation is meant to tackle workplace safety and health in the EU, which is especially significant for the agricultural sector.

ENASP contributes to “Long Term Visions for Rural Areas” by acknowledging the diversity of rural areas in Europe and the way that they are often perceived as disadvantaged compared to urban areas. It is important to ENASP to point out that despite this, agriculture and forestry, both industries primarily active in rural regions, not only play a vital part in social security but are literally shaping rural regions and thereby the landscape of Europe.

The contribution also points out that intergenerational solidarity, as is practice in form of a pension fund for former farmers, stimulates innovation in farming techniques because it allows older farmers to hand over farms to younger farmers, thereby not only helping farms keep up with the times but also helping younger people and families to stay in the area they grew up in and find meaningful employment there. The paper clarifies that members of ENASP insure not only for

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pensions but also against accidents at work and occupational diseases. Especially where accident insurance is concerned, insurance is structured on the basis of communities of solidarity: larger companies and those with higher risk pay more but receive equal benefits as other insured parties.

ENASP concludes that agricultural social security systems are a successful and effective support system for rural regions and that it would be beneficial to the EU and its Member States to not only develop them further but to give agricultural social security systems access to existing European funding.

In the second consultation called “Health & Safety at Work – EU Strategic Framework (2021-2027)” ENASP points out to the EC that agriculture is one of the most dangerous lines of work in the EU and with about ten million people working in this field in the EU, the agricultural sector is responsible for several thousand work related fatal accidents every year. This is the reason why the ENASP welcomes the intention of the EU Commission to create a political framework to improve safety and health at work at both national and EU.

The paper also reminds the EC that the agricultural sector is especially vulnerable to the COVID-19 pandemic, as there is little option for working from home and seasonal workers are at high risk of infection, often due to their working conditions or the communal living facilities they are accommodated in.

You can find ENASPs full answers to the “[Long Term Vision for Rural Areas](#)” and the “[Roadmap EU Strategic Framework for Health and Safety at Work \[2021-2027\]](#)” on the ENASP website www.enasp.eu.

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