



# EUROPEAN RURAL COMMUNITY ALLIANCE

Network for the national and regional  
rural and village movements of Europe

[www.ruralcommunities.eu](http://www.ruralcommunities.eu)

## Vision

*The vision is of strong rural communities throughout Europe, joined in national movements, collaborating in a common well-functioning network, working towards a Europe in which rural communities have a strong position in society and a good and sustainable quality of life, shaped by the democratic will of the rural people.*

## Background

ERCA was established as a network for the national and regional civil society rural movements of Europe.

In a report published in 2005, it had been found that at least 18 countries in Europe had such networks, many well established over a long period. These rural movements are dedicated to empowering rural communities to address their own development and to lobby for the policy changes needed to safeguard their futures.

In 2005 these networks came together in Stockholm and agreed to form their own platform at European level.

ERCA began as an informal network in 2005 and was established as an organisation in 2009.

In 2013 the two networks European Rural Community Association and European Rural Alliance merged under the new name European Rural Community Alliance.



## What do we do?

**Our mission** is to support the rural communities of Europe, through their national and regional rural movements, to develop connections, share experience and mutual learning and take collective action to strengthen their position.

We do this by:

- promoting integrated, cross-sectorial, place-based and local rural development at the European level
- enabling informed debate on the future of rural areas and rural development and influencing rural policy, both in the European Union and in the European states.
- building on the collective strengths of the national and regional rural movements and empowering them at regional, national and international levels, and supporting the formation of national and regional rural movements in areas where these do not exist.
- providing a link between the European level rural networks which are supportive of our objectives
- enabling exchange of knowledge and mutual support between the member organisations.





## Activities

As well as providing networking functions for our members and other rural actors, some key recent activities include:

- Initiating and co-organising the European Rural Parliament - in 2013 in Brussel and in 2015 in Schärding, Austria
- Supporting the development of national and regional rural movements, as in Brandenburg, Germany
- Supporting the development of national Rural Parliaments, as in Scotland
- Representation in European rural committees and working groups as in the European Commission Civil Dialogue Group on Rural Development, and ENRD Rural Networks Assembly and Sub-Groups



## Members

Members are many national and regional rural organisations who are adherent to the objectives of ERCA.

*Current members are:*

### Czech Republic

National Network of Rural Community Schools

### Denmark

The Council of Rural Districts, *Landdistrikternes Fællesraad, LDF*

### England

ACRE - Action with Communities in Rural England

### Estonia

The Estonian Village Movement, Kodukant



### Finland

The Village Action Association of Finland, *Suomen Kylatoiminta Ry, SYTY*

### Germany

Village Movement Brandenburg

### Iceland

Landsbyggdinn Lifi

### Latvia

Latvian Rural Forum, *Latvijas Lauku Forums*

### Lithuania

Lithuanian Rural Communities Union, *Lietuvos Koimo Bendruomenių Sąjunga*

### Netherlands

National Association of Small Towns and Villages, *Landelijke Vereniging voor Kleine Kernen*

### Northern Ireland

Rural Community Network

### Scotland

Scottish Rural Action

### Sweden

All Sweden Shall Live, *Hela Sverige ska leva*

If your organisation is interested in becoming a member of ERCA please e-mail using our contact form on our web page.



Photos: Vanessa Halhead and Karin Wenström

## ERCA Board

Staffan Nilsson, *Chair*  
Bert Broekhuis  
Aris Adlers  
Jan Fiala  
Jela Tyrdonova

Vanessa Halhead  
Anneli Kana  
Kim Smedslund  
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