

2025 World Rural Tourism Council (WRTC) Second Quarter
Business and Academic Interaction

"Challenges and Opportunities in European Rural Areas"
“欧洲乡村地区的挑战与机遇”

2025 年 4 月 22 日

演讲人：迈克尔·托阿诺格鲁（Dr. Michail Toanoglou）
WRTC 欧盟区域秘书长

April 22nd 2025

Introduction

Good morning everyone. Today, I want to take you on a journey through Europe's rural areas that form the backbone of EU's identity, economy, and environment. Yet, they face unique challenges that demand special attention. But with challenges come opportunities, and rural areas are brimming with untapped potential.

大家早上好！

今天，我将带领大家一起走进欧洲的乡村地区。它们不仅构成了欧盟身份、经济 and 生态系统的基石，同时也面临着一些独特而严峻的挑战。但正所谓“危中有机”，这些地区也蕴藏着巨大的潜力与机遇，值得我们共同去探索与挖掘。

The Rural Reality: Defining the Landscape

First, what do we mean by 'rural'? Definitions vary, but the EU classifies rural areas based on population density, remoteness, and economic activity. Nearly 30% of the EU's population lives in rural areas, with over half in 'remote' regions. These areas are diverse—from thriving agricultural hubs to shrinking villages grappling with depopulation. Understanding this diversity is key to addressing their needs.

乡村现状：我们如何定义“乡村”？

那么，什么是“乡村”？在欧盟的定义中，“乡村”通常以人口密度、偏远程度以及经济活动作为评判标准。如今，约有 30% 的欧盟人口生活在乡村地区，其中一半以上生活在被划分为“偏远地区”的区域。

这些地区类型丰富多样——既有农业发达的区域，也有因人口流失而日渐萧条的村落。理解这种多样性，是我们制定有效政策、满足实际需求的前提。

Key Challenges

- **Demographic Decline & Ageing**
Rural areas are losing people—fast. Since 1961, remote regions have seen a 0.5% annual population decline. Younger generations leave for cities, leaving behind ageing communities. In some areas, there are just 1.6 working-age adults for every dependent. This strains services, economies, and social cohesion.
- 面临的三大核心挑战
人口减少与老龄化

自 1961 年以来，偏远地区人口每年平均减少 0.5%。大量年轻人离开家乡，涌向城市，使得留在乡村的多为老年人。在某些地区，每 1.6 名劳动人口需抚养 1 位老人或儿童。这种结构变化加剧了服务供给、经济发展和社会稳定的压力。

Access to Services & Infrastructure

Imagine traveling 10 km to reach a school or hospital—this is daily life for many rural residents. Poor transport links and digital divides exacerbate isolation. In 2020, 8.5% of rural households lacked fixed broadband, limiting opportunities for education, healthcare, and entrepreneurship.

基础设施与服务获取困难

试想一下，如果每天上学、就医都需要奔波 10 公里，这是许多乡村居民的日常现实。交通不便、数字鸿沟，进一步加剧了他们的孤立感。到 2020 年，仍有 8.5% 的乡村家庭无法接入固定宽带，限制了教育、医疗和创业的可能性。

- Economic Stagnation

Rural economies often rely on traditional sectors like agriculture, with lower productivity and GDP per capita than urban areas. While the urban-rural income gap is narrowing, disparities persist, especially in southern and eastern Europe.

- 经济发展乏力

- 乡村经济普遍依赖传统行业，尤其是农业，生产力较低，人均 GDP 显著低于城市水平。虽然城乡收入差距正在缓慢缩小，但在南欧和东欧地区，这一差距依然明显。

Opportunities for Transformation

Now, let's turn to the opportunities—because rural areas are not just problems to solve; they're solutions waiting to happen.

- Social Capital & Community Resilience

"Rural communities thrive on strong social networks. Trust and collaboration are embedded in their fabric. This 'social capital' can drive initiatives like time banks for the elderly or community-led renewable energy projects, fostering inclusion and sustainability."

- 三大转型机遇

- 社会资本与社区韧性

乡村社区的优势在于紧密的社会联系和强烈的互信感。这种“社会资本”是其独有的资源，可用于推动老年互助银行、社区主导的可再生能源项目等，进一步增强包容性与可持续发展。

- Green Transition Leadership

Rural areas host 72% of the EU's renewable energy production. Their vast landscapes are ideal for wind, solar, and biomass projects. By valuing ecosystem services and retaining local benefits, rural regions can lead the green transition while tackling energy poverty.

- 绿色转型的前沿阵地

目前，欧盟 72% 的可再生能源产自乡村地区。无论是风能、太阳能，还是生物质能，广阔的自然空间为这些项目提供了绝佳条件。通过重视生态系统服务和回馈本地社区，乡村可以在绿色转型中发挥引领作用，同时缓解能源贫困。

- Innovation & Diversification

From agritourism to digital hubs, rural areas are reinventing themselves. Take 'Biovilla' in Portugal—a cooperative combining regenerative agriculture, education, and eco-tourism. Or cross-border healthcare projects like 'Healthacross,' proving rural innovation can scale.

创新与多元发展

从生态农业到数字乡村，从跨境医疗到农业旅游，乡村正在转型。例如，葡萄牙的“Biovilla”项目就融合了再生农业、生态旅游和教育；而“Healthacross”等项目则说明，乡村创新也能形成规模效应。

- Policy Tools & Funding

The EU's Long-Term Vision for Rural Areas (LTVRA) and tools like the Rural Toolkit are bridging gaps. Integrated funding, such as combining agricultural and cohesion funds, supports holistic projects. The key? Tailored solutions that match local needs.

- 政策支持与资金工具

欧盟推出的《乡村地区长期发展愿景（LTVRA）》及其“乡村工具箱”计划，正在帮助弥补城乡差距。通过整合农业与区域发展资金，支持一体化项目，实现“因地制宜、按需施策”。

Conclusion

So, what's the takeaway? Rural areas face steep challenges, but their potential is immense. By investing in connectivity, empowering communities, and leveraging their natural and social assets, we can build rural areas that are stronger, connected, resilient, and prosperous. The future of Europe isn't just urban—it's rural too. Let's ensure no region is left behind. Thank you.

Thank you.

Dr. Michail Toanoglou

WRTC - Secretary General for the EU region

各位朋友，欧洲的乡村面临着许多挑战，但它们的潜力同样巨大。只要我们投资于基础设施建设、赋能社区、充分挖掘自然与社会资源的价值，就能够打造出更加坚韧、互联、繁荣且具有韧性的乡村体系。

欧洲的未来不仅属于城市，也属于乡村。让我们携手努力，确保没有一个地区被遗忘。

非常感谢大家！

—— 迈克尔·托阿诺格鲁博士

WRTC 欧盟区秘书长

Below are the references used:

1. European Commission. (2021). A long-term vision for the EU's rural areas.
2. Perpiña Castillo, C. et al. (2022a). Urban-rural interactions and territorial disparities. JRC Policy Brief.

3. Perpiña Castillo, C. et al. (2023). Opportunities for remote rural areas. JRC Policy Brief.
4. Perpiña Castillo, C. et al. (2024b). Renewable energy in EU rural areas. JRC Report.
5. Meloni, C. et al. (2023). "The rural-urban well-being gap in Europe." Bio-based and Applied Economics.
6. Stanef, M.R. (2012). "Measuring urban-rural differences." Theoretical and Empirical Researches in Urban Management.
7. Joint Research Centre (JRC). (2025). Learning from the Rural Toolkit.