

LEADER implementation: state of play

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*3rd meeting of the Subgroup on LEADER and Territorial
Development*

5-6 March 2025

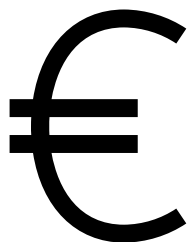
Key points:

1. Implementation of LEADER in Rural Development Programmes (RDPs) 2014-22
2. LEADER in CAP Plans – launch, simplification, added value, data on monitoring, selection of result indicators
3. New Commission, new priorities – competitiveness, road to future EU budget (MFF), simplification, security and resilience incl. against disinformation, Vision for Agriculture and Food.

LEADER implementation in RDPs (2014-22)

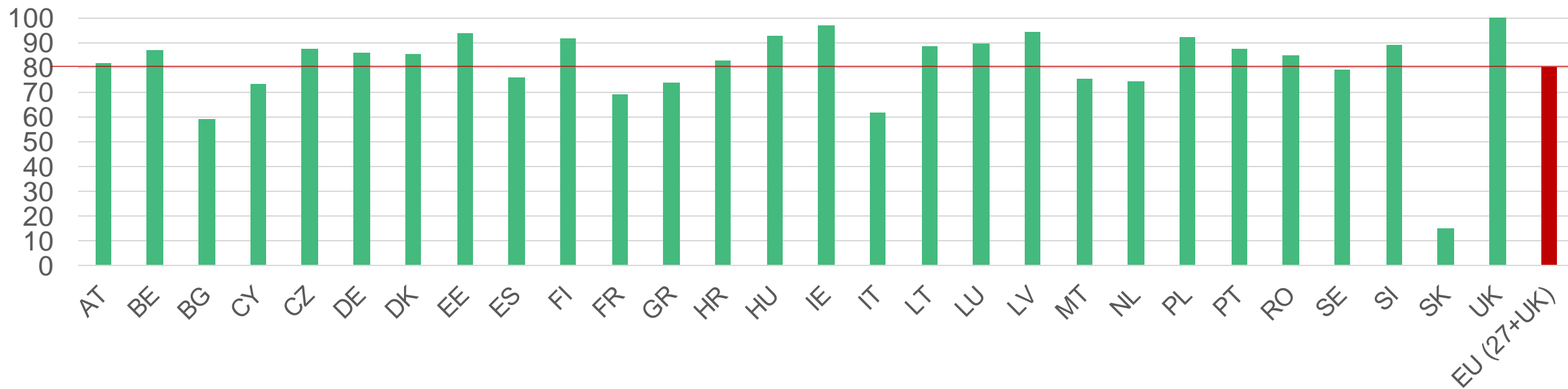


Absorption of LEADER measure in RDP 2014-22 (%)



80% of LEADER funding disbursed

Yet in Bulgaria, France, Italy, Slovakia : less than 70%



LEADER in RDPs 2014-22 (EU27+UK)

(based on AIR 2023)

8 billion EUR (of EAFRD), of which 6,4 billion EUR disbursed so far (end 2024)

2,728 Local Development Strategies implemented

60% of EU rural population covered

72,000 jobs created

31% of rural population benefitting from improved services



LEADER in CAP Plans 2023-27

Incl. results of the survey for this meeting



LAGs at work to implement their strategies 2023-27... but some delays

LAGs should be able to fulfill their tasks one year after approval of CAP plans (=end 2023)

The situation is nuanced with some delays: even though the vast majority of EU LAGs have been selected (except SK and BG), many have been paid for running costs, but fewer LAGs already opened calls for projects

Full picture is expected in the annual reports for 2024 but some information present in the survey



LEADER is at work in the CAP Plans – results of the survey

LAGs selected

BE-VL (15), CY (4), DE (372), EL (50), HR (56), HU (105), FI (53), LT (49), LUX (5), LV (33), EL (50), NL (31), PT (58), SI (37)

LAGs received at least one payment or advance (for running costs)

BE-VL (13), CY (0), DE (370), EL(0), HR (56), HU (62) FI (53), LT (48), LUX (4), LV (33), NL (28), PT (6), SI (37)

LAGs received at least one payment (for projects)

LT (39), LUX (4), LV (18), BE-VL (3), NL (17)

LAGs with open calls for projects

BE-VL (15), DE (370), HU (9), FI (53), HR (11), LT (45), LUX (5), LV (33), NL (30), SI (31)

Selection not completed: SK, BG

The survey will be kept open and the MS are still invited to complete it.





Simplification in LEADER (survey)

Use of simplified cost options

BE-VL (microprojects, regular projects, staff costs), DE (staff costs), EL (construction costs), FI (all kinds of projects), LUX (umbrella projects), LT (all projects), LV (small projects for business, youth initiatives, cooperation projects), running costs (all MS except NL)

Advance payments to projects/running costs

Cooperation projects (DE, EL, FI, LT, LUX, SI);
Local projects (HU, NL, PT)
Running costs (PT, LV*, FI*, HR, LT, HU, NL, EL, DE)

Discussions on simplification to be continued at the annual review meetings...

Other simplifications

Procedures/reporting (FI), Forms (LUX), IT tools to reduce documentation (BE-VL), EL (de minimis for private projects), simplified payment claim for small projects (NL), less docs (CY), standard forms for monitoring (LT), simpler docs (HR), simpler rules on conflict of interest (DE)

Obstacles to simplification

Limited deeper understanding of bottom-up approach
Cost of engagement-bottom-up approach
Limited proportionality (small projects – controls)
Many irregularities even projects are small
Hard to set up SCO for small programmes
Audit requirements (EU/national)
National environmental/building laws (DE)



LEADER relevant result indicators in CAP Plans (modifications)

VIBRANT RURAL AREAS

R37: jobs AT, BE-VL, CY, DE, DK, EE, IE, LV, NL, PL, PT, RO, SE, SI

R39: rural businesses AT, BE-VL, CY, CZ, DE, DK, ES, IE, LV, NL, PL, PT, RO, SE, SI, RO, PL

R41: services SI, IE, PL, AT, DE, DK, SE, NL, LV, BE-VL, PT, ES

R42: social inclusion SI, IE, RO, PL, AT, NL, BE-VL, PT, ES

R40: smart villages AT, CY, CZ, ES, IE, NL, PL, RO, SE, SI

Still awaited: BG, BE-WAL, EE, EL, ES (partly), FI, FR, HR, HU, IT, LUX, LT, MT, SK,

CLIMATE ENVIRONMENT CARE

R37: investments in environment or climate: AT, BE-VL, CZ, DE, ES, NL, PL, SE, SI,

R15: renewable energy NL, PL, PT

COMPETITIVENESS OF AGRIFOOD SUPPLY CHAIN

R10: supply chain: BE-VL, CZ, NL, PL, PT, SL

R9: farm modernisation: CZ, PT

R3: farm digitalisation: CZ, SI



Added value of LEADER in CAP Plans – time to deliver!

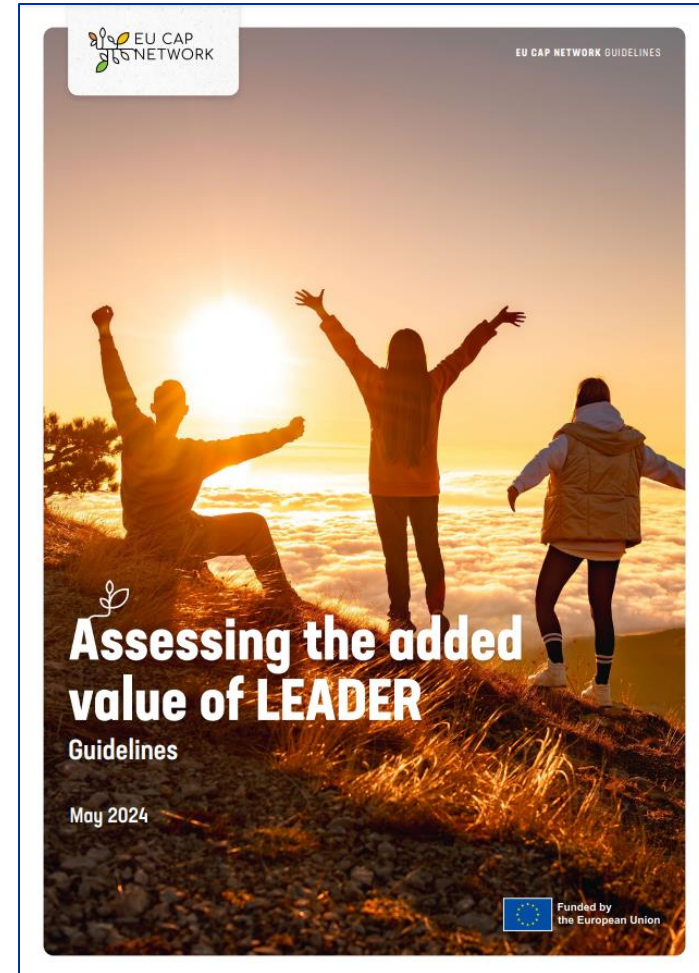
Social capital building

Improvement of local governance, including
bringing the EU to citizens

Enhanced project results compared with non-
LEADER delivery

Useful guidelines: (in all languages)

[Assessing the added value of LEADER | EU CAP
Network](#)



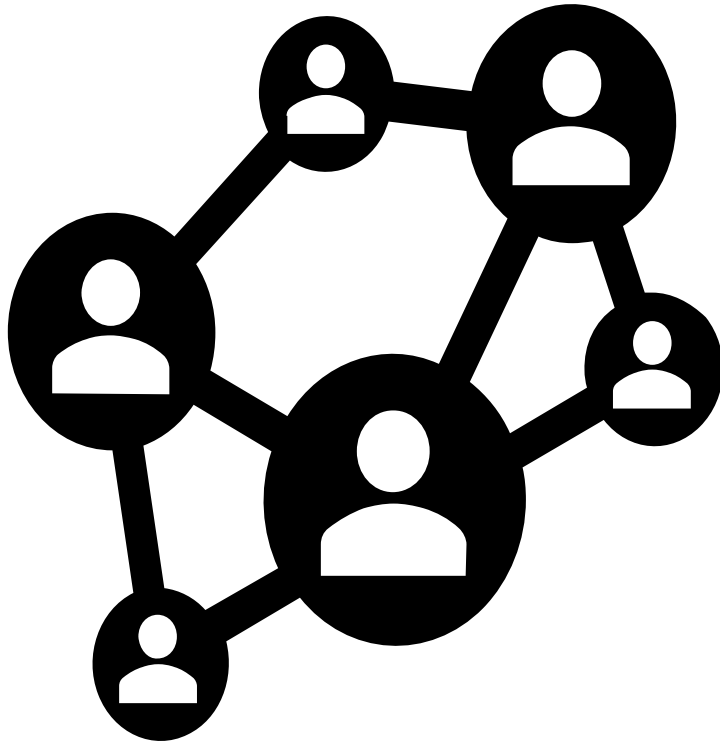
First monitoring data on LEADER (DME) in CAP Plans 2023-27

Data covers 22 Member States (except: Spain, Slovenia, Slovakia, Bulgaria, Malta, Ireland (partly) and includes 2,036 LAGs (out of 2,633 planned)



Added value of LEADER: extensive LEADER networks in rural EU and real participative democracy

Valorise the LEADER
networks better?



147 million people covered
by LEADER strategies

2,036 LAGs so far

120,000 MEMBERS OF LAGs
of which:

34,000 social partners

39,000 economic partners

30,000 local public
authorities

21,000 other partners

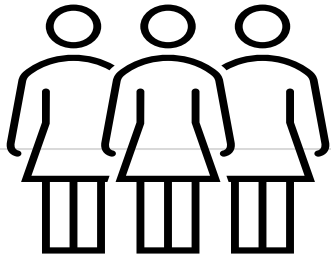
EU closer to citizens

25% of LAG members
or 29,000 members are
directly involved in
decision making bodies

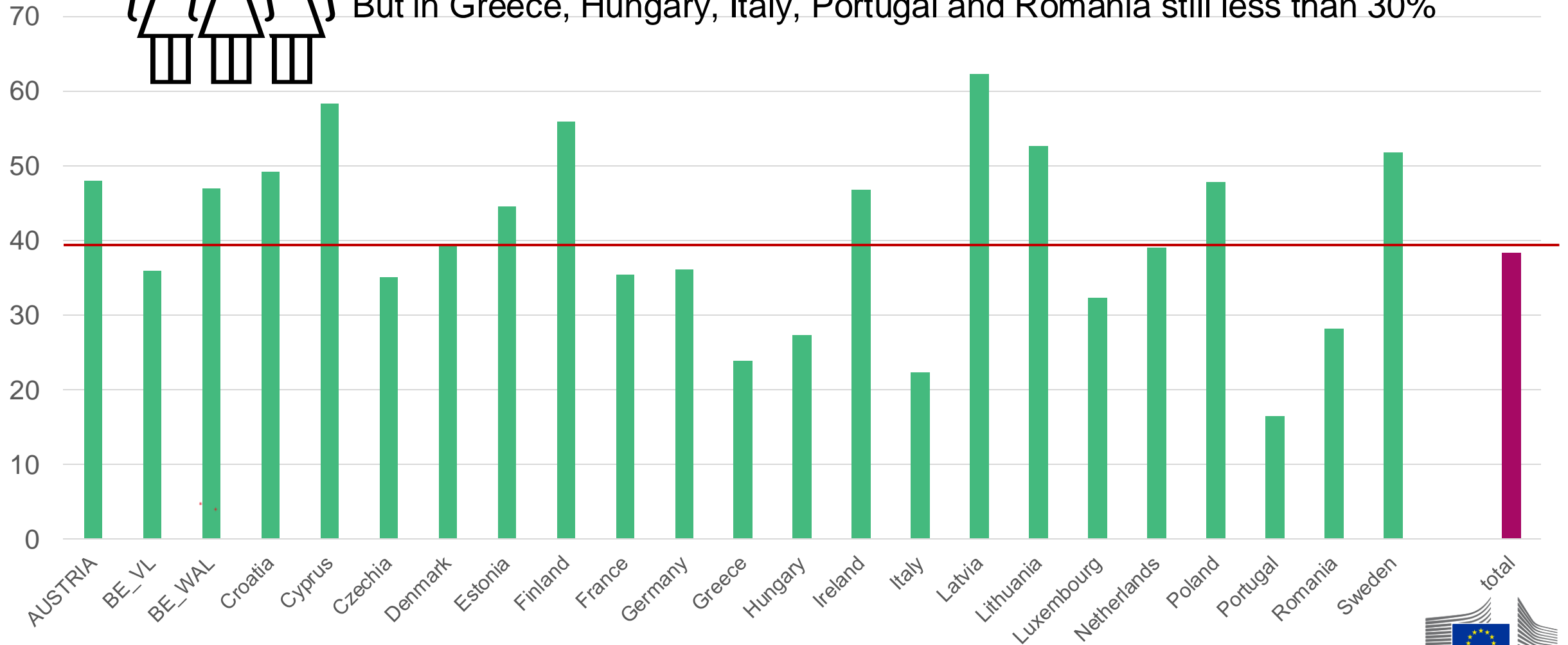
Augmentation of social capital and local governance



Women in LAGs' decision making bodies (%)



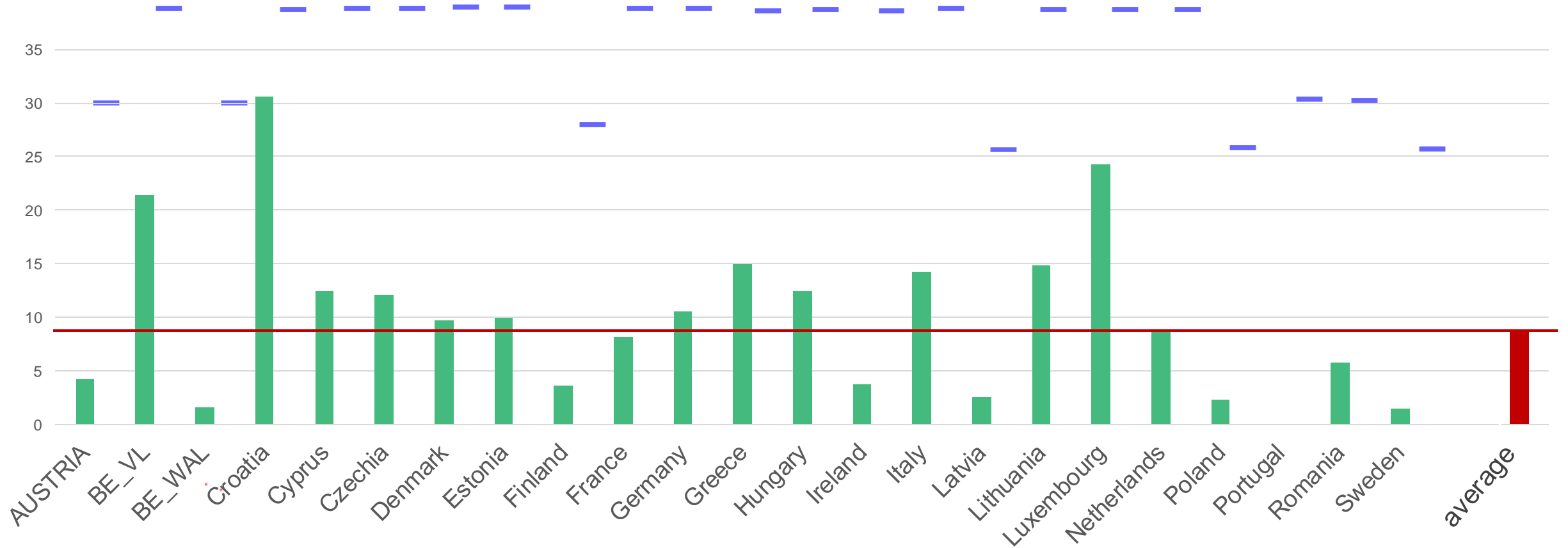
are on average **40%** in European LAGs decision making bodies
But in Greece, Hungary, Italy, Portugal and Romania still less than 30%



Young people in LAGs' decision making bodies (%)

9% on average but 7 MS well below

Note: the definition of young age varies across Member States and is marked with —



New Commission 2024-29, new priorities - context for LEADER

Vision on Agriculture and Food (19 Feb 2025)

Communication on the road to the next multiannual financial framework (11 Feb 2025)



LEADER in the changing landscape for Europe

...

Competitiveness

Incl. start-ups, innovation, research, skills,



Security

Resilience

Incl. against disinformation

Multiple pressures on the future budgets (2028-35)



Incl. fair living and working conditions in rural areas

LEADER/smart villages to be strengthened

Simplification



Road to MFF 2028-35 and public consultations



Public consultations: open till 6 May 2025

Implementing EU funding with member states and regions:

[EU's next long-term budget \(MFF\) – implementing EU funding with Member States and regions](#)

Make your voice heard!

[EU's next long-term budget \(MFF\) – implementing EU funding with Member States and regions](#)

