STUDY REGARDING THE ECONOMICAL, SOCIAL AND EDUCATIONAL CONTEXT IN EACH PARTNER COUNTRY

In 1988, the European Union Community set up a specific framework devoted to rural areas in the document “The Future of rural society”. Meanwhile, the reform of Europe structural funds also worked as an encouragement for an integrated rural development.

In 1993, rural areas received further political recognisition within the European Union through a specific citation in article 130A of the Maastricht Treaty, which identified rural areas as a priority for assistance under the EU policy for economic and social cohesion.

A major European conference on rural development was held in Cork, Ireland, in 1996, where the Commission and its partners at national, regional and local level looked ahead to the requirements of the Union’s rural development policy for the year 2000 and beyond. The resulting document, the Cork Declaration called for sustainable development in all rural area, introducing more subsidiary, simplification and integration in relation to the various different measures available to support rural development.

At this point, rural areas accounted for more than 80% of the EU territory and more than a quarter of its population, which is characterized by the diversity of countryside, culture and traditions, as well as major economic and social changes.

In this document we are going to present the economical, social and educational context for all the countries involved in the project. Understanding these contexts will make possible the elaboration of a viable and sustainable strategy for adult education in rural areas. This document is needed in order for the partners to know the existing situation in the involved countries.

ROMANIA

Administratively, the rural area is comprised of 2686 communes incorporating 13 thousand villages. It is very different from urban area by economic activities, occupations and factors of production. It also is very heterogeneous, with tiny human settlements and larger communities, densely populated areas and isolated villages and hamlets, rich communities and poor communities. However, the rural area is particularly important to Romania - in both economic and social terms: it accounts for 45% of the country’s population, 47% of housing and 46% of the living space. In this respect, Romania is unlike either its neighbors or EU countries where only 23% of the total are rural population. In Romania, 89% of the country’s surface area and 91% of its farmland area is under rural community administration. With 48 people per sq. km., the rural area is more sparsely populated than the urban area (where the figure is 480).

1 (From the World Bank Report - From Rural Poverty to Rural Development)
Economy

The rural area lags behind the urban one - socially and economically. Primary productive activities prevail in rural area: farming, forestry and fishing. By contrast, secondary and tertiary production – manufacturing industries, trade and other services are dominant in urban area. Food processing and extraction industry are the most common industrial activity in rural area. This difference in economic activities also extends to occupations: most of the economically active population in rural area is self-employed farmers, unlike in urban area where employees cut the biggest share. It should, however, be said that while entrepreneurship measured by the proportion of employers in total economically active population is low in both areas, it is almost nil in the rural area, where less than one-fifth of all Romanian employers are located. These differences are apparent in Table 1.

Table 1. Differences in occupational status by area of residence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupational status</th>
<th>% of total, by area</th>
<th>% of total, by category</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>Rural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employee</td>
<td>91.0</td>
<td>32.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employer</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-employed</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>34.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family worker</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>31.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Member of agricultural company or non-ag. Cooperative</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Education

Differences in occupational status are, in their turn, linked to different educational achievements and skills in the two areas. The education level in rural areas is lower than in urban areas (see Table 2.). The working population with no formal schooling or with just primary education makes up 27.6% in rural area, which contrasts with a low 2.6% in urban area. On the other hand, higher school graduates are concentrated in the urban area where 90% of their total live.

Table 2. Education level of working population by area

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total</th>
<th>% of total, by area</th>
<th>% of total, by category</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>Rural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No formal schooling</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary school</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>24.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower secondary school</td>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>31.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower high school</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>8.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocational school</td>
<td>24.7</td>
<td>17.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper high school</td>
<td>34.0</td>
<td>12.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specialty post-high school</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long-course university</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Resources in the two areas basically determine both economic activities and occupations. The rural area makes intensive use of primary resources: land, forests and the subsoil. By land ownership, rural residents own some 80% of all farmland and operate an even higher percentage of agricultural and holdings. Livestock ownership is almost 100% in rural area. By contrast, rural ownership of production equipment, industrial construction, and infrastructure is far below the urban level.

**Table 3. Indicators of physical and social infrastructure**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Population total</th>
<th>Rural</th>
<th>Urban</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>45%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Physical infrastructure - % by rural/urban area</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Length of drinking water distribution network – km</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length of gas distribution network – km</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length of sewage system – km</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social infrastructure – in 1000 people</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School units</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classrooms and school laboratories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hospital and dispensary beds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical staff (doctors and nurses)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communications – in 1000 people</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Radio and local radio subscribers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TV subscribers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual telephone units</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

On the other hand, the rural area is very heterogeneous. Average figures, used to illustrate the rural-urban disparity, tell nothing about this heterogeneity that has its roots in the wide diversity of economic, geographic and socio-cultural conditions in rural area. There are large rural communities comparable in size with towns, such as Voluntari in Ilfov County with a population of 27 thousand inhabitants, and small communities with a little over one hundred inhabitants, such as Brebu Nou in Caras-Severin County. Furthermore, the landholdings managed by a community may vary within wide limits: Murighiol commune in Constanta county holds over 80 thousand hectares of land, which contrasts with the one thousand hectares held by Doicesti commune in Dambovita county. And this wide diversity of resources and living standards may grow wider if we take our analysis further down to villages.
The major characteristics of rural population are: it is shrinking, aging and less educated than urban population. All these are more frequent phenomena determinants in small rural communities far away from urban areas. By geographic region, the population drop is more significant in the south of the country and in western Transylvania, with aging affecting roughly the same parts of the country. The counties with lower education levels are concentrated in the Northeast and South border counties.

All these characteristics have direct rural development implications. We assume that the living standards are determined by:

- The quality of human resources (approximated by education level);
- Opportunities for households to make good use of their factors of production (approximated by location and distance to city);
- Other factors linked to rural community size.

By assumption, lower household living standards can be linked to lower educational achievements. Also, the living standard of a rural community can be linked to its size and proximity to large urban communities as essential prerequisites for households to make better use of their factors of production, which vary, inversely proportional with transport costs and proportional with the size of local and urban market. Finally, the geographic regions with shrinking population, lower birth rates, and rising death rates and out migration may be in this position precisely because of falling living standards and our measure may be a proxy for the lower welfare areas.

Labor

Labor is one of the key resources for rural development. In any causal model, the available human resources will influence the standard of living, by the size and quality of labor. To know what the current development level of rural area is like we must know the size and structure of its labor resources, the range of rural occupations, by activity and education level, and labor distribution by geographic region.

The activity rate is higher and unemployment lower in rural area (Table 4). The activity rate in rural area in the three years surveyed was by some 10-percentage points higher than in urban area. Differences were even bigger with the labor force participation rate (14.6 per cent age points in 1997). The rural unemployment rate – as defined by ILO – trailed the urban rate by some 5-percentage points during the same period of time.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Activity Rate</th>
<th>Labor Force Participation</th>
<th>Unemployment Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>Urban</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>66.0</td>
<td>73.0</td>
<td>60.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>64.8</td>
<td>69.9</td>
<td>60.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>64.8</td>
<td>71.5</td>
<td>59.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

By age groups, the working rate is far higher in rural area for the young (15-24 years) and the elderly (over 50). This is something worth stressing. As can be seen in
Figure 1, the proportion of young people in work is 61.9% in rural area vs. 37.4% in urban area. As concerns the elderly, only 5.5% of the people of retirement age (65 years and over) in urban area are working, unlike in rural area where the working people in this group account for a high 52%.

Figure 1. Activity rate of adult population, by age group and areas of residence

The structure of the working population in Table 5 reflects the average for each area of residence. In Romania’s rural areas, there are wide disparities in the occupational structure from commune to commune. There are communities where industry and the tertiary sector lack altogether, and agriculture accounts 100 percent of employment. Such communities are expected to add lower value per labor unit, an assumption that would be tested in Chapter Three. The primary sector prevails in the East and South West (Table 6) in these regions, more than three quarters of the rural population is working in agriculture, with industry and services accounting for a small share only (10%-12%).

Table 5. Structure of active population, by sector and area of residence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>69.8%</td>
<td>7.2%</td>
<td>68.4%</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
<td>69.8%</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industry</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
<td>47.1%</td>
<td>17.0%</td>
<td>46.4%</td>
<td>16.1%</td>
<td>45.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Services</td>
<td>13.5%</td>
<td>45.8%</td>
<td>14.6%</td>
<td>46.9%</td>
<td>14.1%</td>
<td>47.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6. Structure of the active rural population by sector and region

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>As % of total employed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Agriculture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North-East</td>
<td>78.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South-East</td>
<td>74.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South</td>
<td>64.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South-West</td>
<td>75.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West</td>
<td>67.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A Rural Development Report (Urban Project/PHARE, 1998) presents two maps that use the existence or non-existence of industrial activities in rural communities as a measure for rural occupational diversity. The first is a map of industrial activities in rural area, which shows that more complex rural industrial activities are concentrated in two counties, Suceava and Timis, and that some other industrial activities are located in a few communities in the counties of Satu-Mare, Bihor, Mures, Brasov, Covasna, Harghita, Gorj, Olt, Arges, Dâmbovita, Constanta. Most of the units operated in these communities are in the mining and food processing industries. The second map identifies the existence or non-existence of food processing in rural communities. This industry is strongly represented in Suceava, Vaslui, Constanta, Arges, Dolj, Timis and Olt counties.

**Transport and Communications Infrastructure**

The rural area also has to cope with a shortage of public transport and communications infrastructure that would help the delivery of appropriate services.

As far as transport is concerned, we would first refer to public roads – of county and community significance –, which measured 58,478 km and accounted for four-fifths of the country’s public roads in mid-1997.

Of that total, just under one half (47 per cent) were county roads and 53 per cent were community roads. A very low percentage – 7.7 per cent of county roads and 3.1 per cent of community roads – was rehabilitated with more than two-fifths being cobbled roads. We may add that nearly three-fifths of community roads were cobbled, but there were still a quarter of them that were unpaved.

In as much as rural access to national roads is concerned, it should be said that only about half of all rural communities (1462) – and about three-fifths of the rural population - had direct access to the main road network. The density of county and community roads in the territory was also low: at end- 1997, there were 27.3 km of roads in 100 sq. km of rural area.

As concerns communications, post and telephone-telegraph offices in rural area fail to meet demand.

In 1997 there were 7214 rural post offices or 90 per cent of all Romanian Post offices. Adding to them were 9805 mailboxes whose number dropped by 6.8 per cent in 1997, a drop that caused a compression of postal services in rural area. Postal offices are particularly few in five counties in the South.

Telephone and telegraph services in rural area were provided by 2182 offices, or some four fifths of all units delivering such services; their numbers also had dropped in the previous year by 50 units (2.2 per cent).

Telephone units in rural area at the end of 1997 totaled 530 thousand, to account for 13.4 per cent of the country’s total but for just 52 units in 1000 rural people (the total includes telephone units of public telephone offices and legal entities in addition to those of households). Only in 1160 rural communities (or 43 per cent of their total) are telephone services available to every constituent village; in one-fifth of the rural...
communities less than one half of their constituent villages have access to telephone services.

Finally, access to radio and TV programs is not provided to rural households on a large scale (even though almost all rural communities have access to electricity).

DENMARK

Area:
total: 43,094 sq km
Land: 42,394 sq km
Water: 700 sq km

Note: includes the island of Bornholm in the Baltic Sea and the rest of metropolitan Denmark, but excludes the Faroe Islands and Greenland

Population: 5,336,394 (July 2000 est.)

Age structure:
0-14 years: 18% (male 505,820; female 479,815)
15-64 years: 67% (male 1,802,665; female 1,755,633)
65 years and over: 15% (male 330,055; female 462,406) (2000 est.)

Population growth rate: 0.31% (2000 est.)
Birth rate: 12 – 16 births /1,000 population (2000 est.)
Death rate: 11 deaths /1,000 population (2000 est.)
Net migration rate: 1.95 migrant(s)/1,000 population (2000 est.)

Sex ratio:
at birth: 1.05 male(s)/female
under 15 years: 1.05 male(s)/female
15-64 years: 1.03 male(s)/female
65 years and over: 0.71 male(s)/female
total population: 0.98 male(s)/female (2000 est.)

Languages: Danish, Faroese, Greenlandic (an Inuit dialect), German (small minority)

Note: English is the predominant second language

Literacy:
definition: age 15 and over can read and write
total population: 100%

Economy

This thoroughly modern market economy features high-tech agriculture, up-to-date small-scale and corporate industry, extensive government welfare measures, comfortable living standards, and high dependence on foreign trade. Denmark is a net exporter of food. The center-left coalition government is concentrating on reducing the unemployment rate and the budget deficit as well as following the previous government's policies of maintaining low inflation and a current account surplus. The coalition also vows to maintain a stable currency. The coalition has lowered marginal income tax rates while maintaining overall tax revenues; boosted industrial competitiveness through labor market and tax reforms; increased research
and development funds; and improved welfare services for the neediest while cutting paperwork and delays. Denmark chose not to join the 11 other EU members who launched the euro on 1 January 1999.

**GDP:** purchasing power parity - $127.7 billion (1999 est.)
**GDP - real growth rate:** 1.3% (1999 est.)
**GDP - per capita:** purchasing power parity - $23,800 (1999 est.)
**GDP - composition by sector:**
  - agriculture: 4%
  - industry: 27%
  - services: 69% (1997)

**Labor force:** 2.896 million
**Labor force - by occupation:** services 71%, industry 25%, agriculture 4% (1997 est.)
**Unemployment rate:** 5.7% (1999 est.)

**Budget:**
- revenues: $59.7 billion
- expenditures: $57.6 billion, including capital expenditures of $NA (1997 est.)

**Industries:** food processing, machinery and equipment, textiles and clothing, chemical products, electronics, construction, furniture, and other wood products, shipbuilding

**Telephones - main lines in use:** 3.203 million (1995)
**Telephones - mobile cellular:** 1.347 million (1999)
**Telephone system:** excellent telephone and telegraph services

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**THE EDUCATION SYSTEM IN GENERAL**

**GENERAL TARGETS**

Education plays a central role in the Danish society. And here on the threshold of the millennium this is more important than ever, for the labor market is demanding more and more from the workforce in respect of qualifications; and in society as such knowledge and information are the keys to understanding and success in an ever more complex and changeable world.

The Danish government has therefore made it its target to ensure that all young people complete a youth education program, that as many as possible - and at least 90-95% - of an age group complete a qualifying education program, that recurrent education becomes a natural part of people's lives and their participation in social life, and that the education system is flexible and develops steadily in step with society so that it can continue to ensure the vocational and personal qualifications which are needed in a modern high-technological society based on democratic principles.

**THE STRUCTURE OF THE EDUCATION SYSTEM**

The Danish education system consists of 3 levels: basic school, youth education and higher education, to which should be added the area of adult education.
The basic school is a 9-year comprehensive school. Prior to this, there is a voluntary pre-school class, and after there is a voluntary 10th school year.

Youth education is primarily either academically oriented (general upper secondary education) or vocationally oriented (vocational education and training). The individual programs: vocational basic training (e.g., vocational education and training) and free open education (free education) have been established as an additional offer for young people. The youth education programs are normally of duration of approx. 3 years; their duration does however vary between 2 and 4 years.

Upon completion of youth education, it is possible to continue in higher education. Higher education can be divided into: short-cycle (1-3 years), medium-cycle (3-4 years) and long-cycle (5-6 years) higher education.

There is moreover a civil service training system for the staff of the police, the Danish State Railways, the postal service etc. To this should be added programs organized within the armed forces and within the private sector, i.e. banking, insurance and shipping.

In Denmark, there is a long and strong tradition of adult education. Major parts of the adult education area is government financed and regulated by law, but in addition to this there is a wide range of private offers which do not receive any government funding.

And last but not least, we must mention the area of "folkeoplysning" (liberal education): "folkehøjskoler" (folk high schools), courses provided in pursuance of the Act on "Folkeoplysning" (liberal education at day and evening schools), "efterskoler" (continuation schools), youth schools etc. which all provide possibilities of personal and occupational development in a free school environment without leading to any actual vocational qualification.

Each year, an estimated about 40% of the population - or 2 million people - take part in education and training activities which are wholly or partially financed by the public purse. Half of these are children and young people who attend the teaching in the basic school, in youth education or in higher education. The other half takes part in adult education/ "folkeoplysning" (liberal education).

6.2% of Denmark’s GDP is spent on education. Seen in an international perspective, this corresponds to the OECD-average. Denmark spends more than the average on the basic levels of education, whereas we spend a little less than the OECD-average on higher education.

12% of the total public expenditure goes to the education system. The distribution on areas of education is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education Area</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Basic school</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth education</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher education</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult education</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administration etc.</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SPAIN

General presentation

Area:
Total: 504,782 sq km
land: 499,542 sq km
water: 5,240 sq km
note: includes Balearic Islands, Canary Islands, and five places of sovereignty (plazas de soberania) on and off the coast of Morocco - Ceuta, Melilla, Islas Chafarinas, Penon de Alhucemas, and Penon de Velez de la Gomera

Population: 40,037,995 (July 2001 est.)

Age structure:
0-14 years: 14.62% (male 3,015,851; female 2,835,763)
15-64 years: 68.2% (male 13,701,065; female 13,605,314)
65 years and over: 17.18% (male 2,881,334; female 3,998,668) (2001 est.)

Population growth rate: 0.1% (2001 est.)

Birth rate: 9.26 births/1,000 population (2001 est.)

Death rate: 9.13 deaths/1,000 population (2001 est.)

Net migration rate: 0.87 migrant(s)/1,000 population (2001 est.)

Sex ratio:
at birth: 1.07 male(s)/female
under 15 years: 1.06 male(s)/female
15-64 years: 1.01 male(s)/female
65 years and over: 0.72 male(s)/female
total population: 0.96 male(s)/female (2001 est.)

Literacy:
Definition: age 15 and over can read and write
total population: 97%

Economy

Spain's mixed capitalist economy supports a GDP that on a per capita basis is 80% that of the four leading West European economies. Its center-right government successfully worked to gain admission to the first group of countries launching the European single currency on 1 January 1999. The AZNAR administration has continued to advocate liberalization, privatization, and deregulation of the economy and has introduced some tax reforms to that end. Unemployment has been steadily falling under the AZNAR administration but remains the highest in the EU at 14%. The government intends to make further progress in changing labor laws and reforming pension schemes, which are key to the sustainability of both Spain's
internal economic advances and its competitiveness in a single currency area. Adjusting to the monetary and other economic policies of an integrated Europe - and further reducing unemployment - will pose challenges to Spain in the next few years.

GDP: purchasing power parity - $720.8 billion (2000 est.)
GDP - real growth rate: 4% (2000 est.)
GDP - per capita: purchasing power parity - $18,000 (2000 est.)

GDP - composition by sector:
- Agriculture: 4%
- Industry: 31%
- Services: 65% (1999)

Labor force - by occupation: services 64%, manufacturing, mining, and construction 28%, agriculture 8% (1997 est.)
Unemployment rate: 14% (2000 est.)

Budget:
Revenues: $105 billion
Expenditures: $109 billion, including capital expenditures of $12.8 billion (2000 est.)

Industries:
Textiles and apparel (including footwear), food and beverages, metals and metal manufactures, chemicals, shipbuilding, automobiles, machine tools, tourism
Industrial production growth rate: 4.5% (2000 est.)

Telephone system: general assessment: generally adequate, modern facilities; teledensity is 44 main lines for each 100 persons

Adult education in rural areas

To be able to understand the needs that adult Spanish people have at present, it is essential to know the changes that there have been in the last times.

As for rural areas, in the last twenty years its population has changed deeply in terms of territorial organization, socio-demographic features and professional features. The loss of population in rural areas is now much more selective, and in certain cases there is a consolidation of those demographic reactivation movements which started off at the beginning of the 90’s. There has been a slight demographic recovery in certain medium-sized towns even if traditional differences regarding territory, generation and gender are still present in Spanish rural society. This mild recovery was caused in most cases not by a natural increase, but by a larger number of returns: whether permanent (retired and young people) or seasonal (holiday homes).

When analyzing the migratory flows between rural and urban areas, as well as the profile of the groups involved in these flows, it can be clearly concluded that the rural society of Spain now has a new special configuration. It can also be seen that there has been a decline in agriculture as well as an increase in the service industry. There are different social and professional groups, with different interests and strategies, involved in this process, and also a certain balance in the migratory flow within Spanish rural municipal districts.
About women and work on the family farmers

The confusion that exists, sometimes in the minds of the women themselves, between domestic and farm work inevitably blurs the distinction between productive and reproductive work, a situation that does not arise with the men's work. Woman's work is discontinuous, irregular and extremely varied, which makes it difficult for the women themselves and of course for conventional statistics to make an objective evaluation.

The rural women in official statistics

Though official statistics are undeniably deficient in accurately portraying such a complex and indeterminate social phenomenon as the role of women in agriculture, they are critical to framing the quantitative dimensions of the target population group.

Socio-professional breakdown of the active agricultural population by gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Professional status</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th></th>
<th>Women</th>
<th></th>
<th>Total</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(x 1000)</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>(x 1000)</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>(x 1000)</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employer</td>
<td>29.0</td>
<td>2.35</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>0.45</td>
<td>31.9</td>
<td>2.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farm operator without hired labour</td>
<td>464.7</td>
<td>42.2</td>
<td>142.4</td>
<td>32.5</td>
<td>607.1</td>
<td>39.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooperative member</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>0.27</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.23</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>0.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unpaid family member</td>
<td>98.3</td>
<td>8.97</td>
<td>142.4</td>
<td>32.56</td>
<td>240.7</td>
<td>15.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wage earner</td>
<td>505.5</td>
<td>45.94</td>
<td>147.5</td>
<td>33.71</td>
<td>653</td>
<td>42.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>0.27</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.59</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>0.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>1104.9</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>436.2</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>1541.1</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to this survey, most women actively involved in agriculture are wage earners (usually casual labour), unpaid family members (working on the farm of a relative with whom they live) and farm operators without hired labour (a denomination that can give rise to confusion and is comparable to the "holder" of the Agricultural Census).

Level of education

This is the consequence of the study made about the educational situation of Spanish women (in general) nowadays, referring both to the historical development (focusing on the recent events) and the international context.

Among the conclusions of the research, it is worth mentioning the fact that women's participation nearly equals that of men's in all the levels of the education system. Slight qualitative differences, however, have been found in the options and the
professional branches chosen, the type of centres they attend, and the marks obtained (female marks are slightly higher). In Secondary Education, the distribution between the two options is uneven, as over 50% of women take the academic branch, while only 43% follow the vocational branch. This situation is changing towards a more balanced one.

In Vocational Training, the options preferred by women are the following: the administrative, sanitary, hairdressing and housekeeping. Nearly half of the students at university are women. In the last decade, the growth in the number of female students has been 103% while that of men has only increased 26%.

More significant differences appear in the type of studies selected: 75 out of every 100 women study in Faculties or University Colleges, one fourth in University Schools and only a remaining 2% are enrolled in Higher Technical Colleges.

The number of women teachers in the education system varies according to the levels, the study modalities and the distribution of tasks. The tendency is the younger the pupils are, the higher the number of women in the teaching staff, and vice-versa, although in the last 20 years the number of female teachers at Secondary and University education is on the increase.

This variable is particularly important to understand the differences in attitude and behaviour among the groups studied, and the generation gap that exists in Spanish rural society.

The highest levels of illiteracy are found among women wage labourers and the highest levels of education among women employed in agro-business.

The percentage of women among 16-24 years old with post-primary education rises considerably, as do differences in socio-cultural behavior when compared to the rural women as a whole.

The level of education in farm households varies considerably from one region to another. Though, nationally, 36.3% have primary schooling, the proportion rises to 69% in Aragon.

There are major differences among the various generation groups and notable differences in levels of formal education. While there are virtually no younger women without schooling, this changes among the 45-year-olds, rising to 14.6% in the 55-65 age group and 17.4% among the over-65s. Similarly, the percentage of younger women (under 35) in farm households with post-primary schooling (39%) is much higher than the overall average (10%).

FRANCE

Area - comparative: slightly less than twice the size of Colorado

Land boundaries:
total: 2,889 km
border countries: Andorra 56.6 km, Belgium 620 km, Germany 451 km, Italy 488 km, Luxembourg 73 km, Monaco 4.4 km, Spain 623 km, Switzerland 573 km

Population: 59,329,691 (July 2000 est.)
Age structure:
0-14 years: 19% (male 5,719,502; female 5,448,608)
15-64 years: 65% (male 19,345,269; female 19,322,902)
65 years and over: 16% (male 3,849,783; female 5,643,627) (2000 est.)

Population growth rate: 0.38% (2000 est.)
Birth rate: 12.27-births / 1,000 population (2000 est.)
Death rate: 9.14-deaths / 1,000 population (2000 est.)
Net migration rate: 0.66 migrant(s)/1,000 population (2000 est.)

Sex ratio:
at birth: 1.05 male(s)/female
under 15 years: 1.05 male(s)/female
15-64 years: 1 male(s)/female
65 years and over: 0.68 male(s)/female
total population: 0.95 male(s)/female (2000 est.)

Languages: French 100%, rapidly declining regional dialects and languages
    (Provencal, Breton, Alsatian, Corsican, Catalan, Basque, Flemish)

Literacy:
definition: age 15 and over can read and write
total population: 99%
    male: 99%
    female: 99% (1980 est.)

Economy - overview

France's economy combines modern capitalistic methods with extensive, but declining, government intervention. The government retains considerable influence over key segments of each sector, with majority ownership of railway, electricity, aircraft, and telecommunication firms. It has been gradually relaxing its control over these sectors since the early 1990s. The government is slowly selling off holdings in France Telecom, in Air France, and in the insurance, banking, and defense industries. Meanwhile, large tracts of fertile land, the application of modern technology, and subsidies have combined to make France the leading agricultural producer in Western Europe. Persistently high unemployment will continue to pose a major problem for the government; a 35-hour workweek is being introduced. France has shied away from cutting exceptionally generous social welfare benefits or the enormous state bureaucracy, preferring to pare defense spending and raise taxes to keep the deficit down. France joined 10 other EU members to launch the euro on 1 January 1999.

GDP: purchasing power parity - $1.373 trillion (1999 est.)
GDP - real growth rate: 2.7% (1999 est.)
GDP - per capita: purchasing power parity - $23,300 (1999 est.)
GDP - composition by sector:
    agriculture: 3.3%
    industry: 26.1%
    services: 70.6% (1998)

Labor force: 25.4 million (1994)
Labor force - by occupation: services 69%, industry 26%, agriculture 5% (1995)

Unemployment rate: 11% (1999 est.)

Budget:
revenues: $325 billion
expenditures: $360 billion, including capital expenditures of $NA (1999 est.)

Industries: steel, machinery, chemicals, automobiles, metallurgy, aircraft, electronics, mining; textiles, food processing; tourism

Industrial production growth rate: 2% (1999 est.)

Telephones - main lines in use: 34.86 million (yearend 1998)
Telephones - mobile cellular: 11.078 million (yearend 1998)
Telephone system: highly developed
domestic: extensive cable and microwave radio relay; extensive introduction of fiber-optic cable; domestic satellite system
international: satellite earth stations - 2 Intelsat (with total of 5 antennas - 2 for Indian Ocean and 3 for Atlantic Ocean), NA Eutelsat, 1 Inmarsat (Atlantic Ocean region); HF radiotelephone communications with more than 20 countries

The educational system

The French Republic has 60 million inhabitants, living in the 22 regions of metropolitan France and four overseas departments (1.7 million). Despite the fact that the population is growing slightly (up 0.4% a year), the number and proportion of young people under 25 are, however, falling: there are now fewer than 19 million of them in metropolitan France, i.e. 32% of the total population, compared with 40% around 1970 and 35% at the time of the 1990 census. France is seeing a slow aging of the population — less marked however than in other neighboring countries (Germany and Italy), especially as the annual number of births is currently increasing slightly.

15 million pupils and students, i.e. a quarter of the population, are in the education system. Just over 2 million are in higher education.

In 1999, France's GDP was close to FF 9,000 billion (EUR 1,330 billion), i.e. FF 150,000 (EUR 22,000) per inhabitant. Of this total, just over FF 600 billion (EUR 95 billion) were devoted to initial or continuing education: 7.2% of GDP. As far as school education spending is concerned, France is in a middle position, behind the Nordic countries (Sweden and Denmark), but fairly significantly ahead of Italy and Japan.

France has a workforce today of 26 million, of whom fewer than 2 million are unemployed: the unemployment rate recently fell to below 9%. 6% of the labor force (about 1.5 million jobs, including 1 million civil servants and local government officers) is undergoing training.

Around 13 million pupils attend school in France. The system is a unified one, whose present general structure (primary schools, collèges, lycées) was gradually put in place during the 1960s and 1970s, ending the formerly more compartmentalized system which was based on a clear separation between primary and secondary education.
Since the 1970s, France has also had an outstanding record with respect to the development of pre-school education; all 3- to 5-year-olds can go to nursery classes.

Since 1967, school attendance has been compulsory for those from 6 to 16 years of age. France has 60,000 primary schools catering to pupils during their first five years of formal education: the first three years (CP - *cours préparatoire* - and CE1/CE2 - *cours élémentaire* 1 and 2) provide a grounding in the basic skills. The next stage - CM1/CM2 (*cours moyen* 1 and 2) takes the children up to the end of primary school.

Secondary schooling is divided into two successive stages, known as cycles. From 11 to 15 years, almost all children now attend a *collège*, taking them from form 6 (*sixième*) to form 3 (*troisième*) (1). Since 1975 there has been a single mixed-ability *collège* for all pupils regardless of their level of achievement. After form 3, they move onto a general, technical or vocational *lycée*. These prepare pupils for the corresponding *baccalauréat* examinations (referred to as *le bac*), which they normally take at the age of 18.

Decisions about pupils (repeating years, moving up to a higher class, changing course) are taken through a procedure involving a dialogue between the school (teachers, administrative and ancillary staff) and the families and pupils. Although the teachers give their opinions in what is known as a "class council" — consisting of representatives among pupils, teachers and parents — parents can appeal against a decision and demand (depending on the pupil's level) that the pupil move up rather than repeat the year, or repeat the year rather than do a course they do not wish their son or daughter to pursue. In every school, there are specialist counselors to help pupils, parents and teachers resolve any problems they may encounter.

Today, form 3 (which is the final year at *collège*) is the first point at which children have a choice regarding some of the subjects they wish to study, and the direction they would like their curriculum to take (although they must choose a foreign language in form 6, and another in form 4).

The vast majority of pupils attend schools, which are overseen by the Ministry of National Education. However, around 100,000 (suffering from various disabilities) go to special schools run under the aegis of the Ministry of Health, and 200,000 go to agricultural *lycées* (technical and vocational courses). Finally, 300,000 others, aged 16+ undergo apprenticeships (work contracts), which — since the 1987 reform — can prepare them for all types of vocational qualification.

Alongside the ordinary school education system, there are also specialist or adapted classes, which are often integrated into primary and secondary schools. Such programs include the CLIS — classes which act as bridges to bring children back into the mainstream system, and the SEGPA — adapted general and vocational education sections designed particularly for children and adolescents having difficulty at school due to psychological, emotional or behavioral problems, and for slow learners. Similar curricula are also found in special schools, particularly those under the aegis of the Health Ministry. The aim is to get these children (around 5% of the pupils in any one year group) to achieve a minimum skills level: the CAP (*certificat d'aptitude professionnel*), which sanctions training in a specific vocational skill.

Schools managed under the aegis of the National Education Ministry may be public or private. The private sector educates approximately 15% of primary school and 20% of secondary school pupils, percentages that have remained stable over the past decade. The bulk of private schools are Catholic, having contracts with the State
(which *inter alia* pays their staff salaries). Families of the fewer than 50,000 pupils in private schools without such contracts pay high fees.

For twenty years, youngsters leaving school without adequate qualifications have been the hardest hit by the increase in unemployment. In the mid 1990s, the best-qualified young people, relatively spared until then, began to find things significantly more difficult. Since 1998, they have, however, been the first to benefit from the general improvement in the first-job market.

A person's future position in society is in fact — to a fairly large extent — dependent on his/her academic achievements. Five years after the end of their studies, people with degrees are five times more likely to hold an executive or middle-ranking managerial position than those who started work immediately after the *baccalauréat*. The bulk of the people in top jobs in both the engineering field and the professions hold diplomas from a *grande école* (prestigious higher education institution with a competitive examination) or have successfully completed a third university cycle.

While this is reassuring in that it demonstrates the value accorded to academic qualifications, it is also a matter for concern, since the inequalities often picked up very early on in school — and overcome with difficulty — have a lasting effect on an individual's future working life. The aim of continuing education, vital for what is now known as "life-long learning", was originally to offer a second chance, attenuating or correcting the legacy of an inadequate basic education, but it only very imperfectly fulfills this role. At the same time, the idea is gaining ground that experience in a trade is as valid as qualifications obtained at school or in higher education. But the procedures for validating vocational achievements — brought about by the 1985 and 1993 acts — still face serious obstacles. In 1998, only 12,000 people managed to validate the achievements of their experience, principally in university education. Today, a Bill on Social Modernization envisions an augmentation of the present system so as to offer a genuine second chance to those whose limited skillsets were not detected at school.

**HUNGARY**

The socio-economic changes of the last decade have brought significant changes in the structure of the settlement system, in the regional distribution of population and concentration within a settlement. The main feature of this change was an accelerating urbanization process, which manifested itself in the growth of the number of towns and population and in the sophistication of institutions and infrastructure in a settlement and in the morphologic appearance.

This process relied on the outflow of population from villages in demographic approach, migration gain can be found only at towns and large villages with high population, going through urbanization. As for small villages, migration loss has increased and stabilized at a permanently high level. Parallel with the urbanization process the network of villages significantly developed, living conditions and infrastructure improved but the growth of disparities was still considerable, polarization strengthened. It is a specific feature that dynamic development of the capital is accompanied by considerable depopulation, with increasing number of out migrants to the agglomeration.

Changes in the decade of the change of regime are the most distinct in the situation and development of settlements. Settlements in underdeveloped areas or peripheries are unable to change their situation on their own. Employment opportunities for local
population are unfavorable; a high and long-term unemployment prevails, so income disparities increase too. A system of normative aids helps backward settlements function, which, if having the adequate funds, enjoy benefits when making regional applications. However, to moderate their lag is a very hard task for them even thus.

\textbf{Number of villages}

The legal basis for regional and settlement-level division of Hungary – as in case of other countries – is the Constitution. Accordingly, the national territory is divided into the capital, counties, towns and villages. The capital is subdivided into districts, while towns can be split into districts too. Villages, towns and the capital are settlement-level units, which necessarily cover the whole national area. Counties are regional units that consist of settlement level units.

\textbf{Administrative division of Hungary on 1 July 2001:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Capital (districts)</th>
<th>1 (23)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>County</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Towns of county rank</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other towns</td>
<td>229</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Villages</td>
<td>2883</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>County, capital, total</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Settlements (including Budapest)</td>
<td>3135</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textbf{Population}

Number of population (thousands) 10 198
Population density person/km\(^2\) 109.6
Proportion of males, % 47.6
Proportion of females, % 52.4
Females per thousand males 1 102

From the population rate of persons living (%) in settlements with less than 1 thousand inhabitants: 7.6
In small settlements with 1 to 10 thousand inhabitants: 33.1
In medium size settlements with 10-100 thousand inhabitants: 30.2
In large settlements with more than 100 thousand inhabitants: 29.1

\textbf{Economic situation}

Gross domestic product (GDP), 2001 GDP, (previous year = 100) 103.8° Per capita GDP, thousand HUF 1461.0° Contribution to the GDP, %; 2000

Agriculture 4.2
Industry and construction 33.4
Trade, tourism, transport, post and telecommunication 22.3
Other services 40.1
Domestic use of GDP, %; 2000
Household consumption 60.6
Collective consumption 9.5
Gross capital formation 29.9
Incomes, earnings

Total household income, billion HUF/year, 2000 9 282
Of which: rate of earnings, % 48.4
Rate of pensions, % 12.1
Rate of other social transfers in cash, % 6.7
Rate of social transfers in kind (public health, education etc.), % 17.3
Rate of other incomes, % 15.4

Employment, 2001

(Labor Force Survey data relating to 15-74 year-old-population)

Economically active population

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Denomination</th>
<th>1999</th>
<th>2000</th>
<th>2001</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employed persons</td>
<td>3 812</td>
<td>3 849</td>
<td>3 860</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Of which: employees</td>
<td>3 201</td>
<td>3 256</td>
<td>3 296</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed persons</td>
<td>285</td>
<td>263</td>
<td>233</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economically active population aged 15-74 years</td>
<td>4096</td>
<td>4 112</td>
<td>4 093</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Education, 2001

Children at kindergarten 342.3
Pupils at primary schools 944.2
Apprentices 130.5
Secondary school students 420.9
Students at universities and colleges 184.1

Social assistance

Child-care allowance, support for training of children, regular child-care support, 2000

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regions</th>
<th>Monthly average number of recipients of Child-care Support for regular child</th>
<th>Average annual Number of Care support, Children</th>
<th>Average monthly Amount of Care support, Care support, HUF</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>191 227 69</td>
<td>674 786 347</td>
<td>3 436</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Categories/definitions of social benefits:

2 *Excluding persons being on child care leave and including conscripts.
Recipients of pension, retirement allowance: insured persons provided with pension, annuity or other provision by the National Pension Insurance Fund or the Hungarian State Railways.

Pension by own right: the old age, disability, and accident disability pension. Old-age pension: pension provided on the criteria of having passed the specified retirement age, having worked the specified years of service, and having been granted a ruling in approval of a pension claim.

Disability pension, accident disability pension: pension awarded prior to passing retirement age on criteria of deterioration of working ability and set on the basis of extent of disability.

Dependents' pension: Widowhood pension: widow's or accident pension received by right of relation. Orphan's allowance: provision received by right of relation or accident to relative. Parents pension: provision due to the parents or grandparents of a deceased person.

Main provision: if there is only one form of benefit, the benefit received, whatever heading it is awarded under, if more than one benefit is received concurrently, the benefit of top priority. (Usually the benefits received in the insured person's own right have top priority.)

Supplementary provision: if there is more than one form of benefit, those benefit other than the main provision.

Full benefit: main and supplementary provisions taken together.

Minimum pension: the smallest nominal statutory amount of pension for the period in question.

New retirement resolutions: resolutions ordering the transfer of pension or retirement provision to the claimant after positive evaluation based on administrative regulations.

Sick pay: income substitute benefit due to those in occupational categories defined by statute. It is provided for the calendar days of the period of inability to work after the expiry of sick leave, except for child-care sick pay, labor accident and occupational disease in which cases sick pay may be claimed from the first day. Since 1 January 1996 the employer has to bear one third of the expenses of sick leave. Sick pay days: those of the days of unfitness to work for which the insured person received sick pay (in calendar days). Average daily number of persons on sick pay: a quotient of the sick pay days of insured persons and of calendar days.

Sick leave: an employee is entitled to 15 days' sick leave per calendar year to cover periods of unfitness for work occurring by reason of sickness - between 1 January 1992 and 31 December 1995, sick leave was set as 10 working days - out of which the employee is entitled to 3 days' sick leave without any justification, whose expenses are borne by the employer. Till July 1997 the amount of sick leave was minimum 75 per cent of the average earnings in the reference month, from 1 July 1997 it is 80 per cent of absence fee.
Child-care assistance benefits: provisions relate to family allowance and schooling support, introduced in October 1999, granted by the state monthly to families with children.

Family allowance: socio-political cash benefit granted by individual title between 1 April 1990 and 31 March 1996 for child keep. Between 1 April and 31 December 1998 it was due to families with 1 or 2 children only in case the per capita monthly income of the family (calculated on the basis of the previous year) did not surpass the level stipulated by law. In case of families with 3 or more children or with chronic illness the provision was still due by individual title. Since 1 January 1999 family allowance is again provided by individual title for children up to the school age and for chronically ill or handicapped children. The parents are granted schooling support for children in the compulsory schooling age (6 to 16 years) and for children still studying in public institution but not surpassing 20 years of age.

Child-care allowance: due to a parent applying for unpaid leave after maternity leave has expired up to the child's third birthday or up to the tenth birthday of a child who is chronically ill or physically or mentally handicapped.

Child-care fee: due to a parent applying for unpaid leave after maternity leave has expired up to the child's second birthday. Childcare fee has the same form as sick pay and is related to the individual's earnings. Between 15 April 1998 and 1 January 2000 this type of benefit was suspended.

**Public health**

Inhabitants per physician in active service, 1999 276.0

Inhabitants per one operating hospital bed, 2001 127.0

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regions</th>
<th>Persons</th>
<th>Number of physicians in active service</th>
<th>Number of general practitioners</th>
<th>Number of inhabitants per</th>
<th>Operating hospital beds</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>..</td>
<td>..</td>
<td>6729</td>
<td>1490</td>
<td>83430</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Communication infrastructure**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Denomination</th>
<th>1999</th>
<th>2000</th>
<th>2001</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Post</td>
<td>3247</td>
<td>3257</td>
<td>3265</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telephone</td>
<td>3605</td>
<td>3479</td>
<td>3260</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of radio broadcasters</td>
<td>183</td>
<td>179</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Number of television main transmitters

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cultural institutions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of</th>
<th>Number of</th>
<th>Number of attendances to,</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>3 585</td>
<td>46 475</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>36 129</td>
<td>3 938</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 895</td>
<td>14 294</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**POLAND**

*Criteria used to define rural*

The OECD defines rural areas in Poland as territory situated outside town administrative boundaries, unlike in the European Union and where the distinction between urban and rural is based on population density.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rural areas in Poland defined according to different criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Definition criteria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural population as percentage of total population</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural areas as percentage of total area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average population density (people/ km²)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative division into rural and urban areas (according to GUS)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population density below 150 people/ km² (OECD criterion)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population density up to 100 people/ km² (EU criterion)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data collected at commune level. The total area of Poland is 312,700 km², the population (end 1998) was 38.6 million of which 14.7 million were rural dwellers. Source: GUS (Central Statistical Office)

The above Table shows that the differences in defining rural as oppose to urban under the above definition criteria are rather insignificant, especially for GUS and OECD criteria.

In Poland there are:

a) 870 towns of which 564 are seats of urban-rural communities (gminas);
b) 56,803 rural localities consisting of: 42,782 villages and 14,021 colonies, hamlets or settlements.

The settlement pattern varies widely:

- Nearly 15% of villages have less than 100 inhabitants,
- Close to 66% of villages have 100 to 500 dwellers,
- Nearly 13% of villages have 500 to 1000 dwellers,
- Only 6% of villages have at least 1000 inhabitants.
Out of a total of 2,486 gminas, 1,606 are rural and 564 urban-rural.

Poland has a relatively low average population density of 124-people/km².

Population in rural areas

The rural population according to the Polish definition accounts for 38.1% of the total population (14.737 million people) with 7.191 million men and 7.202 million women. The agricultural census showed that in 1996, 50.9% of the rural population was involved in farming. The share of the rural population varies between voivodships from 20.2% in the Silesian voivodship to 59.0% in the Podkarpackie voivodship.

The share of people below 14 years of age and above 70 years old is much higher than in towns. The percentage of multi-generation families is also much higher than in towns. Households with 5 people and more account for 12.2% of the total number of households in towns whereas in rural areas they constitute 29.7% of families.

Educational levels of the rural population are lower than those of urban dwellers.

Comparison of the educational achievement of the rural and urban populations (15-years old and more):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category (people above 15)</th>
<th>Urban areas</th>
<th>Rural areas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational achievement:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Higher level</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Secondary school and college</td>
<td>9,8</td>
<td>1,9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Vocational</td>
<td>34,1</td>
<td>15,4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Primary school</td>
<td>24,7</td>
<td>28,1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Unfinished primary school or no education</td>
<td>27,6</td>
<td>43,8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: GUS according to population and representative household census carried out in 1995

The poor education of rural dwellers inhibits farm modernisation and reduces the scope for developing off-farm employment opportunities.

Therefore improving the educational standards and qualifications of the rural population continues to be a priority for the Government.

Rural population by education level and by group age

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age groups</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Higher academic</th>
<th>Secondary or college</th>
<th>Basic vocational</th>
<th>Completed primary education</th>
<th>Uncompleted primary education or without education</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15 - 24 years</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>0,3</td>
<td>17,7</td>
<td>33,7</td>
<td>42,1</td>
<td>6,2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 - 39</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>3,3</td>
<td>26,6</td>
<td>48,5</td>
<td>20,6</td>
<td>1,0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40 - 49</td>
<td>50 - 59</td>
<td>60 and more</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3,1</td>
<td>2,4</td>
<td>1,0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17,1</td>
<td>8,8</td>
<td>4,4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33,0</td>
<td>14,5</td>
<td>5,5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44,9</td>
<td>67,7</td>
<td>60,1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,9</td>
<td>6,6</td>
<td>29,0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Central Statistical Office according to representative population and household survey in 1995

### Population by main sources of income

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Urban Areas</th>
<th>Rural Areas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- employed</td>
<td>53,7</td>
<td>34,0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- self-employed</td>
<td>9,8</td>
<td>30,9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Of which:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Private farms in agriculture</td>
<td>1,4</td>
<td>27,4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- people living on social benefits</td>
<td>36,5</td>
<td>35,1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Of which:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- pensions</td>
<td>15,8</td>
<td>14,8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- disability pensions</td>
<td>11,9</td>
<td>12,5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- unemployment benefits</td>
<td>5,0</td>
<td>5,6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- other social benefits</td>
<td>0,9</td>
<td>0,8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data: GUS, the latest census (1995), Statistical Year Book 1998

According to 1996 agricultural census 27.5% of the total Polish working population was employed in agriculture, game shooting and forestry, of which 23.5% worked on individual private farms.

The share of agricultural employment is decreasing at a slow rate, mainly due to lack of off-farm employment opportunities. For this reason about 70% of people working in agriculture are only part-time farmers.

### Age distribution of the population

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Urban x)</th>
<th>Rural x)</th>
<th>Farm population xx)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total population</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proportion of the population of pre productive age (% of total)</td>
<td>24,7</td>
<td>28,8</td>
<td>27,3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proportion of the population of productive age (% of total)</td>
<td>61,9</td>
<td>55,7</td>
<td>56,0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proportion of the population of post-productive age (% of total)</td>
<td>13,4</td>
<td>15,5</td>
<td>16,7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


xx) According to Central Statistical Office (GUS) - Polish Agricultural Census - 1996

Productive age for women 18-59, for men: 18-64

a) Economically active persons - **64,9%** (53,6% - in towns); of which:

* Employed 59,1%(45,7%);
* Unemployed 5.8% (7.9%);
b) Economically inactive persons - 35.1% (46.4%).

The higher rate of economic activity for the rural population is primarily accounted for by employment in agriculture. According to the Central Statistical Office rural unemployment (registered as well as unofficial) is estimated at 1.9 million people (of which 972 thousand are registered). The total rate of unemployment in rural areas is twice as high as in urban areas. This, however, is regionally differentiated. The areas dominated by former state farms have the highest levels of unemployment.

In conclusion: non-profit earnings are the most common source of income for the rural population, with wages from hired work in second place and earnings from employment on agricultural holdings in third place.

However, although many people have off-farm income, agriculture still represents an important additional source of income that cannot be neglected. The number of people with off-farm income of some sort is twice as high as that for whom agriculture is the main source of income.

The SME sector in Polish rural areas lacks sufficient development with only a small percentage of the rural population finding employment in it. A weak rate of start-ups in the SME sector was observed in rural areas over the period 1990-1999, and this occurred mainly in industrialised areas and along transport routes.

Regional differentiation of rural areas

Three macroregions in Poland may be identified when considering farm structures and agriculture:
industrialisation level measured by the number of off-farming jobs per 1,000 inhabitants

**Macroregion II** - areas with the prevalence of large-size farms requiring urgent settlement of the ownership aspects of the agricultural structure as well as a farm development concept which would be adequate to the challenges of the region. The unsettled ownership, tenancy agreements which do not oblige to the prevention of the ecological balance in agriculture. Under-invested large-size farms. Widespread cereal monoculture is leading the macroregion's agriculture to decline.

**Macroregion III** - areas with the prevalence of medium-size farms characterised at present by the inadequate progress of changes and at the same time looking forward to state incentives to activate the production and structural changes (in which especially incentives those aimed at the farm development variety of functions). Subregions a, b and c differ as regards the cultural and technical level of farming.

**Macroregion I**, covers the Podkarpackie, Małopolskie, Świętokrzyskie and Śląskie voivodships. This macroregion features fragmented farm structures with an average farm size between 2.5ha and 4ha. However, the percentage of rural households generating their income mainly from agriculture ranges from about 7.0% in Bielsko and Katowice regions to 31.0% in Przemyśl region, with an average for the Macroregion of 25%. The remaining 75% of rural households gain their income mainly from off-farm work, pensions and disability pensions (some under farmers' schemes). The reduction in employment in off-farm sectors in 1990-1993 period caused serious problems. Rural areas in Macroregion 1 account for some 30% of the total recorded Polish rural unemployment as well as about 40% of the hidden unemployment in agriculture. Despite good soils and a relatively favourable climate, agriculture in Macroregion 1 cannot employ surplus labour. Only 10 to 20% of the rural population (depending on local conditions) can generate their main income from agriculture. This situation prevails in Śląskie as well as in the Świętokrzyskie, Podkarpackie and Małopolskie voivodships. Some rural areas in Macroregion 1 specialise in horticultural production (e.g. Tymbark fruit processing company and vegetable and fruit growing in Sandomierz).

**Macroregion II**, covers the Warmińsko-Mazurskie, Pomorskie, Zachodniopomorskie, Lubuskie and Dolnoslaskie voivodships. Here farm structures are determined by a substantial percentage of former state-owned land, leased out to private tenants. Macroregion 2 has a large concentration of former employees of state-owned farms (PGRs), who are at present mostly unemployed. The rural population in Macroregion 2 tends to have a poorer educational standard than the rural population elsewhere. Low family incomes and a resultant weak demand for consumer goods have a negative impact both by impeding the establishment of new companies and on the activities of existing local companies. Tax revenues collected by local authorities tend to be modest whilst they're already is and should continue to be high social expenditure. In order to initiate the economic development of this Macroregion conditions for attracting a significant inward investment must be enhanced. Yet, to encourage the influx of capital, rapid improvements in the technical and social infrastructure are necessary.

**Macroregion III**, covers the Wielkopolskie, Kujawsko-Pomorskie, Mazowieckie, Podlaskie, Lubelskie and Łódzkie voivodships. Agriculture in Macroregion 3 is relatively balanced in terms of its economic, environmental, demographic and social situation. Macroregion 3 has 2/3 of all Polish farm holdings. At least 400,000 of the
farm holdings in Macroregion 3 are characterised by a relatively high capacity to adapt to the changing farming conditions. Additionally, Macroregion 3 is characterised by a relatively lower number of agri-food processing companies.

**Level of technical, social and cultural infrastructure in rural areas**

**Technical infrastructure**

The dispersed settlement pattern and resultant high costs of infrastructure provision in rural areas, along with generally low incomes derived from farming and high unemployment (registered and hidden) are responsible for the fact that infrastructure tends to be poorer in rural areas than in urban regions. This results in more difficult rural living and working conditions as compared with towns. In many places the road network is inadequate, energy lines require modernisation; telephones are lacking, water and sewerage facilities are considerably worse than in towns, whilst access to banks, post offices, schools, cultural institutions, as well as health care facilities (particularly specialist centres), is much more difficult. These difficulties significantly hamper the development of off-farm activities and discourage new settlement in rural areas.

According to a representative population census carried out in 1995, 61.7% of the rural population had running water, toilets and bathrooms compared to 87.4% in towns whilst only 10.2% had access to the gas network and central heating compared to 59.9% in towns. In 1993-97 some 821,500 households obtained access to running water, but only 82,200 households got connected to a sewerage system.

The situation is worse on farm holdings, due mainly to the dispersed building layout and the high cost of installing connections together with insufficient funds to co-finance the costs. According to the common agricultural census held in 1996, only 48.0% of private farms use the public water system, 30.0% use an on-farm pipeline network, 21.0% - use their own wells and 1.0% must transport water to the farm. Only 3.7% of farm holdings are connected to a sewerage system, whilst 27.0% have no facilities at all i.e. they do not have any farm sewage facilities or sewage containers.

There are around 2,390 official dumping sites in rural areas covering an area of approximately 2,974 ha in total, of which 842 sites have isolation screens and the possibility of collecting wastewater in a total area of 1008 ha. Only 34.5% of farm holdings use official dumping sites.

At the end of 1998 the number of telephone subscribers in rural areas was 1,681,000, i.e. roughly four times less than in towns. There are 11.42 telephone subscribers per 100 rural people and in 1998 only 50% of rural households had telephones.

Only some 600,000 householders are connected to the gas system. In the first half of the 1990s the connecting rate varied between 35,000 and 57,000 annually. The rate of new connections declined to some 20,000 in 1997 due, inter alia, to the greater use of liquid bottled gas.

The condition of the electricity supply network in rural areas is another problem. The network, originally built mainly for lighting, is nowadays technically obsolete. Indeed, one third of the network needs urgent modernisation. The unsatisfactory technical condition of the network causes underrating of the energy parameters and increases
the frequency of failures. The possibility of using three-phase devices (required for example for adequate fire protection) is also limited. This gives rise to another barrier to rural development.

Social infrastructure

Social infrastructure is underdeveloped and does not satisfy rural needs. The considerable progress made in the provision of technical infrastructure in the present decade has not been accompanied by improvements in social infrastructure. No progress has been made, in particular, in the provisions of cultural facilities, schools and health care facilities (e.g. the number of people per doctor is still four times higher in rural areas than in towns whilst the number of patients per one dentist is twice as high as in rural areas).

Teaching conditions are noticeably poorer in rural areas than in towns, while teaching standards are lower. Rural children have poor educational opportunities. They have only limited access to pre-school facilities and secondary schools. Also rural teachers tend to be less well qualified than their urban counterparts. Moreover rural children have little support from their parents who have little money or indeed ambition to encourage them. The choice of a secondary school depends on the availability of schools in the vicinity, facilities for transport or commuting to the school, failing which the existence of accommodation in a boarding school. Urban youths more often select a general secondary school whilst rural young people continue to prefer basic vocational schools.

There are big regional differences in the provision and quality of social infrastructure with the lowest level of development generally to be found in northeastern voivodships. On the whole, infrastructure development is related to urbanisation and industrialisation.

An important feature of Polish rural society is that it sustains Polish culture such as traditional family ways of life, a respect for property and traditional peasant family farming.

State of the environment in rural areas and their environmental functions

The quality of the environment in rural areas reveals high regional variations. Nonetheless, most rural areas have high quality physical environments, which allow organic production. Polish agriculture tends to be extensive; with the use of the mineral fertilisers being on average 2-3 times lower than in OECD countries. Whilst the use of pesticides is some 7 times lower than the mean OECD level.

Water and soil tend to be more degraded in large industrial areas than in rural districts. Research one by the Institute of Plant Cultivation, Fertilisation and Soil has shown that soil contamination with heavy metals, which makes production of plants for consumption, not recommended only applies to 3% of arable land in Poland, whilst on 2% of land plants for consumption should not be grown at all.

Water pollution originates mainly from municipal waste and animal production in the absence of leak proof dunghills. Some small farms still use wells that are frequently polluted by effluent running into them from farm buildings and living quarters.

About 20% of Poland's land area suffers from significant water and wind erosion. Another 30% of soils are subject to the process of excessive acidification. The level of soil humus is also decreasing contributing to soil degradation.
Other environmental threats result from past swamp drainage and include the lowering of the ground water level and excessive drying out of about 800,000 ha of arable land.

Additional ecological problems arose due to the 1997 and 1998 floods. The floods destroyed almost half a million ha with a loss of the upper fertile soil layer and increased soil acidity.

This range of problems clearly indicates that protection of agricultural environmental resources must form an inherent part of any comprehensive programme. Agriculture may be a source of environmental pollution, but on the other hand it permanently suffers from pollution coming from other sectors of the economy.

A comprehensive environmental policy in agriculture must encompass both human and farm resources with integrated environmental protection programmes including soil protection, biodiversity, flood protection, water management, urban and rural planning, a forestation and tree-planting programmes and promotion of organic farming.

The human dimension is the need to raise social awareness of the environment. People need to realise the material value and role of the environment in rural areas for sustainable development.

Last but not least the Polish rural landscape is one of the least degraded in Europe. The value of its natural amenities may facilitate the development of agro-tourism and ecological methods of production.

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**Employment in farming sector and rural areas**

According to quarterly studies on the economic activity of Polish population, the number of people employed in agriculture, hunting and forestry in totalled 2 742 thousand people, i.e. 18.9% of the overall employment (with the average rate of 4.5% in the European Union in 1999), whereas the overall employment in rural areas totalled 5 596 thousand people, i.e. 38.5% of the total. Out of the total employment in agriculture, hunting and forestry, that in private sector included 2 658 thousand people with 2 543 thousand employees in private farming. Hired labour totalled 213 thousand employees, including 13 thousand in private sector. Women accounted for 43.4% of the total labour in agriculture, forestry and hunting.

Of 2 73 thousand people out of work in Poland in 2, 1 181 thousand, i.e. 43.7% were living in the rural areas. The unemployment rate nation-wide was 15% in December 2. Farm holdings have absorbed unofficial or „hidden” unemployment, which, as estimated, amounts to about one million people.

**Agro-tourism and tourism in rural areas**

Intensive tourism business has been developing in many Polish regions for some time now, including tourists services related to farming activities and everyday life of the farm holding. This type of services has a tradition of many years going back to the period before World War II, when family holidays in the country became very popular amongst city dwellers. After a break of 5 years, that tradition was brought back to life at the onset of the 9 -is, which has provided the farmers with opportunities of earning some additional income, and the city dwellers could find out about folk
culture and country life traditions that have been so carefully and lovingly preserved in many villages. In Poland, there are many rural areas of outstanding scenic beauty, where various types of active or relaxed holidays are offered to tourists to meet their individual preferences and expectations. Not surprisingly, many foreign tourists show growing interest in Polish rural areas. The European Union experts have recognised agro-tourism as one of the five major tourism products in Poland having a good chance of successful competition on international markets.

Once the initial period was over, and it was the time when various initiatives to develop agro-tourism services were undertaken spontaneously in rural areas, the time has come to adjust service performance level in line with the expectations of prospective quests. Persons offering accommodation are organised in regional associations and over 4 regional units, which represent about 25 tourist service providers, have formed Polish Federation of Rural Tourism "Guest welcoming farms".

Drawing on the experience abundant in the EU Member State, work was launched to categorise accommodation facilities according to specific criteria developed under the framework of PHARE TOURiN II Programme. Business activities related to the development of agro-tourism services in rural areas are supported by the state in the form of tax abatements, micro-loans and soft-term credits. Furthermore, non-government organisation provides their support as well, such as training activities, conferences, and publications or catalogues promoting agro- and rural tourism in various regions in Poland.

Most agro-tourism farms are located in the region of Mazury, Suwalki, Kaszuby, Bory Tucholskie, Bieszczady, Sudeten and Lower Silesia.

Being a member of European Organisation of Rural Tourism - EUROGITES, the Federation of "Guest welcoming farms" deals in the development and promotion of agro-tourism. Its mission includes advising members and promoting their interests as well as those of entire agro-tourism sector. To this end, many types of fairs and seminars are organised. Numerous publications promote specific regions and present the up-to-date selection of "Guest welcoming farms". As estimated, over 11 holdings welcome tourists in their farmhouses. National Federation has implemented service standardisation system, so that the guests taking their holiday at locations marked with the Federation logo have full guarantee that the service performance would be consistent with the offer. Expansion of tourist facilities meeting the state-of-the-art requirements and standards provide many farmers with a good opportunity to obtain additional or alternative source of income. As estimated, tourism services in rural areas provide 15.5 thousand jobs. Currently, much is being done to expand this type of business even further. In 25, about 55 thousand jobs are expected to be created in agro-tourism services, which will rank 5th as non-agricultural business activity in rural areas in terms of jobs supply (after manufacturing, trade, construction and transport services). Moreover, further growth of tourist services in terms of both, volume and quality, will pave the way for the expansion of other business activities in rural areas, which will significantly reduce tensions on the labour market.

Science and education

During the 1999-2 period, some government programmes were launched to increase educational opportunities for young people in rural areas.

Properly prepared school premises and well-developed didactic facilities are the prerequisites to the rural education upgrading. Rural communities with low level of
revenues can be provided with public budget support to refurbish and modernise elementary schools facilities, which includes equipment (computer hardware, access to Internet) and the arrangements for the school children transportation.

With the establishment process underway, post-elementary schools (gymnasium type) have been staffed with highly qualified teaching personnel, and their didactic facilities are sufficient to prepare pupils for secondary education.

Basing on the network of best-organised gymnasium-type schools, the system of post-elementary education establishments in rural areas will be developed further.

Integrated projects with a view of establishing modern and publicly accessible gymnasium-type schools in rural areas, including those providing school education to several neighbouring communes, will be implemented thanks to public budget subsidies, soft term loans or subsidies to provide for the cost of bank loans. Preferential financing of sports facilities at schools will be ensured thanks to special funding channelled via Office for Physical culture and Sport.

Newly devised system of rural education is being set in place. Once the post elementary schools of gymnasium type have become fully operational, the process of organising the re-vamped secondary education system is going to be launched in 2.

New secondary schools of comprehensive type to be established in rural areas will be teaching major subjects grouped according to certain profiles. Full secondary education course will end with final exams, which will provide their graduates, i.e. young people residing in rural areas, with free access to education at tertiary level. Lyceum-type schools can be created basing on the system of gymnasium-type establishments, or by the way of transforming some of the existing secondary agricultural schools.

As envisaged, rural youth will be provided with more aid through a system of stipends, which will involve government institutions, NGO’s and local government authorities. Aid system will provide direct support to cover the cost of full board and accommodation, commuting to school, handbooks and any other schooling expenses. Since 1998, State Treasury Agricultural Property Agency has been implementing a programme of stipends for youngsters from housing estates on the former state owned farms.

Financial support to students from rural areas is aimed at the activation and promotion of capable young people from low-income rural families. To that end, the Agency for the Restructuring and Modernisation of Agriculture provides bank guarantees for student’s loans basing on the Act on Student Loans and credits of 17 July 1998. Depending on the farm family income level, the Agency can provide the collateral of up to 8 or 1 % of the total amount of credit used.

The effectiveness of the transformation process in rural sector is largely dependent on the efficiency of adult education, supplementary training and re-qualification activities. Lose co-operation amongst academic and scientific centres, agricultural schools and extension services as well as practical training and permanent education centres enhance the supplementary and expansive nature of educational activities as well as new forms and proposals to meet the precisely targeted needs of rural communities.
Throughout the process of adult education, numerous professional supplementary training and qualifications improving activities have taken place at permanent education centres established in 1998. Now they have a quite significant role to play as they focus on the development of skills necessary to search for, and find employment in non-agricultural sectors of rural economy.

At 48 centres nation-wide, some of the most common activities include:
- Basic level training sessions and courses to upgrade the know-how and economic expertise amongst farmers, agricultural workers, including the farmers managing agricultural producer groups;
- Expertise improving courses to obtain certain vocational qualifications (qualification titles);
- Seminars, training courses, study tours distant learning sessions, exhibitions, display and demonstration events.