

THE CHALLENGE OF LAND ABANDONMENT AFTER 2020 AND OPTIONS FOR MITIGATING MEASURES

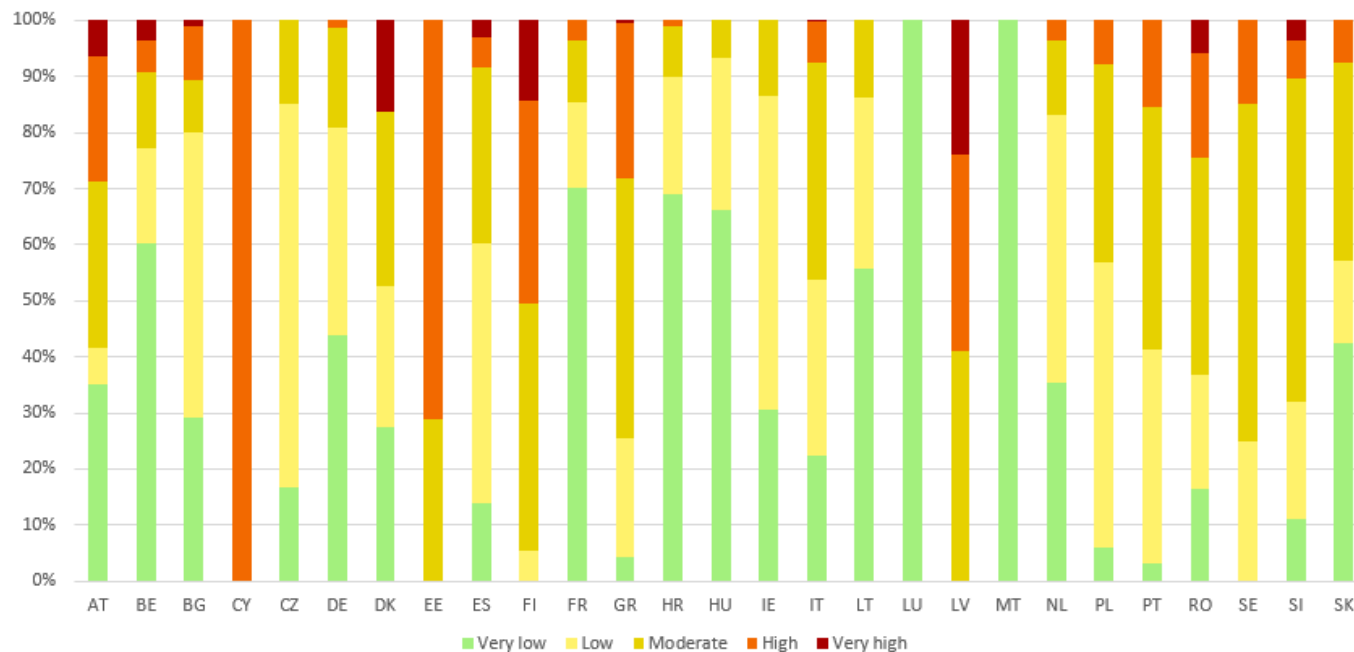
**ÖIR GmbH
Bundesanstalt für Agrarwirtschaft und
Bergbauernfragen**

Structure of the Presentation

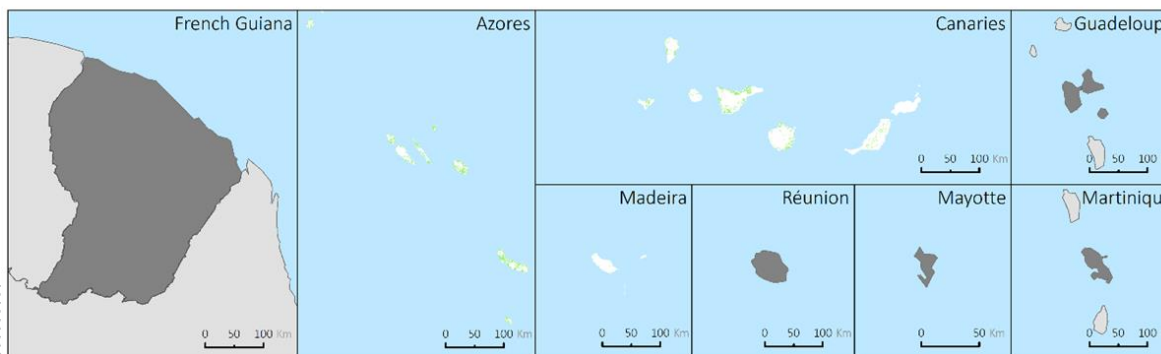
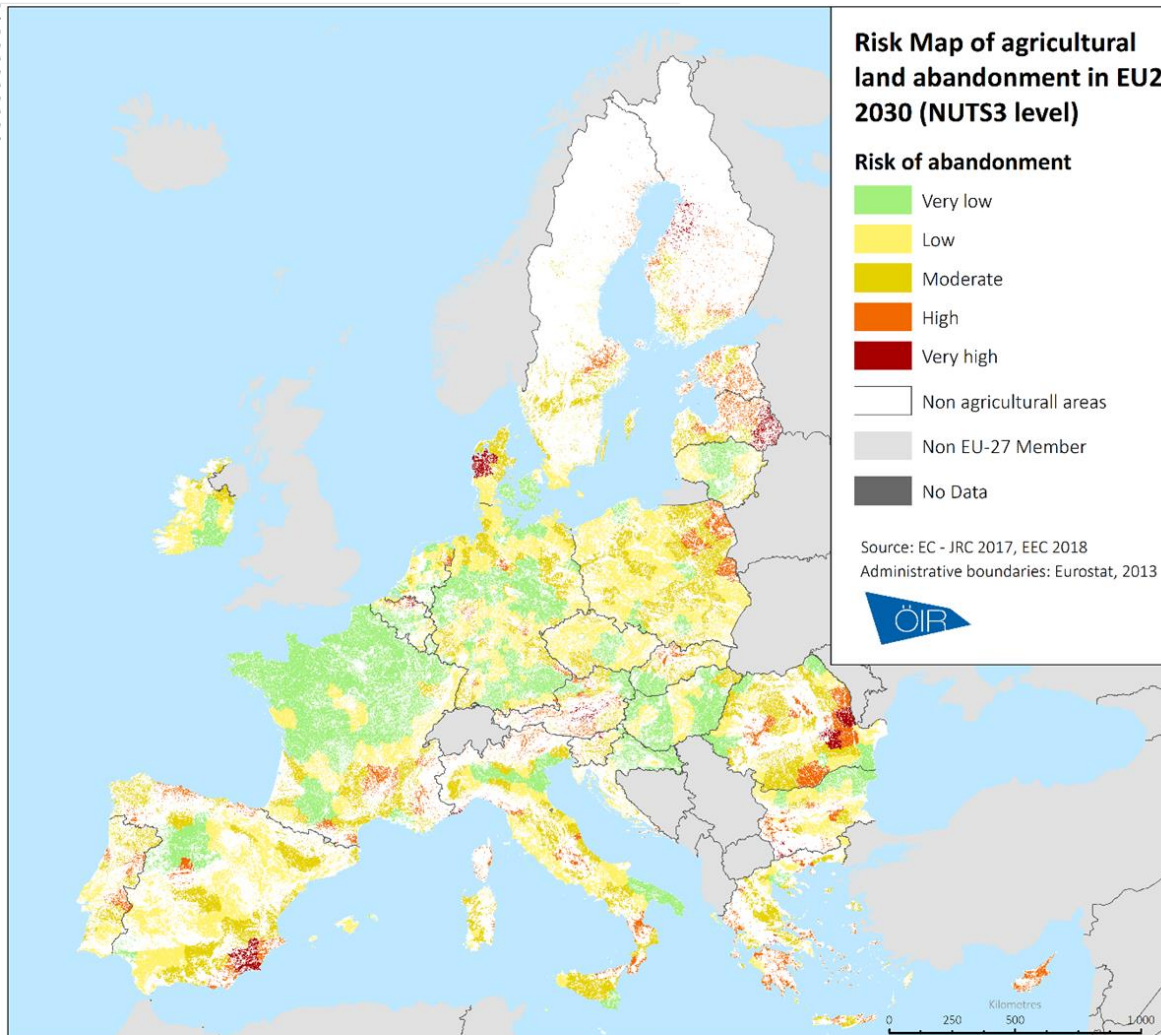
- 1. The risk of land abandonment in EU Member States**
- 2. Territorial and sectoral patterns of the risk of land abandonment**
- 3. Quantitative state of play with regards to land abandonment**
- 4. Main drivers of land abandonment**
- 5. Environmental implications and dual effects of land abandonment**
- 6. Mitigating measures**
- 7. Land abandonment scenarios**
- 8. Conclusions and recommendations**

1. The risk of land abandonment in EU Member States

- Around 30% of agricultural areas in different EU Member States (MS) are under at least a moderate risk of land abandonment

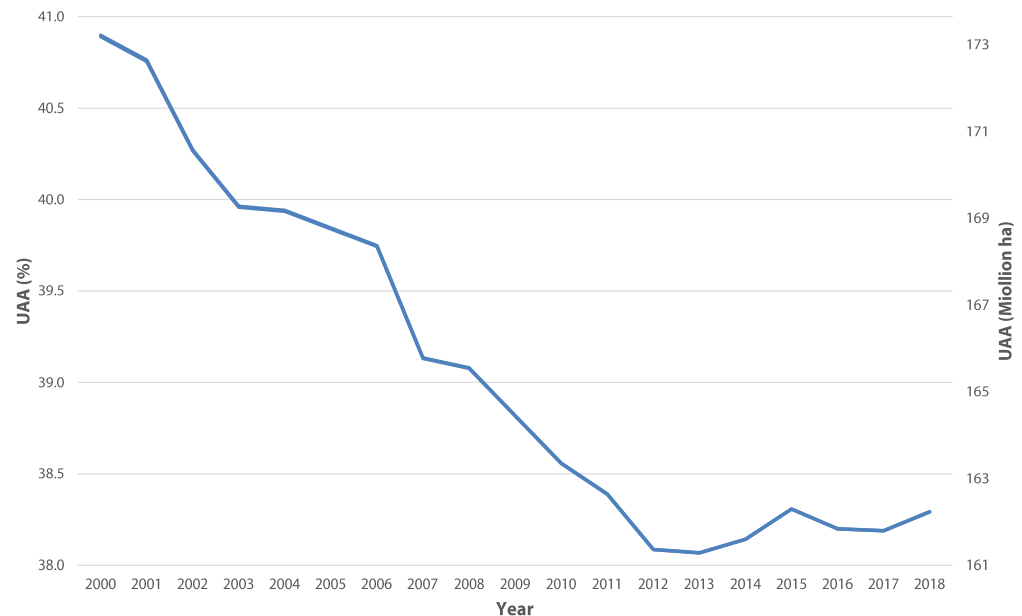


Territorial and sectoral patterns of the risk of land abandonment



3. Quantitative state of play with regards to land abandonment

- A strong shift in the utilised agricultural area (UAA) development at European scale is observable. In 2000-2012 there was a strong and continuous decrease in UAA. In 2012-2018 UAA stabilised and even started to slightly increase.

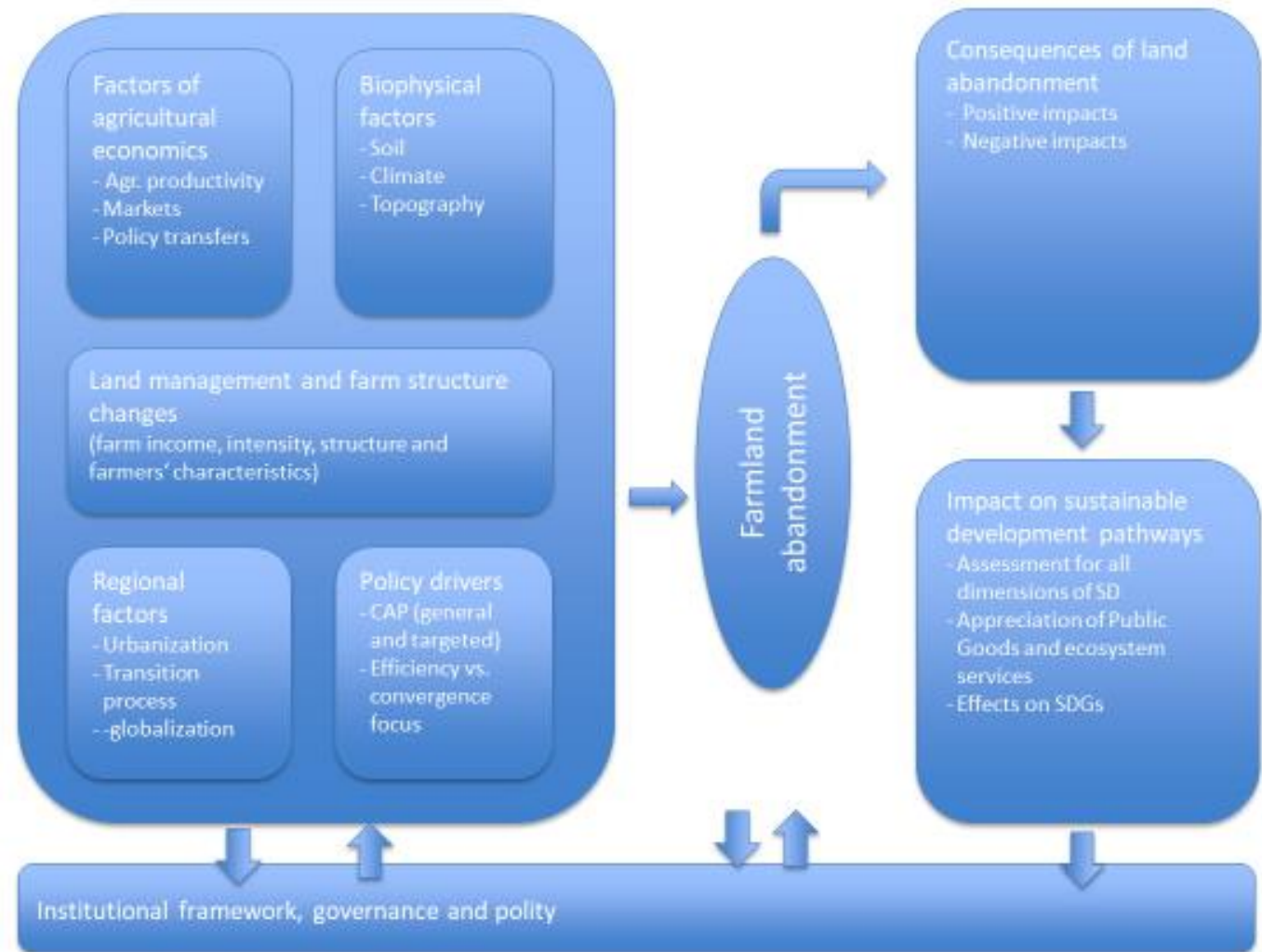


3. Quantitative state of play with regards to land abandonment

- Between 2012-2018 urban sprawl remained a driver of land abandonment. However, the shift from agricultural land to land used for residential, commercial and industrial activities has slowed down significantly between 2012-2018 compared to 2006-2012. Instead, substantial areas of agricultural land were lost to industrial, mining, transport and commercial activities.
- Land cover change to natural surfaces sped up between 2012 and 2018 across the EU. In many regions, land previously used for agricultural activities was transformed into natural surfaces.

4. Main drivers of land abandonment

- Land abandonment is driven by interrelated bio-physical, farming, structural, market, regional, institutional and policy factors influencing decisions on land use and its changes.
- Management issues and structural adaptation are the key driving forces.



5. Environmental implications and dual effects of land abandonment

- Land abandonment has specific environmental implications according to spatial characteristics and the change process itself.
- Harmful effects may include threats to the future of semi-natural habitats, quality of high nature value farmland and linkages of NATURA 2000 sites, and highly appreciated cultural landscapes.
- However, under specific conditions and in certain phases of the abandonment process, beneficial outcomes may be observed, e.g. on biodiversity and habitat preservation.
- These dual effects call for policies to include environmental considerations in their design and to nurture beneficial outcomes through adapted land management systems.

6. Mitigating measures

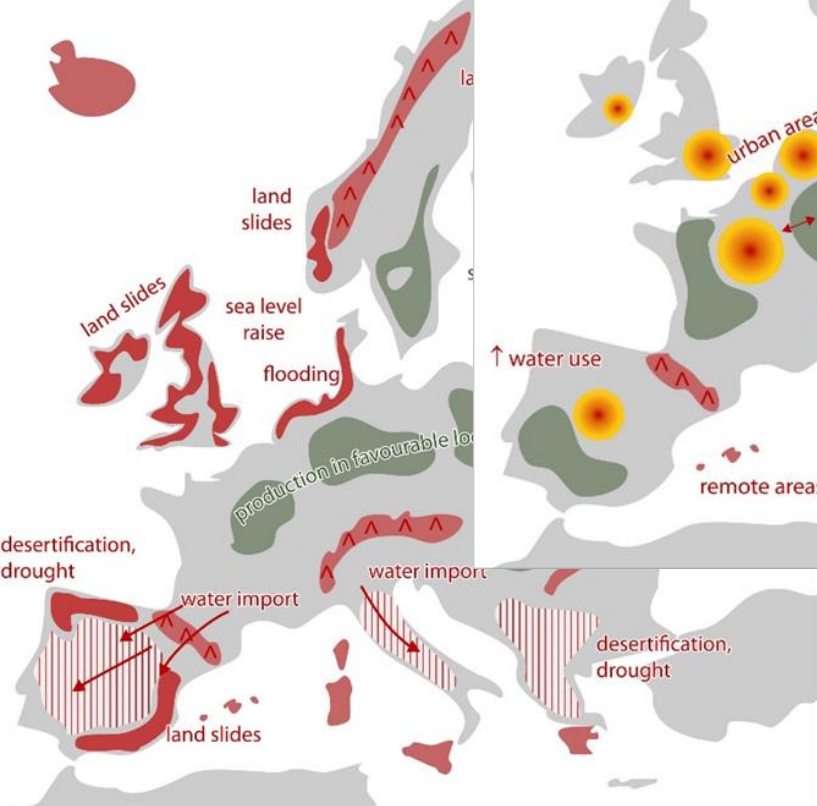
- CAP support is beneficial for mitigating land abandonment processes.
- However, effects are unevenly distributed among different farm types and production groups. There are contrasting effects between the measures and a mixed overall CAP impact on land use changes, production concentration, abandonment trends and abandonment.
- Some measures might also contribute to ceasing land management.
- With the explicit focus on environment and climate action, simplification and modernisation, the on-going CAP reform provides continuity.
- The effectiveness of the future policy framework for mitigating land abandonment will depend on the MS and regional implementation design and efforts.

6. Mitigating measures

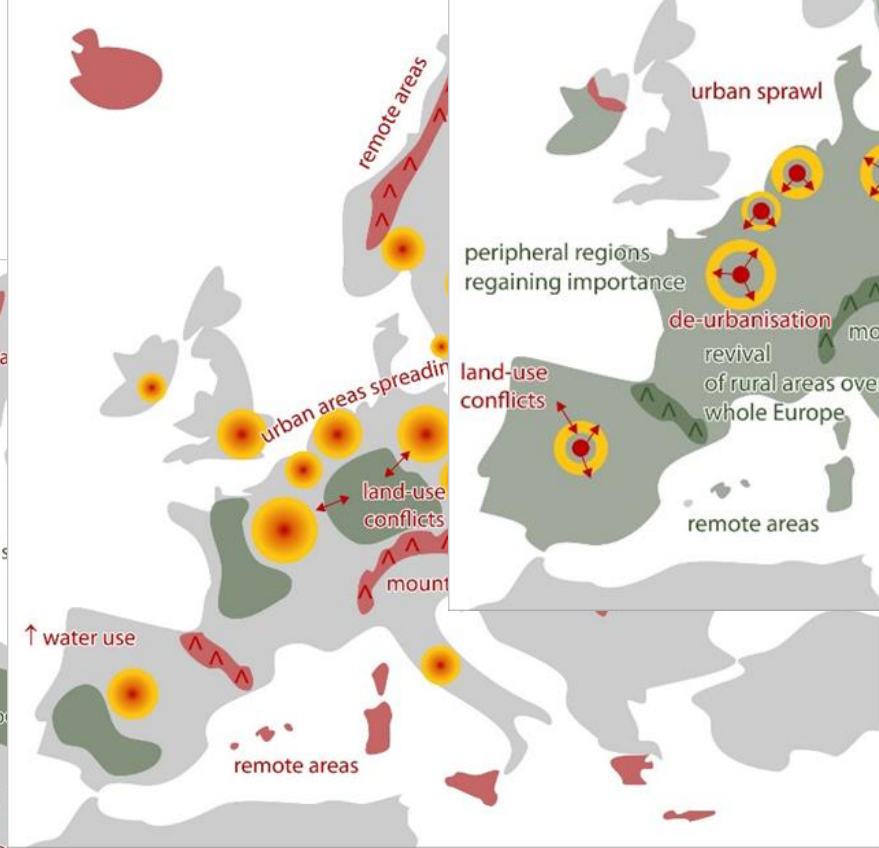
- Although the mechanisms of Pillar I support might mitigate land abandonment through its farm income support and competitiveness support, different effect patterns are observed for regions, management types and farm structures.
- Pillar II focuses more on the linkages between land management, environmental concerns, and rural communities via its integrated approach. It takes account of territorial differences, e.g. through support for areas of natural constraints, including mountain areas. These measures encourage wider social benefits, quality of life and thus aim to maintain vibrant rural regions.

Land abandonment scenarios

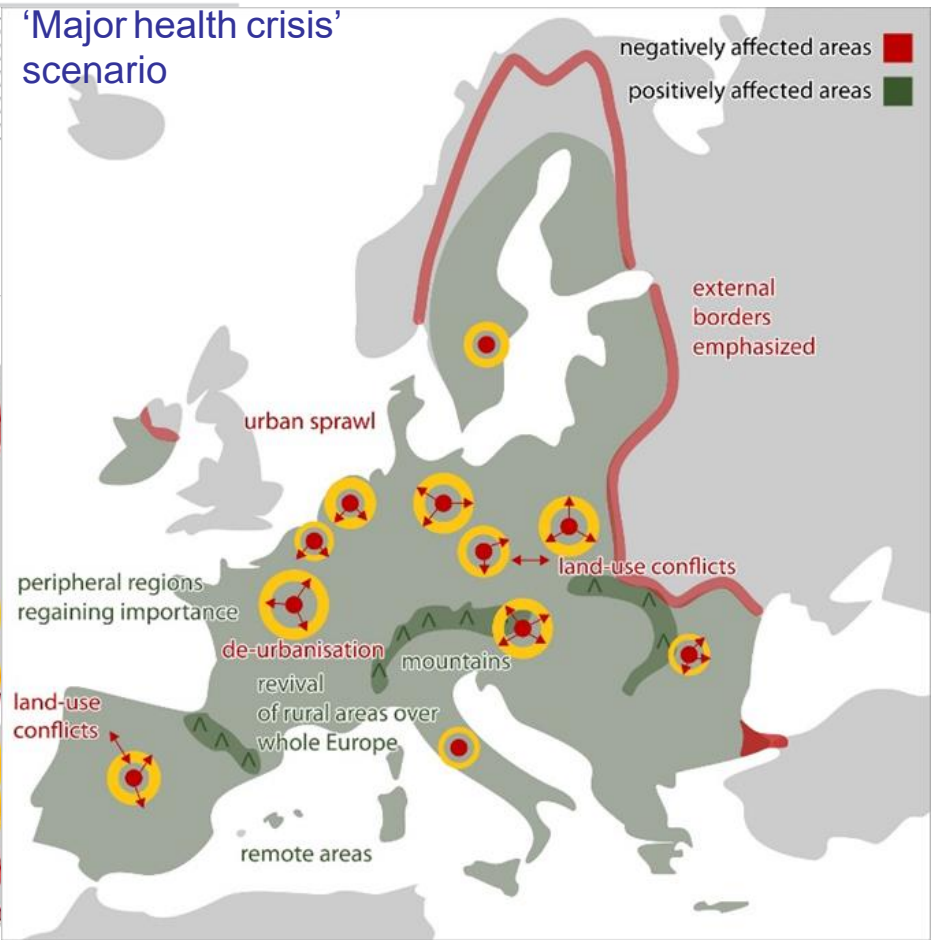
'Climate Change' scenario



'Globalisation of markets' scenario



'Major health crisis' scenario



8. Conclusions and recommendations

- Land abandonment remains an important challenge in the EU and affects different countries and regions differently. It leads to irreversible effects in social and ecological terms.
- The **farming conditions** can be improved through additional education and training programmes for farmers (especially to foster farmers managerial, entrepreneurial and synergies skills). It can also be improved by fostering financial security, lowering the threshold for supporting small farms, by making use of different funds or by enabling access to other investment sources (e.g. financial instruments), and by improving the conditions in accessing additional land.

8. Conclusions and recommendations (cont.)

- To improve the condition of farmers in areas facing natural constraints, payments derived from **ANC measures** should be better tailored to address the risk of land abandonment in these regions.
- **Forestry and environmental measures** should be adjusted to the different vulnerabilities in different regions. Environmental measures should be able to mitigate negative environmental effects of land abandonment and address the positive ones.
- To improve **rural communities** and prevent migration from rural areas, rural services of general interest and investment in rural infrastructure are essential. Therefore, it is necessary to make use of synergies between different European Structural Investment Funds, as well as land use and regional development policies to better handle the issue of land abandonment.