

SSPA'S PROPOSALS DOCUMENT FOR THE MAINTENANCE OF THE DONOR TERRITORIES' POSITIVE ENVIRONMENTAL EXTERNALITIES

The Report *“Positive environmental externalities that rural areas contribute and the impact that depopulation may have on them”* (available in Spanish), shows the value of sparsely populated areas as donor territories, whose benefits transcend the entire society from an environmental and social point of view. The aforementioned Report has objectified specific data, showing that these territories ensure the conservation of biodiversity, decisively contribute to curbing the global effects of climate change, as well as providing the opportunity to integrate the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in terms of sustainability, of well-being, quality of life and health of people, both of those who live in rural areas and of those who live in cities. Ultimately, these territories provide essential resources for the country's necessary ecological transition, which cannot be understood as consisting only of measures to improve, but must include measures to maintain and advance the areas that are already actively and positively contributing to curbing the climate change.

If we have assumed that “the polluter pays”, why not encourage those territories that contribute the most to the conservation of the environment. This work of custodians and managers of the territory that we, rural inhabitants, exercise continues to be invisible, since there is no awareness of the collective benefit, nor of the great strengths that they imply, neither in economic, environmental, nor social terms, as there is neither any consideration for this, even if its maintenance does have significant costs.

Based on the Report, the following measures are proposed in order to converge the transformations necessary to maintain and improve the status of donor territories, in line with the European Green Deal and with the necessary ecological transition of the European Union; because it is just as important to stop producing harmful effects on the environment as it is to maintain and enhance existing ecosystem services:

- 1- To disseminate, sensitize and educate the population about the causes and current consequences of climate change, the importance not only of polluting less, but also of maintaining and promoting those climate-neutral territories that act as donors of externalities positive for the whole of society.
- 2- To generate tools to measure the multifunctional value of the territories and their ecosystem services, through the economic evaluation and quantification of contribution, in order to implement objective economic compensation.
- 3- To place ecosystemic services at the center of decision-making and environmental policies, with new laws that establish real measures to achieve a balance between population and territory and that benefit the whole of society.
- 4- To define economic compensation to neutral and donor territories due to the multifunctional benefits they provide, as well as the positive externalities that they generate to society, recognizing their environmental value and economically compensating for the almost zero profitability they generate to their custodians.
- 5- To promote the implementation in these territories of new neutral companies that generate green and quality employment, through economic incentives and through differentiated taxation.
- 6- To encourage and incentivize corporate environmental responsibility towards donor territories.
- 7- To create a finalist compensation fund, privately managed, which should have an impact on the development and maintenance of territories with positive environmental externalities.
- 8- To get new alliances in the public-private framework that contribute to the achievement of the proposals established by SSPA network.