

## Regional differentiation

Rural Europe is witnessing a multiple process of regional differentiation that is being driven by a range of different, but often interrelated, influences. Through this (partly ancient, partly new) process of regional differentiation, a spatial diversity is emerging that is characterized by five extreme poles and one interlinked, somewhat floating, category.

## Regional differentiation

- Specialized agricultural areas, where farming shows high degrees of specialization, intensity and scale and where other economic sectors are very weakly connected to agriculture.
- Marginalizing areas, where agriculture once had a significant relevance but is currently in decline; in the most extreme examples these are areas where this process contributes to depopulation.
- New rural areas, where agriculture is developing along the lines of multifunctionality, is increasingly intertwined with the regional economy and society and thus contributes to regional qualities. In these areas multifunctionality is often articulated at the level of the enterprise and the *multi-product enterprise* is a distinctive feature of these regions.

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- Segmented areas, where alongside specialized agriculture *other*, equally specialized sectors (e.g. housing, tourism, and nature) are emerging; multifunctionality at the level of enterprises is lacking here. Instead, the region as a whole, offers a broader range of juxtaposed services and goods. Multifunctional *land-use* (at regional level) is the distinctive feature.
- New suburbia, where agriculture is declining and where new, often dispersed, settlement patterns are emerging in which commuting provides a major link with the urban economies.
- Dreamland, which reflects additional and highly contingent tendencies. It is the place where, indeed, dreams are bundled. These might be stable places, but mostly they are places whose popularity waxes and wanes.

