



30.8.2018

# **DRAFT OPINION**

of the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development

for the Committee on Regional Development

on the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council  
on the European Regional Development Fund and on the Cohesion Fund  
(COM(2018)0372 – C8-0227/2018 – 2018/0197(COD))

Rapporteur for opinion: James Nicholson

PA\_Legam

## SHORT JUSTIFICATION

The rapporteur broadly welcomes the aims and objectives of both the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and the Cohesion Fund. It is right the EU has a coherent approach to reducing the economic and social disparities that exist between the regions and member states, and that aims to promote sustainable development. While the rapporteur understands that urban areas play a key role in reducing unemployment and promoting social inclusion and combating poverty, he feels a better balance between the needs of rural and urban areas is required. The rapporteur has therefore made some additions to the text that focus on rural areas and their communities. When we discuss education, skills training and employment creation we can sometimes concentrate solely on the EU's towns and cities, the rapporteur proposes that specific attention is given to rural areas (amendment 6). The rapporteur has introduced a couple of new aspects to the text, farmers who are marginalised because they can work remotely and in isolation and seasonal workers who can often face difficulties integrating into rural communities. The rapporteur is keen to promote innovation and digitalisation and therefore recommends increasing allocation to PO 1 from 60% to 65% (amendment 10). Knowing how crucial access to the internet for farmers is, the rapporteur was not happy that the ERDF and the Cohesion Fund would not be able to support investment in broadband infrastructure in areas where there are at least two broadband networks. The rapporteur does not agree with this; it should be the member states and the regions who decide where the funds are most needed. Broadband networks may exist however if they are not adequate and do not allow proper access to the internet for the farmers in the most remote parts of the EU, the member states should be permitted to invest more in improvements (amendment 12).

## AMENDMENTS

The Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development calls on the Committee on Regional Development, as the committee responsible, to take into account the following amendments:

### Amendment 1

#### Proposal for a regulation

#### Article 2 – paragraph 1 – point a – point iv

*Text proposed by the Commission*

(iv) developing skills for smart specialisation, industrial transition and entrepreneurship;

*Amendment*

(iv) developing skills for smart specialisation, industrial transition, **rural development** and entrepreneurship;

Or. en

## Amendment 2

### Proposal for a regulation

#### Article 2 – paragraph 1 – point a – point iv a (new)

*Text proposed by the Commission*

*Amendment*

**(iv a) *nurturing start-up ecosystems***

Or. en

## Amendment 3

### Proposal for a regulation

#### Article 2 – paragraph 1 – point b – point vii

*Text proposed by the Commission*

*Amendment*

(vii) enhancing biodiversity, green infrastructure ***in the urban environment***, ***and*** reducing pollution;

(vii) enhancing biodiversity, green infrastructure, reducing pollution ***and waste***;

Or. en

## Amendment 4

### Proposal for a regulation

#### Article 2 – paragraph 1 – point c – point i

*Text proposed by the Commission*

*Amendment*

(i) enhancing digital connectivity;

(i) enhancing digital connectivity ***including improved connectivity in rural areas***;

Or. en

## Amendment 5

### Proposal for a regulation

#### Article 2 – paragraph 1 – point c – point iv

*Text proposed by the Commission*

*Amendment*

(iv) promoting sustainable multimodal **urban** mobility;

(iv) promoting sustainable multimodal mobility **in both urban and rural areas**;

Or. en

## **Amendment 6**

### **Proposal for a regulation**

#### **Article 2 – paragraph 1 – point d – point i**

*Text proposed by the Commission*

*Amendment*

(i) enhancing the effectiveness of labour markets and access to quality employment through developing social innovation and infrastructure;

(i) enhancing the effectiveness of labour markets and access to quality employment through developing social innovation and infrastructure, **paying specific attention to education, skills training and jobs in rural areas**;

Or. en

## **Amendment 7**

### **Proposal for a regulation**

#### **Article 2 – paragraph 1 – point d – point iii**

*Text proposed by the Commission*

*Amendment*

(iii) increasing the socioeconomic integration of marginalised communities, **migrants** and disadvantaged groups, through integrated measures including housing and social services;

(iii) increasing the socioeconomic integration of marginalised communities and disadvantaged groups **including those who work in isolation such as farmers**, through integrated measures including housing and **access to** social services;

Or. en

## Amendment 8

### Proposal for a regulation

#### Article 2 – paragraph 1 – point d – point iii a (new)

*Text proposed by the Commission*

*Amendment*

*(iii a) supporting migrants in rural areas, particularly seasonal workers who may struggle to integrate into rural communities;*

Or. en

## Amendment 9

### Proposal for a regulation

#### Article 2 – paragraph 1 – point d – point iv

*Text proposed by the Commission*

*Amendment*

(iv) *ensuring* equal access to health care through developing infrastructure, including primary care;

(iv) *promoting* equal access to health care through developing infrastructure, including primary care, *particularly in rural areas*;

Or. en

## Amendment 10

### Proposal for a regulation

#### Article 3 – paragraph 4 – point a

*Text proposed by the Commission*

*Amendment*

(a) Member States of group 1 shall allocate at least 85 % of their total ERDF resources under priorities other than for technical assistance to PO 1 and PO 2, and at least **60** % to PO 1;

(a) Member States of group 1 shall allocate at least 85 % of their total ERDF resources under priorities other than for technical assistance to PO 1 and PO 2, and at least **65** % to PO 1;

Or. en

## **Amendment 11**

### **Proposal for a regulation**

#### **Article 4 – paragraph 1 – subparagraph 1 – point e a (new)**

*Text proposed by the Commission*

*Amendment*

*(e a) technological support to promote the development of innovation and technology in rural communities.*

Or. en

## **Amendment 12**

### **Proposal for a regulation**

#### **Article 6 – paragraph 1 – point i**

*Text proposed by the Commission*

*Amendment*

*(i) investment in broadband infrastructure in areas in which there are at least two broadband networks of equivalent category;*

*deleted*

Or. en