

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-003970/22  
to the Commission  
Sandra Pereira (The Left)  
(7 December 2022)**

*Subject:* Strengthening the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD)

The rural fabric of many Member States such as Portugal has suffered continuously from EU policies, especially the common agricultural policy. This has led to a depopulated hinterland deprived of infrastructure, with weakened public services disconnected from local people, and a fragile economy.

Over the decades we have witnessed the abandonment of Portugal's hinterland and countryside, victims of constant, deliberate underfunding and neglect by successive governments, with flagrant disregard for local people and territorial cohesion.

Improving infrastructure, especially in terms of public transport, is among the most pressing needs of rural areas, with agriculture being seen as the activity that contributes most to the development of rural areas.

In view of the importance of the EAFRD for maintaining economic activity and social and territorial cohesion in rural areas in the autonomous regions and in mainland Portugal, many of which are located in disadvantaged districts with increasingly elderly and diminishing populations, is the Commission considering a strengthening of the Fund?

Submitted: 7.12.2022

**Answer given by Mr Wojciechowski on behalf of the European Commission  
(27 January 2023)**

The European Council conclusions of July 2020 <sup>(1)</sup>, and after the consent of the European Parliament, fixed the allocations for European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) for the 2021-2027 period.

The total allocation of EUR 95.6 billion is well above the levels of the 2014-2020 Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) and includes EUR 8.2 billion for 2021 and 2022, stemming from Next Generation EU.

For rural development in Portugal, an amount of EUR 4 262.6 million has been allocated for the period 2021-2027, including an amount of EUR 353.5 million stemming from Next Generation EU.

The 2023-2027 Portuguese Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) Strategic Plan (SP), as approved by the Commission on 31 August 2022 <sup>(2)</sup>, is allocating EUR 320 million to support small farmers, who play an important role in the vitality of rural areas and EUR 131.6 million for supporting young farmers.

The CAP Plan also supports the development of rural areas at large, by covering all of them with local development strategies under Leader for more than EUR 140 million over the period.

It furthermore addresses the worrying depopulation and ageing trend that affects Portuguese rural areas, as well as income disparity vis-à-vis urban areas, with other EU and national funds.

The CAP Plan, the Recovery and Resilience Facility and the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF), of which the Cohesion funds in particular, play a crucial role to promote integrated local development approaches.

This will increase the attractiveness of rural areas for setting up businesses, ensuring access to essential services and supporting innovation and research.

Any strengthening of the EAFRD will need to be discussed in the framework of the negotiations for the post-2027 MFF.

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<sup>(1)</sup> <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/45109/210720-euco-final-conclusions-en.pdf>

<sup>(2)</sup> C(2022)6019 of 31/08/2022.