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REPORT

on reversing demographic trends in EU regions using cohesion policy
instruments
(2020/2039(INI))

Committee on Regional Development

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MOTION FOR A EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT RESOLUTION

on reversing demographic trends in EU regions using cohesion policy instruments (2020/2039(INI))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the freedom of movement of workers, which is guaranteed by Article 45 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU),
- having regard to Article 174 of the TFEU on strengthening the economic, social and territorial cohesion of the Union,
- having regard to Article 107(3)(c) of the TFEU, which allows aid to be used to facilitate the development of certain economic areas, provided that this aid does not significantly affect competition ('category c' regions),
- having regard to Article 349 TFEU on the Outermost Regions,
- having regard to Articles 9, 46, 47, 48 and 147 of the TFEU regarding several aspects of work and employment in the EU,
- having regard to the European Pillar of Social Rights, in particular principles 2, 3 and 20,
- having regard to the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council laying down common provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund Plus, the Cohesion Fund, and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and financial rules for those and for the Asylum and Migration Fund, the Internal Security Fund and the Border Management and Visa Instrument (COM(2018)0375), and in particular Chapter II thereof on territorial development,
- having regard to the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing a Recovery and Resilience Facility, COM(2020)0408,
- having regard to its resolution of 17 April 2018 on strengthening economic, social and territorial cohesion in the European Union: the 7th report of the European Commission¹,
- having regard to its resolution of 14 November 2017 on the deployment of cohesion policy instruments by regions to address demographic change²,
- having regard to its resolution of 15 November 2011 on demographic change and its consequences for the future cohesion policy of the EU³,
- having regard to its legislative resolution of 27 March 2019 on the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the European Regional

¹ OJ C 390, 18.11.2019, p. 53.

² OJ C 356, 4.10.2018, p. 10.

³ OJ C 153E, 31.5.2013, p. 9.

Development Fund and on the Cohesion Fund⁴,

- having regard to Article 20 of the TFEU, Regulation (EU) No 492/2011⁵ and Directive 2004/38/EC⁶ on the free movement of workers and their families within the Union,
- having regard to the Commission report of 17 June 2020 on the impact of demographic change,
- having regard to the Commission’s roadmap of 27 July 2020 entitled ‘Rural development: long-term vision for rural areas’⁷,
- having regard the Council conclusions on ‘Demographic Challenges – the Way Ahead’, adopted on 8 June 2020,
- having regard to the Green Paper entitled ‘Ageing: Fostering solidarity and responsibility between generations’ presented by the Commission on 27 January 2021,
- having regard to the Commission’s roadmap of 16 November 2020 entitled ‘Demographic change in Europe: Green Paper on ageing’⁸,
- having regard to the report by the European Observation Network for Territorial Development and Cohesion (ESPON) of December 2017 on the geography of new employment dynamics in Europe,
- having regard to the ESPON policy brief of June 2019 entitled ‘Addressing labour migration challenges in Europe: An enhanced functional approach’,
- having regard to the report on World Population Prospects 2019 by the Population Division of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs,
- having regard to the European Commission Report on the Impact of Demographic Change from 17th June 2020⁹
- having regard to the European Regional Competitiveness Index 2019,
- having regard to the OECD paper on Adapting to Demographic Change, prepared for the first meeting of the G20 Employment Working Group held under the Japanese G20 Presidency from 25 to 27 February 2019 in Tokyo,
- having regard to the 2002 ‘Barcelona targets’,
- having regard to the 2016 report of the Committee of the Regions on the impact of demographic change on European regions,
- having regard to the 2018 report of the Committee of the Regions entitled ‘Addressing

⁴ Texts adopted, P8_TA(2019)0303.

⁵ OJ L 141, 27.5.2011, p. 1.

⁶ OJ L 158, 30.4.2004, p. 77.

⁷ Ares(2020)3866098

⁸ Ares(2020)6799640

⁹ https://ec.europa.eu/info/files/report-impact-demographic-change-reader-friendly-version-0_en

- brain drain: The local and regional dimension’,
- having regard to the Opinion of the Committee of the Regions entitled ‘Demographic Change: Proposals on Measuring and Tackling its Negative Effects in the EU Regions’ of 12-14 October 2020,
 - having regard to the Commission’s Long-Term Vision for Rural Areas, which is currently under preparation,
 - having regard to the Committee of the Regions opinion entitled ‘EU Strategy for Rural Revival’ of 8-10 December 2020;
 - having regard the territorial impact assessment report of the Committee of the Regions on demographic change of 30 January 2020,
 - having regard to Rule 54 of its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the opinions of the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs and the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Regional Development (A9-0061/2021),
- A. whereas population distribution at local, regional, national and EU level, as well as its stability or change, have very different dynamics across Member States and their regions, with unequal impacts on the depopulation phenomenon, and ultimately on the social, economic and territorial cohesion of the Union; whereas according to the European Regional Competitiveness Index 2019 there is a gap between capital/metropolitan regions and more peripheral areas, with 78 % of European population living in urban areas or functional urban area, and benefiting from quality services in energy, transport and digital connectivity, while many peripheral regions areas still encounter difficulties in these regards; whereas cohesion policy, as the main source of public investment in the EU, accounting for 8.5 % of government capital investment, can play an important role in addressing these demographic challenges, also with a view to preserving the EU’s natural demographic balance in the long term;
- B. whereas for the purposes of this report ‘sending regions’ are regions that are losing high skills and/or competencies (in one or more sectors/domains) to the advantage of other regions as a result of permanent emigration over a specific time period, and ‘receiving regions’ refers to regions that are gaining high skills and/or competencies (in one or more sectors/domains) as a result of permanent immigration over a specific time period;
- C. whereas demographic trends are also influenced by climate change and in particular by floods and heatwaves related to this process; whereas a coordinated approach integrating principles of sustainability, greening and digitalisation across different EU policies could also contribute to reversing negative demographic trends;
- D. whereas there is a high correlation between the provision of social services, physical and ICT connectivity, education and labour opportunities on the one hand, and the ability to retain and attract population to certain areas on the other; whereas many EU regions, including rural areas which make up 44 % of the Union’s surface area, remote,

peripheral, insular and mountainous regions, which suffer from a geographical, social and economic point of view, still face a severe gap in the provision of these services; whereas these regions and are particularly affected by low-density, rural exodus and depopulation trends with negative impacts on ageing, generational renewal and agriculture development; whereas increased synergies with EU Transport Policy should be developed in order to address the specific needs of low-density and depopulating regions; whereas the current ageing trend for EU population has important economic and social consequences, such as higher dependency ratios, pressures on fiscal and social security sustainability, and increased stress on healthcare and social services;

- E. whereas the free movement of labour is one of the four freedoms of the European Union and its single market;
- F. whereas, although the EU population has seen substantial growth in previous decades, the growth rate is now falling and the population is expected to decrease significantly in the longer term; whereas in 2015 the EU experienced the first natural population decline with more deaths than births; whereas in 2019 Europe accounted for just 6.9 % of the world's population, and by 2070 it will account for less than 4 % of the world's population, with sharp declines especially in Eastern and Southern Europe due to the combination of low fertility rates and net intra-EU migration from these areas; whereas long-term demographic trends in European regions continue to indicate lower birth rates and ageing societies except in some outermost regions, and particularly in Mayotte, where a population increase of 38 % is forecast by 2050 compared to 2010 levels, alongside a corresponding increase of 26 % for French Guiana¹⁰;
- G. whereas demographic aspects should be mainstreamed across different policies, including by incorporating them in long-term priorities; whereas it is important to collect and monitor reliable statistical data and to support research and the exchange of good practices at all levels in order to foster a better understanding of demographic challenges, anticipate their impact on the labour markets, and to develop innovative and effective solutions for ensuring age-friendly environments;
- H. whereas the health and economic crisis generated by the COVID-19 pandemic made clear that solidarity between generations, along with adequate funding for health and social care and sustainable economy, represent driving forces for the recovery process and for the creation of more inclusive and more resilient societies; whereas the COVID-19 pandemic has unveiled the fragility our healthcare systems, especially in connection with an ageing population; whereas the COVID-19 pandemic has underlined once more the importance of safeguarding and promoting the dignity of the elderly and their fundamental rights in the EU;
- I. whereas COVID-19 crisis is likely to have a significant impact on birth, and death rates and migration flows in Europe, but the full economic, employment and social consequences of the pandemic are still unknown; whereas the short and long term impacts on demographic trends of the extraordinary measures taken in response to the crisis will have to be thoroughly analysed, including from a gender perspective; whereas preliminary studies suggest that the pandemic has exacerbated existing inequalities between men and women, including an increase in unpaid care work and job losses;

¹⁰ Sources: INSEE (French National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies), United Nations.

whereas the public health crisis has a disproportionate impact on women and girls and in particular from most vulnerable groups, which Cohesion Policy should take into account including by channelling investments in care services and improving the working conditions in this sector, as well as by supporting the transition towards a care economy;

- J. whereas movements of young educated professionals within Europe from southern and eastern Europe to north-western Europe have been recorded since the beginning of the economic crisis in 2008; whereas there is a high correlation between the socio-economic conditions of a region and its brain drain/gain dynamic; whereas sending regions and receiving regions will need to work together to address the challenges faced and use integrated approaches to develop long term policies aimed at maximising the quality of life of the population;
- K. whereas innovation and investment in human capital are the main drivers of socio-economic and employment growth in Member States and their regions over the medium to long term;

Current characteristics and challenges related to demographic change in the EU

General considerations

1. Underlines that the four freedoms are the cornerstone of EU competitiveness and values; notes, nevertheless, that further attention should be paid to their effects on demographic trends, and the related implications for the balance between and within Member States, as well as for their economic, social and territorial cohesion; underlines the EU is facing a major demographic challenge, which, despite different impacts across regions, has to be acknowledged and tackled in a holistic way in order to redress the negative natural demographic balance of recent years; whereas the reversal of the current negative demographic trends in European territories through measures addressing their cause and not just their consequence, should be a priority for the European Union, alongside the dual objective of accelerating the climate and digital transition;
2. Observes in this context significant demographic contrasts linked to different economic opportunities, provision of services, accessibility, transport and digital connectivity, at both Union and Member State level between core, metropolitan regions and the periphery; reiterates in this context that the Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T) can only be effective if local transport infrastructures are function effectively; stresses that these disparities are particularly visible in rural areas or those facing natural or specific constraints, such as sparsely populated and mountainous regions, as well as between the mainland and islands and outermost regions; reiterates that accessibility to most islands and outermost regions is characterised by infrequent and often expensive transport;
3. Observes that GDP per capita, income levels, employment rates, fertility rates, socio-economic factors, the rural and urban divide, and population ageing are among the most important factors with a direct impact on demographics; notes that the current employment dynamics in particular are generating demographic flows within EU regions leading to socio-spatial disparities and challenges that post-2020 cohesion policy will need to address; underlines that internal migration patterns from eastern,

south and central regions to northern and north-western regions mostly involve young, educated and skilled workers; notes that migration by non-EU citizens has allowed the EU to avoid population loss in recent years;

4. Points out that Europe is manifestly experiencing population ageing and declining birth rates, affecting the dependency ratio and having negative effects on workforce growth, which is far behind the rate in the last decade; warns of a visible decline in the labour force in eastern, southern and central European regions; highlights that population ageing also affects housing and transport planning, infrastructure and service needs, as well as fiscal and social security sustainability; notes that active ageing policies are needed in order to reduce the negative dimension of demographic changes, especially in rural and remote areas, and to ensure an adequate level of quality of life for all inhabitants;
5. Points to the ongoing COVID-19 health crisis and the possible medium- and long-term socio-economic implications for labour market dynamics; regrets, further, that the COVID-19 pandemic has had a negative impact on the average life expectancy in Europe; underlines that self-isolation and social distancing measures, despite their positive impact in lowering infection rates, have had visible effects on production, demand and trade, reducing economic activity and leading to higher levels of unemployment, a sharp decline in corporate incomes, and higher public deficits; notes that as a result, a new wave of migration by young people both within and between Member States can be predicted;
6. Underlines that the ongoing COVID-19 crisis has exposed considerable disparities in the quality and access to healthcare services; recalls in this regard the need to bolster public services in rural areas, such as healthcare facilities, in order to address the very significant inequalities and differences in life expectancy based on place of residence, social status and educational level; recalls that the digital divide was also exposed by the pandemic, affecting in particular elderly people and those living in less developed regions, rural and/or mountainous remote areas, as well as the outermost regions;
7. Underlines another challenge made visible by the pandemic, namely the need to ensure decent working and living conditions for seasonal workers, who are important for filling shortages in certain economic sectors, especially agriculture;
8. Stresses that determining the dimension of the depopulation process is a challenge in itself, as statistical records do not provide accurate data, as figures for people leaving certain areas are only available after delays lasting many years; notes, moreover, that Eurostat's population forecasts for the next decade indicate that both rural and urban regions may face population losses; points out, in this context, the importance of correctly evaluating the dimension of demographic challenges and of adequately addressing them, also in order to counter radicalisation and movements opposing the European integration process and to enhance the economic, social and territorial cohesion; recommends exploring the possibility of using further indicators besides GDP and population density for the classification of territories with severe and permanent handicaps; stresses, moreover, the importance of updated statistical demographic data, disaggregated at least at NUTS 3 level, for better monitoring the impact of demographic trends on the territories and to allow for more effective and focused actions to address them; asks Member States to invest in modernising the data collection capacity for

demographic evolutions at different NUTS levels;

Local and regional dimensions

Sending regions

9. Notes that in general rural, post-industrial areas and towns, which are underdeveloped compared to major metropolitan areas, as well as remote territories, including islands and most of the outermost regions are facing a number of specific situations: a considerable decline in population numbers, also due to birth rates, lower than national or EU average levels of income, and difficulties in territorial integration with other regions, making them more vulnerable to the risk of depopulation; stresses that this situation also leads to difficulties in accessing public services, such as housing, education, healthcare including access to vital drugs; points out that rural regions currently account for 28 % of Europe's population but this is predicted to fall significantly in the future; highlights that EU initiatives directed to rural areas such as cohesion and agricultural policies should be further strengthened by promoting better coordination of policy initiatives that enhance youth employment, entrepreneurship, digitalisation and support for young and new farmers; welcomes in this regard the Commission's intention to accelerate the roll-out of high capacity broadband infrastructure in sparsely populated and rural territories, and considers it an opportunity to improve quality of life, and to promote education opportunities, job creation, innovation, better accessibility to health services and other public services, adaptation to technological change and development of cultural venues and leisure activities; stresses that women in rural areas are an essential to the development of these communities, and that greater recognition of women's work and rights in the rural labour market would significantly diminish the risk of depopulation; encourages the Commission and Member States to create specific strategies to promote the empowerment of women in rural areas; encourages the collection of gender-disaggregated data in order to identify and address any current gender inequalities;
10. Draws attention to some of the drivers of demographic change, forcing inhabitants from the abovementioned areas to leave, and discouraging others from moving there: poor infrastructure, including a lack of fast broadband internet and a lack of transport networks, high levels of youth unemployment, fewer job opportunities, particularly in positions requiring higher education, and also in general for women, a lack of public and private services, difficulties in access to health services, fewer education, utilities and social services opportunities, making it more difficult to adapt to technological change, and a lack of cultural venues and leisure activities; recalls, moreover, the impact of climate change and natural hazards related to it on depopulation, such as intense heatwaves leading to desertification of certain southern areas;
11. Stresses that this lack of diversification in the regional economic structure of certain regions risks creating a negative 'label', including among their inhabitants who may express dissatisfaction with the quality of life and the facilities and services available to them; expresses concern, in this regard, about the 'geography of discontent' that is developing in many EU regions where people feel left behind, and which is closely associated with demographic change; highlights in this context the brain drain effect, leading to the migration of highly trained and qualified people from a particular region or country to another; points out, in particular, that the 'exodus' of medical staff such as

doctors and nurses and teaching staff, worsened by significant cuts in the past years in public funding to health and social care, has led to a deterioration in the quality of medical care and education, making it difficult, especially in remote, rural areas and in the outermost regions, to access high-quality care and education;

12. Is of the view that urban areas are also exposed to depopulation, as one in five cities in Europe have experienced population losses since 1990; notes, however, that urban population shrinkage is not always a continuous linear process and can be episodic or temporary, depending on the territorial context;
13. Underlines a pattern of ‘inner peripheralisation’, in the sense that central, eastern and southern European regions report a substantially negative net population migration rate, while northern and western European regions report a substantially positive rate, receiving large numbers of economic migrants; considers that these disparities are also exacerbated in rural areas where cohesion policy and CAP resources must focus more decisively on innovation in order to encourage young people to start farming, as well as on digitalisation, rural mobility and the development of smart towns, and on helping family farms benefit from innovation and new technologies;

Receiving regions

14. Acknowledges that the metropolitan areas around major cities register a positive migration rate, with characteristic rural-to-urban population movements as a consequence of an increasingly urbanised concentration in employment growth patterns;
15. Notes also that regions that have a high share of people with high levels of education and that provide more employment opportunities for people with high levels of education are less exposed to the depopulation process;
16. Highlights that knowledge economy sectors contribute to regional development, offering high levels of social capital, networks and technology; acknowledges that innovative economic activities are typically located in technologically more advanced regions where sufficient agglomerations of ‘smart’ businesses are more accessible;
17. Underlines, on the other hand, that overconcentration of the population in certain urban areas has already led to negative side effects, such as congestion, rising housing and transport costs, pollution, insufficient water availability, waste-disposal problems, high energy consumption, deterioration of the quality of life, and urban sprawl, as well as a significant risk of poverty and social exclusion, and uncertainty for certain segments of the population; underlines these negative effects have thus led to local authorities being unable to provide services to all residents of urban areas; warns of some of the negative effects on public health of high population concentrations in urban areas, which have been highlighted by the COVID-19 pandemic;
18. Notes that migration has a direct impact on the inclusiveness of cities, requiring tailored policy responses and supporting measures in different territorial contexts; recalls in this regard that economic migrants contribute more in taxes and social contributions than they receive in individual benefits; highlights the need to strengthen inclusion policies and support local and regional authorities in this regard;

Tailored responses: finding solutions to the challenge of demographic decline

19. Underlines the importance of current initiatives such as the European Innovation Partnership on Active and Healthy Ageing, Ambient Assisted Living and the EIT Digital and Health Knowledge Innovation Communities; calls on the Commission to take into account the solutions already developed by these initiatives for accommodating the demographic shift when addressing the demographic challenges faced by European regions; stresses the importance of the European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning as a way of supporting education and training in areas at risk of depopulation;
20. Stresses that local, regional and national authorities, professional associations and NGOs are essential to identifying and assessing specific investment needs in rural and urban areas for mobility, territorial accessibility and basic services, and, therefore, to unlocking the potential of the areas concerned, including economic, social and demographic trends; believes, therefore, that they should play a decisive role as active participants in developing territorial strategies stemming from local communities; highlights the importance of including, when possible, a specific budgetary response for reversing demographic trends in relevant EU programmes, and of conducting impact assessments of public policies on demography; points out that a territorial approach to EU instruments, such as sustainable urban development, community-led local development strategies or Integrated Territorial Investments (ITIs) could be useful tools that can be used to maintain and create jobs, improve the attractiveness of the region, and increase accessibility to services at local level; recognises the great potential of the circular economy and bioeconomy in revitalising these areas, and calls for tailor-made technical assistance to support local and regional authorities in the design and the implementation of these strategies, including through the use of participatory methods involving local stakeholders, the social partners and civil society;
21. Points out to the need to develop a European rural agenda aimed at improving the accessibility, attractiveness and sustainable development of rural and remote areas so as to have a positive impact on the smooth operation of the supply chain and the internal market; notes that the accessibility and attractiveness of these areas can be enhanced through access to capital for entrepreneurs and SMEs and investments in innovation ecosystems to support knowledge creation and technological diffusion, as well as through providing high-quality public and essential services, digitalisation, including for small businesses, digital innovation and digital connectivity and high quality transport services; believes that local and regional authorities should identify adequate provisions of services, in the most efficient way possible and that the concept of ‘rural-proofing’ should be used to address the specific needs of rural and remote areas with focus on policy implementation and the delivery adequate solutions;
22. Reiterates that transport networks can play a decisive role in addressing demographic change and halting depopulation by reinforcing rural-urban connectivity, including through investments in public transport and other mobility services in rural areas; underlines, in this regard, the importance of improving transport infrastructure including through the maintenance and revitalisation of existing transport links and the provision of links to the TEN-T, which are especially important in rural, peripheral, insular and in the outermost regions, through support to the transition to sustainable and smart transport networks and strengthening interoperability in transport systems as part of the Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy;

23. Considers that sustainable rural tourism could play a very important role in addressing depopulation and boosting job creation and the economic and demographic diversification of rural areas;
24. Acknowledges that the needs and challenges of rural regions, including those related to climate change, must be taken into account in the transition towards climate neutrality and sustainable and smart mobility in line with the Green Deal targets; believes, furthermore, that these investments will enable a fair and equal transition towards a digital economy and a digital online education system accessible to all citizens, including of the most vulnerable; is of the opinion, in this regard, that cohesion policy plays a fundamental role through investments in high quality public and essential services;
25. Considers that the Urban Agenda for the EU, which identifies major priorities and actions for improving the quality of life in urban areas, could contribute to shaping proper instruments promoting growth, integration, cooperation and innovation and tackling social challenges; insists also on the need to develop strategies aimed at enhancing the knowledge economy and smart specialisation in European regions, including through developing knowledge networks and providing support for human capital investments; highlights the role of cities and regions both in depopulated and overpopulated areas; reiterates the need to make further funding opportunities directly available to cities and regions in order to implement programmes locally, and calls for maximising the use of the European Urban Initiative;
26. Underlines that cohesion policy should contribute to better integrating women in policy planning for regional and urban development in order to design gender-inclusive cities and communities that work for all; believes, moreover, that investments under the ESF+ should promote the employability of women and single parents struggling to find employment, should ensure funding for affordable childcare facilities and support young families; recalls that the needs of children in the care of a family member or living alone while parents are working abroad should also be addressed through counselling services, access to housing, healthcare and education; highlights also the importance of family friendly legislation that facilitates a satisfactory work-life balance;
27. Underlines that investments should also target support for young people, older people, persons with disabilities and other vulnerable groups as they enter or remain on the labour market and help them to find a quality job, with special attention given to the most highly depopulated rural and remote areas; believes that tailored training should also be explored with a view to promoting the concept of the “‘economy of well-being’”, as well as healthy and active ageing approaches;
28. Recalls that the needs of ethnic minorities should also be addressed in the context of tackling demographic challenges;
29. Recalls the need for strategies aimed at reversing labour migration at EU, national and regional level; calls on local regional, national and EU authorities to develop policies that increase the attractiveness of their regions in terms of job opportunities, and to tackle the brain drain in sending regions through prevention, mitigation and appropriate responses also using the means provided by cohesion policy; underlines in this context that there are already several initiatives in various Member States, such as incentives for

workers with highly specialised skills, aimed at turning the brain drain into a brain gain for the regions in question;

30. Stresses that the COVID-19 health crisis has affected all Member States and regions to different extents, and is likely to lead to new trends in demographic flows; recalls in this context that the additional resources for the ERDF and ESF provided through REACT-EU, although this is only a temporary instrument, seeking to ensure a sound and robust recovery of the EU's economy from the crisis could significantly help to keep people in employment, and create new jobs in areas at risk of depopulation, including through support for SMEs and the self-employed; welcomes the introduction of flexible working arrangements, including remote or short-time work, and underlines that this support must be granted in a non-discriminatory basis;
31. Recalls in this regard that the pandemic has highlighted the importance of digitalisation all across the economy in alleviating the consequences of social distancing and freedom of movement restrictions, and also for facilitating health monitoring or teleconsultation and providing healthcare services in sparsely populated areas or areas facing natural or demographic challenges; believes that the opportunities offered by this should be used to create new jobs in areas with an ageing demographic;
32. Points to the increased spread of teleworking during the COVID-19 crisis, and believes that it may prove to be a useful tool to reverse depopulation trends in rural areas, making it possible for young educated people to stay in areas which they would otherwise leave; invites the Commission and Member States to reflect on how teleworking could impact future intra-EU mobility and the perceived attractiveness of different regions;

Policy recommendations

33. Calls on the Commission to propose a strategy on demographic change built on the following main elements: decent employment conditions, work-life balance, the territorial aspect of policies promoting economic activity and employment, the adequate provision of social services of general interest in all territories, effective local public transport, and adequate care for dependent persons and long-term care, with special attention on new forms of work and their social impact;
34. Urges Member States and regional authorities to implement an integrated approach to addressing demographic challenges through cohesion policy instruments, and encourages the promotion of smart villages and other incentive schemes to retain population and attract young people to rural and semi-urban areas;
35. Recalls that the Recovery and Resilience Facility will provide large-scale financial support to make Member States' economies more resilient and better prepared for the future, and insists that Member States should propose, in line with their specific circumstances, measures for addressing demographic change, in particular in the most vulnerable areas, in their national recovery and resilience plans; considers that local and regional bodies must be actively involved in drawing up these plans, as this is an area of particular importance when evaluating plans, and subsequently in their management by Member States; believes that synergies should be developed between cohesion policy and Next Generation EU programmes so as to ensure a more comprehensive approach to demographic challenges;

36. Highlights the importance of the JTF and its implementation mechanism, which aim to support the communities affected by the energy transition, contributing to creating new opportunities for rural and post-industrial areas as well to reducing the risk of depopulation; considers that support should be given in this regard to local and regional cooperative initiatives;
37. Reiterates that demographic change is a fundamental challenge for the EU, and that addressing it should be prioritised in the design and implementation of programmes; recalls in this regard that one of the main objectives stipulated in the ERDF and Cohesion Fund Regulation for the next multiannual financial framework (2021-2027) is to support urban and rural areas with geographical or demographic handicaps, with Member States having to allocate EU financial support for projects that promote environmentally sustainable and socially inclusive economic development in the regions concerned; recalls, in this regard, that particular support should be given to NUTS level 3 areas or clusters of local administrative units with a population density of below 12.5 inhabitants per square kilometre or with an average annual population decrease of more than 1 % between 2007 and 2017, which should be subject to specific regional and national policies to ensure better physical and ICT connectivity, improve access to and the quality of social services, promote entrepreneurship and the creation of high quality job opportunities through cohesion instruments: welcomes the new article of the ERDF and Cohesion Fund Regulation which calls for national plans to support regional and local areas facing continuous demographic decline;
38. Calls on the Member States to mobilise ESF and JTF resources to greater extent and to combine them with national and local investment in order to tackle social exclusion, energy poverty, and material deprivation, to effectively counter the digital gap and digital exclusion, especially in rural areas and among the young, the elderly and persons with disabilities, and to secure access to digital tools and programmes and to affordable communication infrastructures; calls, therefore, for accessible and affordable opportunities to acquire digital skills in a way that is adapted to the needs of the elderly; points out that these initiatives have greater chances of success when they are linked to opportunities for intergenerational exchange; believes in this sense that the potential of digitalisation, robotisation and artificial intelligence could be further explored and promoted, along with ensuring high ethical standards while securing inclusion, in order to improve the autonomy and the living conditions and health of older people;
39. Reiterates the need for further local and integrated approaches to cohesion policy, Common Agricultural Policy national strategic plans, and national recovery strategic plans in order to allow for an easier, but at the same time sound, management of financial resources and for maximising synergies among the various EU funds and integrated tools; emphasises the need to reinforce administrative capacity to reduce red tape and ensure coherent legislation throughout the project implementation process and focused technical assistance at all stages;
40. Calls on the Member States to conduct the programming and implementation process of the 2021-2027 cohesion policy with full respect for the partnership principle, and to take account of the particular needs of the regions with demographic constraints in their partnership agreements; stresses the importance of prioritising regional and sub-regional needs, including demographic and migration aspects and territorial challenges (urban and rural); believes that these strategies should be accompanied by territorial and

demographic impact assessments, conducted in parallel with economic, environmental and social assessments; calls on the Commission to monitor and where appropriate secure the full implementation of the Code of Conduct on Partnership which can contribute to an increase of the cohesion policy absorption rate in parallel with enhanced quality of projects;

41. Calls on the Member State States to take into account the different demographic challenges in the design of their national recovery and resilience plans, their national development policies, long-term strategies for sustainable development and tailored cohesion policy programmes, correlated with the European Semester goals, with a view to ensure proper financing aimed at tackling depopulation and reversing negative trends and enhancing territorial attractiveness;
42. Calls on the local, regional and national authorities in regions at risk of depopulation to focus investments on ways of encouraging young families to settle in those regions, as well as on universal accessibility to quality services and infrastructure, with the participation of SMEs and service management businesses, and a focus on job creation, in particular for young people, reskilling of workers, creating entrepreneurial conditions and supporting SMEs; calls on Member States to reinforce their support for this; considers investment in all levels of education, including early childhood education, affordable, accessible and equitable mobility services, childcare facilities to foster women's participation in the labour market and in lifelong learning to be a priority, particularly in rural areas and the Outermost Regions; believes that it is particularly important to create the right conditions for young people to remain in these regions and to tackle early school leaving, offering them attractive education, training, upskilling and reskilling options at local and regional level, including digital skills, through classroom or distance learning, in order to encourage them to pursue their studies in these regions; understands that the regions will need the concentrated support of the Union and the Member States in this endeavour;
43. Calls for more to be done to support regions facing significant population increases, such as Mayotte and French Guiana, by deploying adequate financial resources to guarantee the continuity of basic services in sufficient quantity and quality, particularly in the sectors of education, health and transport.
44. Considers it appropriate to involve regional and local authorities in long-term cooperative governance and planning initiatives at various levels; asks the Commission and the Member States to disseminate good practices on the use and benefits of this type of governance and planning tools to support polycentric development, and to use the territorial impact assessments (TIA) to further design EU and national policies that affect demographic change; reiterates, in this regard, the high importance of the active and genuine involvement of regions in the planning and management of the Recovery and Resilience Facility for reinforcing the efficiency of the instrument;
45. Is of the opinion that innovation and research can have positive spillover effects at the regional level; encourages policymakers at regional and national level to use the new Recovery and Resilience Facility and the ERDF to invest in the extension of broadband in order to foster the digital and knowledge-based economy, as well as in providing resources, high quality public services and incentives, with a view to maintaining highly skilled workers in order to develop research centres in the different regions, thus

increasing the attractiveness of the depopulated areas especially to young talents and entrepreneurs; calls for further development of the synergies between the European Structural and Investment Funds and the Horizon Europe programme as well as other initiatives, such as those promoted by the European Institute of Innovation and Technology; considers, moreover, that attractive fiscal policies for business investment through reduced tax rates for families and fiscal incentives for employers and self-employed people would facilitate job creation and investment opportunities; believes, furthermore, that measures encouraging young families to buy their first home, as well as a higher degree of flexibility on state rules could be considered in order to overcome depopulation challenges;

46. Encourages regions to capitalise on their competitive advantages as established in the Smart Specialisation Strategies; recommends developing so-called ‘oasis strategies’ focusing on the most successful, vibrant and growing sectors by harnessing the local potential for development of the region; calls on local and regional authorities to invest the Youth Employment Initiative with a focus on attracting young and trained workers, retaining those who are currently employed, encouraging entrepreneurship, and on local, national and EU incentives; underlines, furthermore, the importance of promoting measures to foster solidarity between generations, active ageing and the opportunities offered by the so-called ‘silver economy’ as a major policy shift for rural areas, turning the issue of population ageing into an opportunity for the development of rural areas;
47. Stresses the need for a wider territorial perspective in line with the ‘New Leipzig Charter: The Transformative Power of Cities for the Common Good’ and the ‘Territorial Agenda 2030’ to reinforce urban networks of second-tier cities and smaller towns in order to harness their significant potential to buttress territorial, economic and social cohesion beyond their immediate boundaries, through greater urban-rural linkages, functional areas, and regional cooperation;
48. Calls on the Commission to focus on policy coordination at EU level on issues related to functional cooperation areas at different levels, such as cross-border, macro-regional and rural-urban, in order to address demographic challenges;
49. Insists that investments should be focused on information and communication technology and human capital, since this has the potential to reduce distances between users and to attract highly skilled workers in order to avoid the digital divide and ensure digital cohesion; stresses the importance of funding ICT infrastructures, the development and uptake of these technologies among SMEs and schools in rural, insular, mountainous and isolated regions and regions in industrial transition, including through funding from the Recovery and Resilience Facility, and Cohesion policy funds more generally; stresses the importance of striving towards an equal and parallel deployment of these technologies in regions and Member States in order to reduce the gap of attractiveness and digital divide;
50. Acknowledges that ‘magnet cities’ primarily contribute to the building of regional ‘growth poles’; underlines, nevertheless, that second-tier cities play a critical role in regional development, and in this respect calls on the Commission and the Member States to put in practice strategies for the harmonised development of these cities;
51. Considers that municipalities should promote ‘open innovation’ initiatives, making use

of knowledge to accelerate the innovation process and to develop a collaborative approach with relevant partners and stakeholders with a view to creating regional innovation ecosystems;

52. Highlights the potential of the blue economy to reverse the negative demographic trend in small islands and peripheral maritime regions in the EU; stresses that the proper implementation of blue economy activities, if closely monitored to mitigate any negative environmental externalities and to increase the socio-economic benefits to the whole value chain, including small businesses, hinterland territories and local citizens, could help fight against depopulation in southern Europe, and contribute to spreading the revenue from coastal cities to rural villages, to increasing social inclusion and to achieving the objectives embedded in the European Green deal;
53. Recommends, where appropriate, the rethinking of education and training systems in the Member States, inter alia by developing educational pathways to occupations that are compatible with remote working, combined with policies to prevent a permanent brain drain from the sending regions; insists on using local and regional advantages, as well as the development of local economic and social facilities and tailor-made solutions, not only to prevent the brain drain, but also to reverse this phenomenon; is of the opinion that vocational education and training, including labour mobility, can represent an effective way to share skills and professional experiences, to enhance the skillset of workers and make them more resilient against the swift dynamics of the labour market, thus contributing to the prevention of the brain drain; encourages regional and local authorities to facilitate access to dual education in order improve the transition from education to employment; considers, moreover, the promotion of pan-European ‘diaspora strategies’ aimed at encouraging return processes for those who had left for a more attractive region, with a focus on higher education students in agriculture and rural economics who should be incentivised to go back to their region after graduation with a view to contributing to the economic viability of their respective sending regions;
54. Calls on the Commission to ensure that the initiative on the long-term vision for rural areas includes practical solutions and means of support to address peripheries and demographic changes; believes that this long-term vision for rural areas should develop into a true European rural agenda, with tangible and concrete objectives, and the involvement of all relevant regional and local actors, both in its architecture and its implementation; believes, furthermore, that it should include a gender mainstreaming strategy accompanied by impact assessment tools; invites the Commission, in agreement with the Member States and local and regional authorities, to propose a new deal on demographics in the EU as a multi-level policy approach which would lead to a European strategy on demographic trends; believes that demographic issues, including depopulation and ageing, should be among the issues addressed during the Conference on the Future of Europe;

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55. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the European Economic and Social Committee, the Committee of the Regions and the

national and regional parliaments of the Member States.

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

The demography trends of moving from rural to urban areas, from less developed to developed national regions, from East to West and from Southern Europe to the North have a visible mark on EU society, impacting directly the lives of EU citizens and the local communities with significant effect at national, regional and local level.

The demographic decline increases the existing inequalities with a visible impact on the quality of life. It also have a direct impact on the social, economic and territorial cohesion of the EU, making eventually the EU investments unsustainable, widening the gap between more developed and poorer regions.

The ongoing COVID-19 health crisis will have medium and long-term effects on the dynamics of the labour market; the self-isolation and social distance measures have left visible effects on production, demand and trade, reducing the economic activity and leading to higher levels of unemployment and higher public deficits. Nevertheless the rapporteur is of the opinion that the current reality following the pandemic generated by COVID-19 is a turning point for the policies related to demography and it has the potential to create new opportunities to develop the rural and depopulated areas, by the fact that there is an increase in the interest of city dwellers to move to rural areas. People's priorities are changing, wanting more outdoor space and now having the opportunity and flexibility to work from home.

Demographic trends affect EU regions in a many different ways, thus there is no 'one size fits all' description of these trends; there are positive and negative effects of the population movements for both senders and receivers. The destination regions may face issues as concerns the integration of migrants, but also the advantages of receiving young and skilled workforce. While the origin regions are affected by a growing number of separate families, but benefit from the money returning to the regions.

The local and regional authorities have the important role to identify and tackle the demographic tendencies, proposing tailored solutions, in particular to address the problems of disadvantaged areas which suffer from severe and permanent natural or demographic handicaps. The most affected communities are the rural and sparsely populated areas also the postindustrial areas and the regions under energy and technology transition.

The rapporteur propose the INI report structured in three main chapters which aim to present the current challenges at the local, regional and Union level, the practical solution currently used by the concerned authorities and stakeholders and finally the policy recommendations based on these findings. The report envisages different solutions such as increasing and enhancing the attractiveness of investments in those regions in terms of infrastructures and cooperation of public and private actors to deliver quality services more efficiently in sparsely populated areas and areas with extremely low population density.

The instruments proposed by the Union to reverse the negative trends have to be simple, flexible and attractive.

Beside the existing tools, the European Commission proposed new measures covered by React EU to respond efficiently to the consequences of the COVID – 19 pandemic and the initiative for the Long Term Vision for the Rural Areas.

In particular, the rapporteur points out that the free movement of labour represents a cornerstone of European Union competitiveness. It influences nevertheless the demography, which has major implications for the EU regions and their economic, social and territorial cohesion. In this context, demographic contrasts are registered at both Union and Member States level. He observes that GDP per capita, income level; employment and fertility rates as well as population ageing are factors with a direct impact on demography.

This report focus in particular on the local and regional dimension of the decline in population in certain areas. In general rural, post-industrial and remote areas are confronted with a number of specific situations: they are experiencing a considerable decline in population numbers, they register lower than national or EU average levels of income, they experience difficulties of territorial integration with other regions, making them more exposed to the risk of depopulation; points out that the rural regions currently account 28 % of Europe's population but is predicted to fall significantly in the future.

Among other factors of demographic change, forcing inhabitants from the above mentioned areas to leave or discouraging others from moving into them, it is important to mention the lack of infrastructure, including fast broadband internet and missing transport networks, less job opportunities, difficult access to health services, fewer education opportunities which lead to more difficult adaptability to technological change challenges.

Moreover also urban areas are exposed to depopulation, with one out of every five cities in Europe facing population losses since 1990; notes however that the urban shrinkage is not always a continuous-linear process, but it can be also episodic or temporary, depending on the territorial context.

On the other hand the overconcentration of the population in certain urban areas has already led to side-effects, such as congestion, rising housing and transport costs, pollution, deterioration of the quality of life and urban sprawl, as well as a significant risk of poverty and social exclusion for certain segments of population, thus, local authorities being unable to provide services to all residents of urban areas.

The rapporteur is of the opinion that local and regional authorities have a crucial role in developing territorial strategies, taking into consideration the development needs and the potential of the areas concerned, including the economic, social and demographic trends; reminds that community-led local development strategies represent a useful tool which can be used to increase accessibility and job creation. The EU Urban Agenda is the right instrument to identify major priority themes and actions for improving the quality of life in urban areas.

The rapporteur underlines the need for further simplification of cohesion policy instruments in order to allow for an easier, but at the same time stresses the need of management of financial resources and for the maximisation of synergies among the various EU funds.

In this context it is important for the Commission and the Member States to disseminate the good practices on the use and benefits of this type of governance and of planning tools to support polycentric development.

Furthermore the investments in information and communication technology (ICT) have the potential to reduce the distance between the users and attract high skilled workers.

3.12.2020

OPINION OF THE COMMITTEE ON EMPLOYMENT AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS

for the Committee on Regional Development

on reversing demographic trends in EU regions using cohesion policy instruments
(2020/2039(INI))

Rapporteur for opinion: Elżbieta Rafalska

SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on Employment and Social Affairs calls on the Committee on Regional Development, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions into its motion for a resolution;

- A. whereas the median age in the EU-27 has risen from 38.3 years in 2001 to 43.1 years in 2018; whereas the working population has been shrinking since 2010 and projections suggest a continuous decline¹¹; whereas the working population is likely to decrease by 18 % in the next 50 years¹²;
- B. whereas Europeans can enjoy a longer and healthier life and life expectancy at birth has increased by about 10 years for both men and women over the last five decades; whereas in 2070, life expectancy is projected to reach 86.1 years for men and 90.3 years for women¹³; whereas the number of dependent persons and persons with disabilities is expected to increase, while the population is ageing; whereas the old-age dependency ratio is projected to reach 62 % by 2030¹⁴; whereas in 2014, almost half of the elderly population reported difficulties with completing at least one personal care or household activity¹⁵;
- C. whereas old-age poverty is likely to be a growing concern as demographic trends continue; whereas in 2018, in the EU-27, 15.5 % of people aged 65 or above were at risk of poverty¹⁶; whereas women are more likely to be hit by poverty and social exclusion in old age; whereas women's life expectancy at birth is 5.5 years higher than men's¹⁷; whereas women carry a disproportionate burden of formal and informal care

¹¹European Parliamentary Research Service, Demographic Outlook of the European Union, March 2020, p. 3.

¹²European Commission, Report on the impact of demographic change, June 2020, p. 15.

¹³European Commission, Report on the impact of demographic change, June 2020, p. 4.

¹⁴European Parliamentary Research Service, Demographic outlook of the European Union. March 2020, p. 5-6.

¹⁵Eurostat, Functional and activity limitations statistics, November 2019.

¹⁶European Commission, Report on the impact of demographic change, June 2020, p. 22.

¹⁷European Commission, Report on the impact of demographic change, June 2020, p. 7.

for children, older people and persons with disabilities; whereas one third of women aged between 20 and 64 do not participate in paid work because of family or care responsibilities, in comparison to only 5 % of economically inactive men¹⁸; whereas in 2019, the percentage of women living in a single household was as high as 40 % and was more than double than that of men living alone¹⁹;

- D. whereas demographic change has a severe impact on social, economic and territorial cohesion in the EU, particularly in rural areas and in regions that have already been lagging behind; whereas the demographic decline in some regions aggravates existing inequalities and undermines people's quality of life; whereas inequalities in the EU may force workers to pursue job opportunities in a different region or Member State; whereas cohesion policy instruments need to address the multiple factors influencing migration to cities, other regions or Member States; whereas young people and women are notably among those leaving rural areas and disadvantaged regions;
- E. whereas both the free movement of workers and internal and external migration will continue to have an impact on the size of the population at Union, national and regional level; whereas migration and brain drain are often triggered by social and economic disparities between countries, both within the Union and between the EU and third countries;
- F. whereas population ageing is causing a shrinking working-age population and may result in the decline of municipalities and villages throughout the EU; whereas decisions to merge municipalities and villages or to incorporate them into other municipalities or cities may also result in municipalities and villages disappearing altogether; whereas ambitious investments and quality jobs and improving the accessibility and quality of services and infrastructure are of particular importance in regions at risk of depopulation in order to boost their economic recovery and long-term competitiveness in the single market and to thus reverse negative demographic trends;
- G. whereas the COVID-19 pandemic is likely to affect demographic trends in the EU and has once again exposed the lack of policy responses to the impact of demographic change in the EU, such as the lack of adequate and affordable housing, quality care facilities and sufficient care and support services as illustrated by medical desertification phenomena; whereas negative demographic trends mean that more solidarity is needed between generations, which is crucial for a successful recovery from the COVID-19 crisis and future crises, and for the creation of fairer, more inclusive and more resilient societies; whereas the COVID-19 pandemic has underlined once more the importance of safeguarding and promoting the dignity of the elderly and their fundamental rights in the EU;
- H. whereas the intensity and speed of demographic change impose considerable economic, social and environmental pressures on the Member States' governments and on local and regional authorities in terms of the provision and maintenance of public services, including education, healthcare, social welfare, housing, social services, pensions, utilities and age-friendly infrastructure; whereas, without adequate policy response, these pressures will be exacerbated by a declining active population and a higher

¹⁸EIGE, Gender Equality Index 2019. Work-life balance, 2020, p. 79.

¹⁹European Commission, Report on the impact of demographic change, June 2020, p. 11.

dependency ratio and by a growing prevalence of chronic diseases;

- I. whereas tackling demographic challenges calls for coordinated action and a comprehensive set of policies, including targeted measures in the areas of employment, social protection, health and occupational safety, education and skills, which take time to be formulated and to produce an effect; whereas some negative impacts of demographic change in the most affected regions necessitate an immediate response with the support of Union instruments;
- J. whereas proper infrastructure, affordable high-quality services, especially healthcare, elderly care, childcare and long-term care and day-care facilities, will play a key role; whereas the role of teleworking, digital education, telecare and telemedicine needs to be properly assessed first, and then possibly further developed and properly implemented in order to expand their deployment and to ensure the quality of life and safety for citizens; whereas it is essential to acknowledge the importance of the Employment and Social Innovation programme (EaSI) in funding projects related to long-term care; whereas it is vital to ensure the general accessibility of products and services for families, disabled and elderly people in accordance with the concept of universal design;
- K. whereas it is important for the EU to mainstream demographic issues into all its policies, including by incorporating them in its long-term priorities and in its budget lines, particularly in its industrial and sustainable development policies, and in the European Semester, and to collect and monitor reliable large-scale statistical data and to support research and the exchange of good practices at all levels in order to foster a better understanding of demographic challenges, anticipate their impact on local labour markets, and to develop innovative, effective and green policy solutions on ensuring age-friendly environments; whereas demographic challenges cannot be addressed without a Union industrial strategy in place that ensures public investment, quality jobs, public research and innovation, public education boosting equal development and sustainability; whereas in its resolutions of 15 November 2011 on demographic change and its consequences for the future cohesion policy of the EU²⁰ and of 14 November 2017 on the deployment of cohesion policy instruments by regions to address demographic change²¹, Parliament called for the use of all available EU instruments, including cohesion policy funding, to tackle the challenges posed by demographic change;
- L. whereas cohesion policy instruments constitute the main source of public investment in the EU, accounting for 8.5 % of government capital investment in the EU, 41 % at the level of the EU-13 and surpassing 50 % in a number of other Member States²²;
- M. whereas young people already had to carry a disproportionate share of burden during the 2008 economic and financial crisis; whereas the fight against unemployment, especially youth and long-term unemployment, inequality and exclusion among young and older people remains one of the key challenges facing EU regions; whereas the availability of jobs and opportunities, including during recovery and reconstruction

²⁰Texts adopted, P7_TA(2011)0485.

²¹Texts adopted, P8_TA(2017)0427.

²²European Commission, European Structural and Investment Funds Data, October 2018.

phases, and high-quality services improves quality of life and reinforces rural areas, thus allowing them to counter their depopulation and inequalities between regions; whereas the European Structural and Investment Funds should be used more proactively in order to support young people, older people, persons with disabilities and other vulnerable groups as they enter or remain in the labour market and to have a quality job, with special attention given to the most highly depopulated rural and remote areas;

- N. whereas the importance of work-life balance is not properly recognised; whereas parents, children and families must be guaranteed support, including accessible childcare infrastructure, flexible work arrangements, help for single-parent families and parents with children with disabilities, and adequate financial support during maternity, paternity and parental leave; whereas such support can help to reverse negative demographic trends;
- O. whereas all policies addressing demographic opportunities and challenges must be evidence-based, person-centred and rights-based and, in particular, must not in any way undermine individual reproductive rights; whereas investment in the areas of sexual and reproductive health, gender equality, healthcare and care services and their related infrastructures, are important elements to tackling demographic challenges;
- P. whereas discrimination on grounds of gender, religious belief, age, disability or sexual orientation is prohibited and presents a breach of fundamental Union values;
- Q. whereas a coordinated approach to demographic change, under the framework of the Treaties, would be of utmost importance in order to reverse the current negative demographic trends, and would promote territorial, economic and social cohesion and reduce unemployment in the EU; whereas, pursuant to Article 174 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), regions which suffer severe and permanent demographic handicaps should be given particular attention in this regard; whereas rural areas and the agri-food sector constitute an important element for society as a whole and for supporting a strong and resilient Europe; whereas agricultural workers in sparsely populated rural areas and in areas at risk of depopulation may face a higher risk of poverty and social exclusion²³;
- R. whereas demographic change should be perceived as a structural change that must be socially sustainable and must recognise, value and make use of people's potential at every age and will therefore require the involvement of policymakers at all relevant levels and of civil society; whereas, in this context, ageing represents an opportunity to build a silver economy; whereas demographic change can present opportunities and can highlight the need to foster new development perspectives, especially for rural areas, through, inter alia, the demand for quality food, the development of sustainable tourism and the enhancement of the silver economy, social innovation and infrastructure;
1. Calls on the Member States to use the Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF) and the cohesion-fund resources to enhance the attractiveness of areas experiencing severe and

²³In 2015, just over one quarter (25.5 %) of the rural population was at risk of poverty or social exclusion, while relatively lower shares were recorded for people living in cities (24.0 %). According to Eurostat figures from 2016, this trend has deepened further, and now a higher proportion of the EU-28 population living in rural areas (compared with urban areas) face the risk of poverty or social exclusion." (European Parliamentary Research Service, Demographic outlook of the European Union, March 2020, p. 16).

permanent demographic disadvantages, and in particular the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund (ESF) and the future ESF+, to tackle demographic change in a rights-based and socially just manner with a focus on vulnerable and disadvantaged groups, and to improve the quality and accessibility of public spaces for all; calls, furthermore, on the Member States to improve access to social services for all, in particular for persons with disabilities, children and the elderly, and to promote accessible, affordable and resilient healthcare systems in the EU; highlights that the successful absorption capacity of the cohesion funds at regional level is also greatly contingent on territorial, social, political and economic preconditions; calls on the Commission and the Member States to ensure that products and services financed by the cohesion funds are accessible to vulnerable groups, in accordance with the concept of universal design; recalls the responsibility of the Member States for their own public services;

2. Highlights the importance of fostering social inclusion through cooperation between social partners, civil society, regional and local authorities and with the local population in the design and implementation of policies and specific measures as well as at all stages of programming in order to improve planning and absorption of the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESI Funds); emphasises the importance of ensuring the full participation of citizens in the democratic processes;
3. Calls on the Member States to use the RRF and ERDF resources for supporting independent living and mobility, tackling transport isolation and improving digital and telecommunications infrastructure, particularly mobile and broadband internet connectivity in depopulating, rural, peripheral, remote and outermost areas that are less developed, have high ageing rates, high youth unemployment rates and face brain drain in order to enable access to public services and to increase the number of job opportunities; stresses that, in order to enable young and elderly people to work, study and take an active part in modern society, they must be given the opportunity to acquire the necessary digital skills; encourages, therefore, support for development initiatives, social services and the development of education and training establishments in small communities in these areas;
4. Calls on the Member States for the greater mobilisation of ESF and Just Transition Fund (JTF) resources and to combine them with national and local investment in order to tackle social exclusion, energy poverty, and material deprivation, to effectively counter the digital gap and digital exclusion, especially in rural areas and among the young, the elderly and persons with disabilities, and to secure access to digital tools and programmes and to affordable communication infrastructures; calls, therefore, for accessible and affordable opportunities to acquire digital skills in a way that is adapted to the needs of the elderly; points out that these initiatives have greater chances of success when they are linked to opportunities for intergenerational exchange; believes in this sense that the potential of digitalisation, robotisation and artificial intelligence could be further explored and promoted, along with ensuring high ethical standards while securing inclusion, in order to improve the autonomy and the living and health conditions of older people;
5. Highlights the need to support a just transition, and believes that a well-designed Just Transition Mechanism, including an ambitious JTF, would be an important tool to facilitate the transition and reach ambitious climate targets while addressing social and

territorial impacts;

6. Welcomes the Commission proposal for the establishment of the REACT-EU instrument that is designed to increase the amount of funding for the ERDF, ESF and the Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived; is nevertheless deeply concerned that this temporary funding is insufficient to tackle the social dimension of the COVID-19 crisis, including the most pressing demographic challenges; expresses regret over the fact that there has been no increase in the allocations for the ESF+ in the 2021-2027 multiannual financial framework agreement; underlines that in order to address demographic challenges, regions should use ESF more proactively in terms of tackling youth unemployment and of giving young people the opportunity to start their career path; encourages the Member States to support training programmes for young people and the development of entrepreneurial mind-set;
7. Stresses that regions and municipalities should make more active use of the ESI Funds to address demographic change, particularly by supporting education, life-long learning, up-skilling and re-skilling, as well as the development of entrepreneurial skills at all levels of education, in order to help people find a quality job and in order to match labour market needs, by supporting SMEs, creating quality jobs, including in sparsely populated areas and areas at risk of depopulation, and strengthening human capital, research and the capacity for innovation, as well as by fostering inter-regional projects, information exchange and the silver economy; welcomes in this regard the Updated Skills Agenda for Europe, which may help address skilled workforce shortages in regions that are lagging behind;
8. Stresses that population ageing puts more pressure to health services and long-term care services that were designed in a different demographic context and that currently have to respond to the health and care needs of an older society; calls on the Member States to increase investment in rights-based, people-centred and evidence-based policies, health prevention and promotion campaigns, infrastructures, early diagnosis and social protection for long-term care, in order to address the growing demand and to ensure that everyone has the right to access good-quality, affordable, preventive, and curative healthcare in a timely way, as enshrined in the European Pillar of Social Rights; underlines that a high level of human health protection should be ensured in the definition and implementation of all Union policies and activities; calls on the Member States to tackle shortages in terms of healthcare professionals by investing in skills and by valuing and supporting healthcare professions and making them more attractive and accessible, with a specific focus on rural and remote areas;
9. Underlines that the implementation of the revised European Social Charter and of the principles on the right to equal opportunities, health, long-term care and access to essential services, pensions, housing and assistance for the homeless included in the European Pillar of Social Rights are essential to fighting the consequences of demographic change; calls, furthermore, for the use of Union funds to ensure access to health for all by promoting the establishment of medical practitioners and the maintenance of hospitals in rural areas;
10. Believes that cohesion funds should be used to foster active ageing in particular through social innovation initiatives intending to, inter alia, facilitate the employment of older people, update their skills, ensure their autonomy and encourage intergenerational

exchanges; calls on the Commission to step up its commitments, such as the Ambient Assisted Living programme, an important initiative that fosters the silver economy in the EU, so as to enable older and dependant people to live longer at home in their familiar environment, including through the use of home automation, human-centred information and communication technologies, artificial intelligence and the continuous exchange of best practices across the EU;

11. Calls for a European care strategy framework that guarantees quality care and long-term care services and allows for a broader use of quality and safe telecare and telemedicine, based on common ethical standards, by providing care professionals with legal safeguards and laying down the necessary requirements for training, with the purpose of securing care and primary care to all, regardless of their age, in any geographical area; calls on the Member States to acknowledge the value of informal care and to improve social protection and support for informal carers; calls on the Commission to draft and adopt a European Charter for the rights of the elderly on the basis of Article 25 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union;
12. Calls for a framework directive on long-term care that would lay down fundamental principles and provide evidence-based criteria for accessible quality long-term care and support services across the EU and that would also facilitate the implementation of alternative approaches, promoting the transition to person-centred and community-based services;
13. Stresses that fair and healthy work-life balance has to be guaranteed to all; calls for the tackling of in-work poverty to become one of the EU's top priorities;
14. Underlines the need to tackle the age-dependency ratio by reducing long-term unemployment and in-work poverty and unemployment among young people and the elderly; recalls that universal access to affordable childcare and other care and support services is a precondition for many people, in particular women and single parents, to become or remain economically active and to ensure a healthy work-life balance;
15. Expresses its concern about the migration flows of young people in the EU from rural to urban areas and to third countries; stresses that in order to address these migration patterns and to prevent the reduction of the working age population, it is essential to provide opportunities for young people in their home countries; notes that if this situation is not properly addressed, any potential increase in birth rates will just lead to increased migration;
16. Urges the Member States to exchange best practices in order to support young people to lead independent lives and to provide them with benefits such as housing allowances and preferential loans; encourages the Member States to recognise the significance of rural and remote areas in their diversity, and to develop their potential through improving their connectivity and stimulating investments in the local economy, fostering entrepreneurship and further empowering women living in those areas – both in economic and social terms, and through securing work-life balance and promoting family-friendly policies; recognises the prominent role that cohesion policy and the common agricultural policy could play in encouraging and boosting the employability and inclusion of women in these areas; calls on the Member States to develop rural and remote areas in particular by investing in appropriate access routes, high-speed

broadband internet and vital and adequate resources and materials for schools, including up-to-date technological equipment in schools, hospitals and all other relevant services, including by developing effective e-governance, and in the promotion of social, cultural and sports activities that encourage a healthier lifestyle and better quality of life in a more affordable way;

17. Stresses the need to tackle the negative impacts of demographic change in a rights-based and socially just manner, in line with the principles outlined in the European Pillar of Social Rights, especially those on the right to equal opportunities, health, inclusion of persons with disabilities, long-term care and access to essential services, old-age income and pensions, housing and assistance for the homeless, which are essential to support the quality of life for people of all ages at local level; calls, furthermore, on the Commission to develop a European strategy on demographic change that provides for a comprehensive and integrated approach to address demographic challenges and handicaps, as set out in Article 174 TFEU, thereby securing the economy, the social inclusion of vulnerable groups and job creation in EU regions; highlights, in this regard, the importance of adequate, reliable and comparable data to better cover the living and working situation of elderly people, including those people living in care facilities and people aged 65+; believes that enhanced cooperation could be an adequate mechanism to establish and implement this strategy and therefore calls on the Commission to cooperate with the Member States to that end;
18. Reiterates its call on the Member States to adopt without further delay the draft Council directive on implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation (COM(2008)0426 final);
19. Calls on the Commission to strengthen its support to national and local authorities' migration and inclusion policies, especially through policy coordination, knowledge exchange and financial support; calls on the Commission and the Member States to improve migrants' access to education and the labour market, especially for female migrants;
20. Highlights that employment and other relevant policies should involve workers' representatives and trade unions to ensure that workers' interests are at their core; stresses the need to promote collective bargaining and increase collective bargaining coverage to ensure decent working conditions for all; highlights the importance of occupational health and safety, age-friendly working environments and the continuous reskilling and upskilling of workers to ensure that people can work until they reach the statutory retirement age; reiterates the need to close the gender employment gap, pay gap and pension gap; encourages the Member States to make use of the cohesion funds to improve the level of employment and inclusion of women, especially in rural areas and in less developed areas, with focus given to the needs of women returning to the labour market at an older age;
21. Underlines the need for support and counselling services that provide people with a life-cycle perspective and counter structural ageism, especially in employment; calls for the provision of support to the national public employment services and to the European network of public employment services, especially in their efforts to support long-term inactive and older jobseekers; highlights the need to ensure the economic and social integration of workers with disabilities and to combat all forms of discrimination in

order to achieve a more inclusive labour market; stresses the paramount importance of companies across the EU supporting a more extensive use of teleworking schemes, which may serve as a tool to retain businesses, strengthen local communities and tackle rural depopulation, thereby positively changing demographic trends and curbing the brain drain; calls on the Commission to propose a legislative framework with a view to regulating telework conditions across the EU and to ensure decent working and employment conditions in the digital economy.

INFORMATION ON ADOPTION IN COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

Date adopted	1.12.2020
Result of final vote	+: 44 -: 2 0: 9
Members present for the final vote	Atidzhe Alieva-Veli, Abir Al-Sahlani, Marc Angel, Dominique Bilde, Gabriele Bischoff, Vilija Blinkevičiūtė, Andrea Bocskor, Milan Brglez, Sylvie Brunet, David Casa, Leila Chaibi, Margarita de la Pisa Carrión, Klára Dobrev, Jarosław Duda, Estrella Durá Ferrandis, Lucia Ďuriš Nicholsonová, Rosa Estaràs Ferragut, Nicolaus Fest, Loucas Furlas, Cindy Franssen, Helmut Geuking, Elisabetta Gualmini, Alicia Homs Ginel, France Jamet, Agnes Jongerius, Radan Kanev, Adam Kósa, Stelios Kympouropoulos, Katrin Langensiepen, Miriam Lexmann, Elena Lizzi, Radka Maxová, Kira Marie Peter-Hansen, Dragoş Pîslaru, Manuel Pizarro, Dennis Radtke, Elżbieta Rafalska, Guido Reil, Daniela Rondinelli, Mounir Satouri, Monica Semedo, Beata Szydło, Eugen Tomac, Romana Tomc, Yana Toom, Marie-Pierre Vedrenne, Marianne Vind, Maria Walsh, Stefania Zambelli, Tatjana Ždanoka, Tomáš Zdechovský
Substitutes present for the final vote	Alex Agius Saliba, Marc Botenga, José Gusmão, Eugenia Rodríguez Palop

FINAL VOTE BY ROLL CALL IN COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

44	+
ECR	Helmut Geuking, Lucia Ďuriš Nicholsonová
GUE/NGL	Marc Botenga, Leila Chaibi, José Gusmão, Eugenia Rodríguez Palop
NI	Daniela Rondinelli
PPE	Andrea Bocskor, David Casa, Jarosław Duda, Rosa Estaràs Ferragut, Loucas Fourlas, Cindy Franssen, Radan Kanev, Stelios Kypouropoulos, Adam Kósa, Miriam Lexmann, Dennis Radtke, Eugen Tomac, Romana Tomc, Maria Walsh, Tomáš Zdechovský
Renew	Abir Al-Sahlani, Atidzhe Alieva-Veli, Radka Maxová, Dragoş Pîslaru, Monica Semedo, Yana Toom
S&D	Alex Agius Saliba, Marc Angel, Gabriele Bischoff, Vilija Blinkevičiūtė, Milan Brglez, Klára Dobrev, Estrella Durá Ferrandis, Elisabetta Gualmini, Alicia Homs Ginel, Agnes Jongerius, Manuel Pizarro, Marianne Vind
Verts/ALE	Katrin Langensiepen, Kira Marie Peter-Hansen, Mounir Satouri, Tatjana Ždanoka

2	-
ID	Nicolaus Fest, Guido Reil

9	0
ECR	Elżbieta Rafalska, Beata Szydło, Margarita de la Pisa Carrión
ID	Dominique Bilde, France Jamet, Elena Lizzi, Stefania Zambelli
Renew	Sylvie Brunet, Marie-Pierre Vedrenne

Key to symbols:

+ : in favour

- : against

0 : abstention

7.12.2020

OPINION OF THE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

for the Committee on Regional Development

on reversing demographic trends in EU regions using cohesion policy instruments (2020/2039(INI))

Rapporteur for opinion: Mazaly Aguilar

SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development calls on the Committee on Regional Development, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions into its motion for a resolution:

- having regard to the report adopted by the Commission on 17 June 2020 on the impact of demographic change in Europe,
- having regard its resolution of 14 November 2017 on the deployment of cohesion policy instruments by regions to address demographic change¹,
- A. whereas Europe's regions currently face far-reaching demographic changes, such as a low birth rate, a high mortality rate, an ageing population and an ongoing rural exodus;
- B. whereas rural and disadvantaged regions are often unable to acquire the same economic indicators for a given time period as other regions, which in some cases appears to pose problems when it comes to applying for support;
- C. whereas agricultural workers in rural areas, particularly those living in remote areas, suffer demographic disadvantages and are at a much higher risk of poverty and social exclusion;
- D. whereas rural areas suffering depopulation may experience land abandonment and increased risk of forest fires, and may face difficulties in their economic recovery²;
- E. whereas, in addition to already-established issues and trends, in the light of the pandemic, policies and instruments addressing demographic problems that focus

¹ Text adopted, P8_TA(2017)0427.

² Forest fires — Sparking fire smart policies in the EU, European Commission (2018).

primarily on low birth rates and the rural exodus must be reviewed, especially in the more sparsely populated and vulnerable areas of the Union; whereas policies that encourage higher birth rates must be encouraged in Europe;

- F. whereas issues relating to demographic changes and depopulation are putting a heavy burden on rural, peripheral and sparsely populated areas and islands, and is having a negative impact on ageing, generational renewal and agriculture development;
 - G. whereas cohesion policy makes a key contribution to delivering digital single market objectives on the ground, in particular through significant financial allocations from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF);
 - H. whereas rural areas make up 44 % of the Union's surface area;
 - I. whereas one of the main issues affecting rural economies is the declining share of agriculture; whereas data has shown that only 10.7 % of EU farmers are aged 40 years or under and that the farming population is ageing, which will have an impact on the agricultural sector;
 - J. whereas the needs of rural areas in the face of demographic change must be met in a more coordinated and effective manner;
1. Notes the gravity of the demographic problem and its link to the socio-economic reality; considers it necessary to create new opportunities and forward-looking investments in rural areas, for example through the development of short supply chains and regional food markets;
 2. Emphasises that inequalities in access to land, common agricultural policy (CAP) direct payments and support, both between and within the Member States, are among the issues that need to be addressed in order to halt regional decline, allow older people to retire from agriculture and encourage young people to start farming;
 3. Expects the deployment of new cohesion social programs such as basic-income pilot projects in rural areas;
 4. Draws attention to the importance of ensuring the availability of services in the regions, as their decline is encouraging older people to retire earlier and to move to cities where these services are easily accessible;
 5. Stresses that the ongoing depopulation of rural areas, which leads to difficulties in accessing public services and in providing adequate health coverage, is not only having serious economic and social consequences, since it represents enormous challenges in achieving the ambitious objectives outlined in the European Green Deal and other EU policies such as CAP and cohesion policy; insists that investments covered by the European Green Deal should take demographic factors into account;
 6. Urges the Commission, in developing the political guidelines for the Farm to Fork and Biodiversity strategies, to take practical steps to maintain the rural population in coordination with the Member States, and the regional and local authorities contributing to securing existing jobs and to creating new jobs, and to make it more attractive for skilled workers, especially in structurally weaker regions, in particular through the

reevaluation of agricultural activities in our regions;

7. Calls on the Commission to harness both strategies to improve the way in which the agriculture sector and rural areas are perceived, while bearing in mind that a lack of knowledge about agriculture is responsible for a number of misconceptions regarding the work done by farmers and the contribution they make to the environment;
8. Urges the Commission to develop local economies that would create job opportunities;
9. Calls for the administrative burden on businesses and administrations to be reduced, with fewer requirements and greater legal certainty, which would therefore improve the framework conditions for successful funding on the ground and reduce barriers to investment;
10. Recognises the great potential of the circular economy and bioeconomy in achieving a more efficient agri-food sector; calls for regulatory provisions that take into account the specific needs of agriculture to generate new opportunities in rural areas by supporting young people, cutting down on bureaucracy and promoting digitisation and entrepreneurship;
11. Underlines the fundamental role of the CAP in maintaining and creating employment in the rural and agricultural sector, but recognises its limitations; urges, therefore, that cohesion policy resources and the new Union recovery fund be harnessed more effectively to meet the needs of rural areas, by consolidating efforts in this area and seeking new forms of cooperation;
12. Calls the Commission to ensure that priority is given to creating opportunities for the labour market, supporting energy transition and developing transport and broadband infrastructure in order to address structural challenges that are the main causes for migration from rural areas;
13. Calls on the Commission to ensure that the future publication setting out its long-term vision for rural areas includes a detailed analysis of the role of agriculture, livestock farming and forestry as mainstays of the rural economy;
14. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to ensure that the positive impact and successful results of cohesion policy in the EU be better communicated and publicised;
15. Underlines the potential of sustainable agriculture in terms of creating decent and long-term jobs in rural areas;
16. Stresses the need to foster and develop projects to promote the return of young people to rural areas by supporting youth employment, digital connectivity and entrepreneurship using best practices from the Member States;
17. Recognises that the policies most effectively addressing demographic challenges are those seeking long-term objectives and resulting from consultation with local stakeholders and civil society organisations;
18. Points out that, notwithstanding the Commission's repeated statements, we still lack a long-term strategy to enable rural areas to face demographic challenges, the threat of

poverty and limited access to services;

19. Urges the Commission to factor in demographic considerations as an integral part of all cohesion policy instruments; stresses the importance of coordinating any Union initiatives with strategies adopted by the Member States in response to demographic challenge;
20. Considers that the new CAP strategies should be flexible and include instruments specifically designed to support digitisation, rural mobility and the development of smart towns;
21. Points out that cohesion policy must focus more decisively on innovation in rural areas; stresses that CAP resources must be deployed as part of a concerted effort to help family farms benefit from innovation and new technologies;
22. Stresses that measures to ensure the economic profitability of agriculture are essential to the success of demographic policies designed to inject fresh life into rural communities and to make them attractive for younger generations;
23. Calls for more ambitious measures at political level to promote generational replacement in this sector through substantial changes regarding conditions of access to land and credit; seeks comprehensive Union support for young farmers through the adoption of policies over and above a CAP that has to address more objectives with less funding;
24. Considers that, in order to encourage the more effective integration of young farmers and newcomers to agricultural activity, it is imperative to facilitate the transfer of holdings by cutting down on bureaucracy and to ensure decent terms for farmers taking retirement;
25. Recognises the key role of women in agriculture; calls for measures to be taken in rural areas to make it easier for women of all generations to remain in their immediate environment, and to and thus contribute to the revival and further development of these areas;
26. Supports initiatives to improve the quality of rural employment through diversification and innovation; observes that this objective should be given priority under the numerous strategies under the European Green Deal and action plans and pursued in a coordinated manner with the Member States;
27. Supports innovation and digitisation with a view to promoting a vibrant, dynamic and economically viable rural environment; calls on the Commission to draw on the smart cities and towns initiatives to develop a new instrument to support undertakings and start-ups in continental and outermost rural areas, thereby also boosting their economic and productive fabric, in order to pave the way for a digital economy in rural areas;
28. Calls on the Commission to support the financing of renewable resources as part of the European Green Deal and the EU's bioeconomy action plan, which can generate jobs and can help with the economic renewal of many rural areas; calls on the Member States to consider introducing computer-skills training modules for regions where these skills are not at a satisfactory level; emphasises that the local action groups have made a

significant contribution to strengthening interactions between rural economic sectors and have made a significant contribution to the implementation of rural development policies;

29. Recalls that the outermost regions must also benefit from a major public health plan in order to ensure that every citizen in these regions, particularly in rural areas, has access to drinking water;
30. Highlights the central role played by Community-led Local Development initiatives in keeping and restoring living and thriving local rural economies, and the need to keep a sufficient level of funding for the Liaison Entre Actions de Développement de l'Économie Rurale (LEADER) approach; calls on the Member states to make full use of LEADER's capacities;
31. Calls on the relevant authorities at national, regional and local level to consider introducing educational modules as part of compulsory education aimed at forging and/or strengthening the link between students in urban areas on the one hand and activities and ways of life in non-urbanised areas on the other, so as to increase knowledge of, and the link between, future generations and rural areas;
32. Stresses that investment in this area should become a priority for EAFRD;
33. Stresses that promoting mobility and networking opportunities, as well as supporting innovative measures by small and medium-sized enterprises and skilled crafts and trades, are seen as key success factors for rural areas;
34. Notes that an effective mobility system is one of the prerequisites for regional economic development, territorial cohesion and the development of regional potential; stresses that it is therefore necessary to provide the necessary funding for the development and maintenance of transport links, which could encourage older generations to stay in rural areas for longer and attract young people from urban centres to work in the countryside;
35. Deplores the fact that, once again, the agreement on the multiannual financial framework (MFF) is not ambitious enough to meet the challenges of demographic involution; criticises the cuts made to the EU's two main instruments designed to promote sustainable development in rural areas on the continent and in the outermost regions (i.e. cohesion policy and the CAP); deplores the fact that the agreement on the MFF is not ambitious enough to meet the challenges of demographic change;
36. Expresses its regret over the fact that the outermost regions are the first to be affected by cuts in funding for programmes such as the programme of options specifically relating to remoteness and insularity;
37. Expresses its regret over the fact that the outermost regions suffer from their insularity, geographical remoteness and lack of perspective for their young people, whereas Article 349 TFEU should enable them to address this issue;
38. Calls for a major plan to facilitate transfers for all undertakings in order to allow young people to gain access to employment, allow for economic activity to be resumed, and allow for the provision of an adequate pension for departing workers; notes that such measures would render the rural economy more attractive, starting with agriculture, and

would benefit the outermost regions and rural areas in Europe.

INFORMATION ON ADOPTION IN COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

Date adopted	1.12.2020
Result of final vote	+ : 38 - : 7 0 : 0
Members present for the final vote	Mazaly Aguilar, Clara Aguilera, Atidzhe Alieva-Veli, Álvaro Amaro, Attila Ara-Kovács, Carmen Avram, Adrian-Dragoş Benea, Benoît Biteau, Mara Bizzotto, Daniel Buda, Isabel Carvalhais, Asger Christensen, Angelo Ciocca, Ivan David, Paolo De Castro, Jérémy Decerle, Salvatore De Meo, Herbert Dorfmann, Luke Ming Flanagan, Cristian Ghinea, Dino Giarrusso, Francisco Guerreiro, Martin Häusling, Martin Hlaváček, Krzysztof Jurgiel, Jarosław Kalinowski, Elsi Katainen, Gilles Lebreton, Norbert Lins, Chris MacManus, Marlene Mortler, Ulrike Müller, Juozas Olekas, Pina Picierno, Maxette Pirbakas, Bronis Ropè, Anne Sander, Petri Sarvamaa, Simone Schmiedtbauer, Annie Schreijer-Pierik, Veronika Vrecionová, Sarah Wiener, Juan Ignacio Zoido Álvarez
Substitutes present for the final vote	Petros Kokkalis, Ruža Tomašić

FINAL VOTE BY ROLL CALL IN COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

38	+
EPP	Álvaro Amaro, Daniel Buda, Salvatore De Meo, Herbert Dorfmann, Jarosław Kalinowski, Norbert Lins, Marlene Mortler, Anne Sander, Petri Sarvamaa, Simone Schmiedtbauer, Annie Schreijer-Pierik, Juan Ignacio Zoido Álvarez
S&D	Clara Aguilera, Attila Ara-Kovács, Carmen Avram, Adrian-Dragoş Benea, Isabel Carvalhais, Paolo De Castro, Juozas Olekas, Pina Picierno
RENEW	Atidzhe Alieva-Veli, Asger Christensen, Jérémy Decerle, Cristian Ghinea, Martin Hlaváček, Elsi Katainen, Ulrike Müller
ID	Mara Bizzotto, Angelo Ciocca, Ivan David, Gilles Lebreton, Maxette Pirbakas
ECR	Mazaly Aguilar, Krzysztof Jurgiel, Ruža Tomašić, Veronika Vrecionová
EUL/NGL	Chris MacManus
NI	Dino Giarrusso

7	-
Greens/EFA	Benoît Biteau, Francisco Guerreiro, Martin Häusling, Bronis Ropė, Sarah Wiener
EUL/NGL	Luke Ming Flanagan, Petros Kokkalis

0	0

Key to symbols:

+ : in favour

- : against

0 : abstention

INFORMATION ON ADOPTION IN COMMITTEE RESPONSIBLE

Date adopted	16.3.2021
Result of final vote	+: 39 -: 0 0: 0
Members present for the final vote	François Alfonsi, Mathilde Androuët, Pascal Arimont, Adrian-Dragoş Benea, Tom Berendsen, Erik Bergkvist, Stéphane Bijoux, Franc Bogovič, Vlad-Marius Botoş, Rosanna Conte, Andrea Cozzolino, Corina Creţu, Rosa D'Amato, Christian Doleschal, Francesca Donato, Raffaele Fitto, Chiara Gemma, Mircea-Gheorghe Hava, Krzysztof Hetman, Manolis Kefalogiannis, Ondřej Knotek, Constanze Krehl, Cristina Maestre Martín De Almagro, Nora Mebarek, Martina Michels, Andželika Anna Możdżanowska, Niklas Nienaaß, Andrey Novakov, Younous Omarjee, Alessandro Panza, Tsvetelina Penkova, Caroline Roose, André Rougé, Susana Solís Pérez, Irène Tolleret, Yana Toom, Monika Vana
Substitutes present for the final vote	Daniel Buda, Isabel Carvalhais

FINAL VOTE BY ROLL CALL IN COMMITTEE RESPONSIBLE

39	+
ECR	Raffaele Fitto, Andželika Anna Mozdżanowska
ID	Mathilde Androuët, Rosanna Conte, Francesca Donato, Alessandro Panza, André Rougé
NI	Chiara Gemma
PPE	Pascal Arimont, Tom Berendsen, Franc Bogovič, Daniel Buda, Christian Doleschal, Mircea-Gheorghe Hava, Krzysztof Hetman, Manolis Kefalogiannis, Andrey Novakov
Renew	Stéphane Bijoux, Vlad-Marius Botoș, Ondřej Knotek, Susana Solís Pérez, Irène Tolleret, Yana Toom
S&D	Adrian-Dragoș Benea, Erik Bergkvist, Isabel Carvalhais, Andrea Cozzolino, Corina Crețu, Constanze Krehl, Cristina Maestre Martín De Almagro, Nora Mebarek, Tsvetelina Penkova
The Left	Martina Michels, Younous Omarjee
Verts/ALE	François Alfonsi, Rosa D'Amato, Niklas Nienaa, Caroline Roose, Monika Vana

0	-

0	0

Key to symbols:

+ : in favour

- : against

0 : abstention