

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

2004



2009

Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development

2008/2100(INI)

11.9.2008

OPINION

of the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development

for the Committee on Regional Development

on complementarities and coordination of cohesion policy with rural
development measures
(2008/2100(INI))

Rapporteur: Bernadette Bourzai

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SUGGESTIONS

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

1. Believes that the earmarking of Structural Funds for Lisbon Strategy targets for the programming period 2007-2013 must take account of the special characteristics of the regions, since it may be detrimental to the goals of territorial cohesion and the mitigation of regional disparities;
2. Stresses that rural development policy must accompany and complement common agricultural (PAC) policy initiatives, taking account of the latter's more general objectives, such as increasing agricultural production and earnings, market stabilisation and security of supply and food sufficiency;
3. Stresses that rural areas may find it difficult to adapt to this new regional orientation policy because of their specific characteristics: an ageing population, problems of access arising from inadequate communications and transport networks, an ongoing rural exodus, lower levels of qualification of rural populations, lack of infrastructure and public services, multiple jobs of those working in rural areas, the lack of technology for setting up projects and of centres of excellence grouping companies and educational and research institutions;
4. Recalls in this respect that all regions throughout the Union as a whole, including rural and remote areas, should in principle benefit from the same development opportunities to avoid any further territorial exclusion of the most disadvantaged areas;
5. Stresses that in a large number of rural areas development possibilities, especially for young people and women, are reduced by difficulties in accessing public services, lack of jobs and the age pyramid;
6. Points out that, in certain areas, there are no alternatives to certain forms of agricultural production which must in many cases be sustained at all costs for environmental and regional policy reasons, particularly in remote and upland farming areas affected by desertification;
7. Recalls that the Gothenburg European Council of 15 and 16 June 2001 expanded the Lisbon objectives to include the concepts of sustainability and cohesion and that rural development policy is geared towards sustainable farming, preserving non-agricultural rural activities, maximising the potential of local development, environmental protection, balanced regional planning and the development of SMEs;
8. Stresses that sustainable and balanced regional development can only succeed if interactions between rural and urban areas – for example in the fields of education, integration, food supply, waste disposal, energy consumption and environmental protection – are based on an approach equally reflecting the interests of each; stresses also that, for this purpose, special programmes should be dedicated to relations between urban

and rural areas;

9. Believes that the future issues facing the countryside call for a balanced development policy encompassing all social and economic agents, including small businesses and micro-businesses in the production and service sectors, given their role in integrated local development;
10. Considers that, in the case of the new Member States, rural development policy must target improving the efficiency of agriculture and reducing the economic development gap between country and city, inter alia by supporting non-farming activities, an objective which can also be attained by using the Structural Funds;
11. Believes that the Union's role is to facilitate, especially in the new Member States, agricultural restructuring, sustainable economic and social development, and a balanced relationship between country and city;
12. Welcomes the ambitions set out at the Second European Conference on Rural Development in Salzburg in 2003 but regrets the fact that the funding granted under the second pillar of the CAP by the latest financial perspectives has been significantly reduced, risking inefficiency and creating a division between the farmer and the rural dweller;
13. Takes the view that in the case of the new Member States, in order to allow them to consolidate their agricultural structures, the second pillar must not be consolidated by transfer of funds allocated to the first pillar, but via contributions to rural development programmes from the Structural Funds and the Cohesion Fund;
14. Recommends that the Commission to carry out an assessment of all instruments used for the implementation and the financial execution of the EAFRD, ERDF and the ESF region by region to check that rural areas are developed as effectively as possible when the funds are allocated;
15. Reiterates Parliament's call for a detailed analysis of the advantages accruing to the various economic agents in the countryside, agricultural and non-agricultural, as well as of the results obtained, especially as regards job creation and preservation; repeats its call on the Commission to undertake a detailed region-by-region study making it possible to ascertain the support requirements of those agents, with a view to defining a new and coherently grounded policy for the countryside;
16. Believes it is necessary to boost governance and partnership by means of closer coordination between the public authorities and all of the economic and social partners at European, national and local levels with a view to the definition, implementation and monitoring of local rural policies;
17. Proposes that, from the financing period commencing in 2014, measures be taken to ensure that the Structural Funds are targeted more closely at the interests of rural areas and that funding under the second pillar of the CAP is extended beyond the agricultural sector, in order to ensure an integrated rural policy; accordingly calls for closer synergy between the CAP and cohesion policy; acknowledges the need for better coordination between the

two policy areas in order to foster synergies and complementarities between regional and rural development policies, thus enabling a comprehensive and integrated implementation of their objectives;

18. Points out that there is a need to develop a coherent, long-term rural development strategy in order to facilitate the most effective and efficient use of all available funding;
19. Requests that the Commission create a high-level working group by 2011 as part of the CAP Health Check which would bring forward proposals to secure the future of the rural economy and all who live in rural areas after 2013.

RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE

Date adopted	10.9.2008
Result of final vote	+: 31 -: 1 0:
Members present for the final vote	Bernadette Bourzai, Niels Busk, Luis Manuel Capoulas Santos, Giuseppe Castiglione, Giovanna Corda, Albert Deß, Constantin Dumitriu, Michl Ebner, Ioannis Gklavakis, Lutz Goepel, Friedrich-Wilhelm Graefe zu Baringdorf, Esther Herranz García, Lily Jacobs, Elisabeth Jeggle, Heinz Kindermann, Stéphane Le Foll, Mairead McGuinness, Rosa Miguélez Ramos, James Nicholson, Neil Parish, María Isabel Salinas García, Agnes Schierhuber, Willem Schuth, Alyn Smith, Andrzej Tomasz Zapałowski
Substitute(s) present for the final vote	Katerina Batzeli, Gábor Harangozó, Astrid Lulling, Hans-Peter Mayer, Catherine Neris, Markus Pieper, Kyösti Virrankoski