



EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

2009 - 2014

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*Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development*

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**2010/2206(INI)**

1.3.2011

## **OPINION**

of the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development

for the Committee on Transport and Tourism

on Europe, the world's No 1 tourist destination – a new political framework for  
tourism in Europe  
(2009 - 2014(INI))

Rapporteur: Rareș-Lucian Niculescu

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## SUGGESTIONS

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

1. Welcomes the fact that the Commission recognises the value of the EAFRD's contribution to the development of rural tourism in Europe and stresses the need to continue the measures supported through that fund in the context of the CAP post-2013 at a sufficient level of financing in keeping with the ambitions stated; reiterates its call for the CAP to be simplified and for a reduction of the red tape surrounding that policy, of which the EAFRD is an integral part;
2. Points out that future measures in support of rural and farm tourism must be fully attuned to the future objectives, strategies and instruments of the CAP in the field of rural development, and especially to those relating to the provision of public goods, such as land maintenance, landscape conservation, biodiversity and forestry, and the conservation and development of rural heritage;
3. Draws attention to the impact of climate change on Europe's regions and its consequences for the tourism-based economy; suggests, in this regard, that a quality charter be introduced as a means of promoting sustainable tourism in areas at risk, with a view to encouraging best practice in relation to infrastructure and tourist services;
4. Asserts that financing the development of rural and farm tourism in the EU is fully justified, since these sectors comprise more than 500 000 accommodation establishments and around 6 500 000 beds, 15-20% of which are in farm tourism areas; points out that supply and demand in these sectors have grown on average by 10-15% over the past 10-15 years, in circumstances where the average overall growth rate in tourism has been 4-5%;
5. Believes that future rural and regional development programmes should effectively support the tourism sector and that special attention should be paid to promoting knowledge transfer and cross-border exchanges of best practice, building on the work of existing European networks such as NECSTouR;
6. Emphasises the fact that rural and farm tourism – given that they entirely complement traditional primary-sector activities and indeed, in the case of farm tourism, reinforce them and thus help, through job creation, to arrest rural depopulation – make a vital contribution to improving the quality of life in rural areas, to diversification of the rural economy and to balanced regional development because they generate new opportunities, especially for young people and women; points out that they also contribute to preserving, and increasing awareness of, cultural identities, traditions and traditional food products; also calls for more emphasis on the quality of jobs in the sector;
7. Emphasises that tourism activities must always respect the landscape and the environment, and that the objective – as stated in the European Landscape Convention – should be a balanced and harmonious relationship between social needs, economic activity and the environment;

8. Points out that rural tourism and farm tourism make up a non-polluting sector of the economy which is not liable to relocation and whose special characteristics render it, unlike other forms of tourism in Europe such as beach tourism, less dependent on seasonal factors, and that a commitment to developing this sector is therefore also a commitment to creating new sources of permanent high-quality jobs;
9. Emphasises that rural tourism and farm tourism are important means of countering seasonal bias in tourism, especially in the more remote regions; to this end, considers it essential to address the question of access to such regions and investigate the potential for extending the European transport networks;
10. Emphasises also that rural and farm tourism require particular attention as they are more vulnerable in specific respects than other tourism sectors, including with regard to the need for infrastructure improvement in rural areas and for better public-transport links to cities, the restricted access to credit for developing farm tourism activities, and organisational shortcomings on the supply side, with poor connections to the market;
11. Stresses the need to promote training and innovation, which are crucial to developing the competitiveness of rural and farm tourism; points out that most companies active in this sector are microbusinesses which have a key role to play in job creation for women and young people; therefore supports creating instruments for improving skills levels which can be transferred to other activities in the countryside;
12. Stresses the major role that rural and farm tourism play in creating a direct link with the supply chain for local food products and other products of specific quality (organically grown, protected designation of origin (PDO) and protected geographical indication (PGI) products, for example), thus creating a system which ensures the production, processing and marketing of products locally;
13. Considers that there is a need to improve farmers' marketing capacity and their access to local markets, thus enabling companies in the catering sector to buy the local produce they need more easily;
14. Stresses how important it is to raise awareness among the public, in both the EU and third countries, of what farm tourism has to offer, enhancing its profile on the European portal [visiteurope.com](http://visiteurope.com); also proposes improving the link between what tourism providers offer and the Nature 2000 network, so as to raise the profile of protection and conservation efforts in the areas concerned and to further promote their development;
15. Calls on the Commission to encourage the introduction of training measures aimed at developing the professional skills of farmers involved in tourism, with a view to promoting economic diversification in rural areas;
16. Points out that one in six people in the EU have a disability, and therefore considers it vital to promote forms of rural and farm tourism that are tailored for and accessible to those with disabilities or reduced mobility;
17. Recognises the importance of the 'ICT and tourism' platform proposed by the Commission but believes that an all-out effort is needed to equip rural areas with up-to-

date IT infrastructure (e.g. broadband internet connection services), so that all information necessary for exchanges of best practice can be made available and inter-linked, to provide training in how to use such infrastructure, and to develop multilingual IT resources, e.g. in the framework of the Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme (CIP), which could facilitate international tourism;

18. Deplores the fact that no official statistics are kept on rural and farm tourism, and that the only information available is based on estimates; welcomes the measures being contemplated to consolidate the social and economic knowledge base in the field of tourism, in respect of which additional financial outlay and red tape should be eschewed insofar as possible;
19. Encourages the Commission to develop year-round rural and farm tourism; suggests therefore that the CALYPSO initiative be prolonged until after 2011 and that more attention be paid, in the programmes developed, to rural and farm tourism, creating positive synergies with other types of tourism that exist close to rural areas (e.g. sporting tourism, resort tourism, cultural and religious tourism, etc.); calls on the Commission to direct particular attention to rural and farm tourism in the context of any EU macro-regional strategies – for example, the Strategy for the Danube Region, which includes the poorest areas in the Union;
20. Proposes to the Commission the establishment of uniform criteria for introducing quality indicators for rural and farm tourism, as already exist in the traditional hotel industry, where the various labels are awarded on the basis of a strict set of criteria, thus ensuring that they are not devalued;
21. Proposes, in view of the success of the ‘European capitals of culture’ and the ‘European heritage label’ initiatives, that a similar initiative be developed to introduce a European label for rural areas of tourist interest; emphasises that a European label must be awarded on the basis of objective evaluation criteria, that current national quality labels must continue to exist and that the requisite level of transparency must be ensured for consumers; calls for use of the new label to be voluntary.

## RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE

<b>Date adopted</b>	28.2.2011
<b>Result of final vote</b>	+: 29 -: 1 0: 0
<b>Members present for the final vote</b>	John Stuart Agnew, José Bové, Luis Manuel Capoulas Santos, Michel Dantin, Paolo De Castro, Albert Deß, Herbert Dorfmann, Béla Glattfelder, Martin Häusling, Peter Jahr, Elisabeth Jeggle, Jarosław Kalinowski, Elisabeth Köstinger, Agnès Le Brun, George Lyon, Krisztina Morvai, Mariya Nedelcheva, Rareş-Lucian Niculescu, Wojciech Michał Olejniczak, Georgios Papastamkos, Marit Paulsen, Britta Reimers, Ulrike Rodust, Alfreds Rubiks, Giancarlo Scottà, Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris, Alyn Smith, Csaba Sándor Tabajdi, Marc Tarabella
<b>Substitute(s) present for the final vote</b>	Giovanni La Via