

WRITTEN QUESTION E-4397/08
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to the Commission

Subject: Milk quotas

The EU's mountain areas are of major importance for the preservation of biodiversity and an unpolluted environment, as well as for the promotion of local cultures, traditions and identity. In this connection, Community policy needs to focus on stopping depopulation in mountain areas while also promoting sustainable development and ensuring a high quality of life in the EU's mountains. In Romania, as in many other Member States, mountain regions cover a large land area and are home to a significant proportion of the population: nonetheless, the difficulties of day-to-day living, the lack of civilised comforts, and the distance from the urban areas that can cater to educational, cultural and socio-economic needs, are such that with each day that passes more and more members of the mountain communities are forced to leave the localities where they were born and have lived their lives. In the context of the ever more frequent discussions on the reform of the CAP, and, especially, the elimination of the milk quotas, farmers in the mountain areas will have additional reasons for ceasing to raise livestock for milk production, and are likely to shift to other forms of production or to move to the plains.

Given that the breeding of livestock for milk production is one of the few income-generating activities in Romania's mountain areas, will the Commission put forward support measures to be taken into consideration in the context of the reform of the CAP and the conditions of application of market liberalisation via the elimination of the milk quotas?

The Commission is reminded that Romania currently operates a programme under which children are entitled to a daily allowance of free school milk, most of it coming from the mountain areas.