

**Question for written answer E-004260/2021
to the Commission**

Rule 138

Mihai Tudose (S&D)

Subject: EU rural action plan

On 30 June 2021, the Commission presented its long-term vision for rural areas in the EU, based on the Rural Pact and the Rural Action Plan. This is a welcome step towards fostering the sustainable and cohesive development of the EU's rural environment. Unfortunately, the proposed timetable is out-of-step with the accelerating depopulation of Europe's villages.

The process of consulting with the Committee of the Regions will be followed by that of analysing and designing measures that will only apply as from the 2028-2034 financial framework, which is liable to exacerbate the disconnect between the rural environment and the pace and trends of the European economy. For the 30% of the EU population living in villages – many of whom, alarmingly, still have problems accessing basic services and facilities – the growing social and economic divide will have a major impact on living standards and their opportunities in the green and digital transition. There are also considerable differences between Member States when it comes to water, electricity and sewerage connections.

Does the Commission intend to accelerate the adoption of the Rural Action Plan? What steps does the Commission feel need to be taken to ensure that the EU regions most affected by this shortfall in rural areas are connected up to primary infrastructure as quickly and extensively as possible?