

Procedure file

Basic information		
INI - Own-initiative procedure	1998/2059(INI)	Procedure completed
A new strategy for mountain and hill farming		
Subject 3.10.01.06 Less-favoured agricultural areas		

Key players			
European Parliament	Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
	AGRI Agriculture and Rural Development		22/01/1998
		UPE SANTINI Giacomo	
	Committee for opinion	Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
	REGI Regional Policy		

Key events			
13/03/1998	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
28/09/1998	Vote in committee		Summary
28/09/1998	Committee report tabled for plenary	A4-0368/1998	
22/10/1998	Debate in Parliament		
23/10/1998	Decision by Parliament	T4-0630/1998	Summary
23/10/1998	End of procedure in Parliament		
09/11/1998	Final act published in Official Journal		

Technical information	
Procedure reference	1998/2059(INI)
Procedure type	INI - Own-initiative procedure
Procedure subtype	Initiative
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 54
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	AGRI/4/09873

Documentation gateway

Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading	A4-0368/1998 OJ C 341 09.11.1998, p. 0003	28/09/1998	EP	
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading	T4-0630/1998 OJ C 341 09.11.1998, p. 0362-0369	23/10/1998	EP	Summary

A new strategy for mountain and hill farming

The Committee adopted the report by Giacomo SANTINI (EPP, I). The report does not seek to put forward a specific new structural policy or a new cohesion policy applying the same criteria to all mountain regions (which account for around 25% of the EU's farmland). Instead it wants the existing instruments to be adapted to take account of local situations, so as to ensure economic and social cohesion and to support local schemes for promoting endogenous development through diversified, regionally-based activities and products. The committee contends that, from an environmental standpoint, such schemes should aim to disseminate the knowledge and skills needed to ensure rational management of natural resources and balanced land-use. Account should be taken of the special needs of mountain areas: -basic infrastructures (schools, roads, social services), so as to prevent desertification; -geomorphological barriers (e.g. altitude, gradient, irregular rainfall, fragmentation of land ownership and low population density), which make mountain farming uncompetitive with agriculture in lowland areas or even other disadvantaged regions as well as creating major difficulties for communications and transport. The committee believes the Commission should: -gather and update all available information, issue periodic reports and submit a communication to the Council and Parliament on EU mountain regions; -submit a Community action plan for these areas; -devise a special programme for mountain regions as part of cross-border cooperation; -strengthen assessment and monitoring procedures, in connection with the reform of the Structural Funds (particularly the new Objective 2 under Agenda 2000), by precisely defining the areas eligible at local level through criteria based on the latest data; facilitate improvements to transport and communications; increase EU compensation for environmental services of public interest which are provided by the population of mountain areas and arid or semi-arid zones; -encourage national and regional assistance policies, with Union support via partnership agreements, for mountain areas not falling within the new Objective 2.?

A new strategy for mountain and hill farming

Adopting the report by Mr Giacomo Santini (EPP, I) on a new strategy for mountainous regions, Parliament calls on the Commission, working together with the regions and governments concerned, to strengthen existing measures to assist mountainous areas and to extend them to less favoured and environmentally sensitive areas. Parliament calls for: - updating of all measures to assist these areas, - a Community action plan for these areas, - rural development measures, - cross-border cooperation measures, - stronger assessment and monitoring procedures under the Structural Funds and better definition of the eligible areas at local or regional level, - increased EU compensation for the environmental services provided in the general interest by the population of these areas and their role in land occupancy. With regard to enterprises operating in areas with important natural features (national and regional parks) in these regions, Parliament calls for exemptions from EU legislation on State aid, while guarding against any risk of distortion of competition in cross-border areas within the EU. It calls for national and regional assistance policies for areas not falling within the future Objective 2, with EU support via partnership agreements. Existing allowances should be maintained and improved so as to boost their impact on farm incomes and combat the trend towards depopulation by making it possible to add maximum value to their agricultural production. The establishment in the valleys of small units for drying or dehydrating fodder should be encouraged. The compensatory allowances system should be adjusted, since the current system is based on surface area and the number of livestock units and does not allow for adequate compensation to offset the natural handicap suffered. Priority should be given to the infrastructure required to strengthen regional economic networks which could open up new employment opportunities in mountain, less favoured and environmentally sensitive regions. Parliament also considers that more favourable differentiated rates of Community aid for investment, processing and marketing of agricultural products and foodstuffs derived from these products and all structural measures should be introduced or maintained, sustainable production systems and local breeds and varieties should be supported, the possibility should be examined of exempting small scale milk producers in mountain areas from the milk quota system where this activity is their sole means of survival and provision should be made under the CAP for specific funds to support the production of milk, meat and breeding cows, these products traditionally being the mainstay of farming in these regions. Given that agriculture and forestry in these regions make an essential contribution to ecological stability and the preservation of the natural landscape, Parliament calls for funding of these activities through Community programmes, including agri-environmental measures, for these measures to be extended to include forestry and for aid to be granted to regional authorities in these areas to prevent and fight forest fires and for reforestation. There should also be measures within the framework of transport policy, tourism policy and the action plan for the information society to exploit the potential of renewable energy sources in these regions based on agriculture, forestry or wind power. Account should be taken of the problems suffered by these regions in the context of enlargement. ?