

Procedure file

Basic information		
INI - Own-initiative procedure	2021/2254(INI)	Procedure completed
<p>A long-term Vision for the EU's Rural Areas - Towards stronger, connected, resilient and prosperous rural areas by 2040</p>		
<p>Subject 3.10.01.02 Rural development, European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD)</p>		

Key players			
European Parliament	Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
	 Agriculture and Rural Development	 CARVALHAIS Isabel	12/07/2021
		Shadow rapporteur	
		 BOGOVIČ Franc	
		 DECERLE Jérémy	
		 ROPÉ Bronis	
		 LIZZI Elena	
		 KUŹMIUK Zbigniew	
		 RODRÍGUEZ PALOP Eugenia	
	Committee for opinion	Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
	 Regional Development (Associated committee)	 AMARO Álvaro	06/12/2021
	 Women's Rights and Gender Equality		26/10/2021
		 SCHNEIDER Christine	
European Commission	Commission DG Agriculture and Rural Development	Commissioner WOJCIECHOWSKI Janusz	

Key events

16/12/2021	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
16/12/2021	Referral to associated committees announced in Parliament		
25/10/2022	Vote in committee		
08/11/2022	Committee report tabled for plenary	A9-0269/2022	Summary
12/12/2022	Debate in Parliament		
13/12/2022	Results of vote in Parliament		
13/12/2022	Decision by Parliament	T9-0436/2022	Summary

Technical information

Procedure reference	2021/2254(INI)
Procedure type	INI - Own-initiative procedure
Procedure subtype	Initiative
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 54; Rules of Procedure EP 57
Other legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 159
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	AGRI/9/07929

Documentation gateway

Committee draft report		PE719.849	29/04/2022	EP	
Amendments tabled in committee		PE731.775	01/06/2022	EP	
Committee opinion	FEMM	PE719.805	17/06/2022	EP	
Committee opinion	REGI	PE704.926	20/06/2022	EP	
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A9-0269/2022	08/11/2022	EP	Summary
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T9-0436/2022	13/12/2022	EP	Summary
Commission response to text adopted in plenary		SP(2023)98	12/04/2023	EC	

A long-term Vision for the EU's Rural Areas - Towards stronger, connected, resilient and prosperous rural areas by 2040

The Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development adopted an own-initiative report by Isabel CARVALHAIS (S&D, PT) on a long-term vision for the EU's rural areas Towards stronger, connected, resilient and prosperous rural areas by 2040.

Rural areas are crucial for food production and self-sufficiency, natural resources, landscapes and biodiversity, as well as cultural heritage. Members are convinced that they can play a central role in addressing today's major societal challenges by providing ecosystem services to mitigate climate change and environmental degradation, promote sustainable food production and enable a just green and digital transition.

Despite their strengths, rural areas, especially remote and less developed rural areas, face major challenges, leading to growing discontent among rural populations. They feel that their needs are insufficiently taken into account in political decision-making, which creates a breeding ground for civic and political disengagement. Rural areas are also struggling with other problems caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and the war in Ukraine.

A long-term vision for the EU's rural areas

Members welcomed the Commission's communication on a long-term vision for the EU's rural areas and stressed that the development of

rural areas must remain a top priority for the EU. They called on the Commission and the Member States to give the highest priority to implementing the proposed Rural Action Plan by setting clear binding quantitative targets to be achieved, to ensure that it is accompanied by the necessary resources for its effective implementation and to ensure that rural areas are indeed stronger, connected, resilient and prosperous by 2040.

It also stressed the importance of implementing a rural proofing mechanism for EU initiatives to assess the coherence and complementarity of EU policies and their potential impact on rural areas.

A path for the future of rural areas for 2040

Members insisted that rural citizens must benefit, like any other citizen, from equitable conditions for achieving their professional, social and personal goals, with a particular focus on more vulnerable groups, and insists that the European Pillar of Social Rights be applied. In this respect, the report stressed the importance of public investment and public partnerships, as well as improved cross-border cooperation and cooperation between rural and urban areas.

Special attention should be paid to vulnerable groups living in rural areas, such as people with disabilities, the elderly and migrants, including seasonal workers, ensuring that their specific needs are being addressed. In addition, targeted interventions supporting young people and fostering effective generational renewal should be a priority, in order to encourage young people to stay in rural areas.

The report highlights the importance of:

- recognising the important role that small and medium-sized farms and family farms play in maintaining rural populations and in preserving land and landscape management;
- supporting cooperation initiatives in the field of agriculture and social economy as a tool for rural development;
- promoting EU quality schemes;
- addressing the serious problem of unfair trade practices in the agricultural sector through additional measures to improve the distribution of value in the chain;
- promoting access to appropriate investment, research and innovation for sustainable agriculture;
- taking concrete steps to ensure the balanced coexistence of humans and large carnivores in rural areas;
- putting in place measures to support a just transition and diversification of the rural economy and encourage the creation of quality jobs in rural areas;
- making efforts to strengthen rural tourism;
- urgently developing and implementing measures to address gender gaps, including in relation to pay and pensions, and take targeted measures to address the specific problems women face in the labour market;
- highlighting the central role of rural areas in the transition to a circular and carbon-neutral economy, including a sustainable bioeconomy and forestry;
- mobilising all available instruments to reduce the risks of a widening rural digital divide and to improve the full roll-out of 5G networks, with particular support from EU cohesion policy funds and Member States' Recovery and Resilience Facility plans;
- considering smart villages as a flagship project of the EU Rural Action Plan.

First steps for defining a vision and strategy for rural areas

The report called on the Commission to ensure that the integrated and Community-led rural territorial dimension is properly addressed by all Member States and to assess its implementation and impact in the common agricultural policy strategic plans, the cohesion policy programmes, the European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund programmes and the Recovery and Resilience Plans.

Member States are urged to (i) address the specific challenges of rural territories and their communities during the implementation of the current multiannual financial framework programmes; (ii) make effective use of the various funding opportunities, in particular to improve the prospects of SMEs in rural areas, and (iii) make better use of all available tools to support rural areas, including tax incentives for individuals and businesses looking to settle in rural areas.

Shaping the future beyond 2027

Members noted the Commission's intention to take stock by mid-2023 of the measures taken by the EU and Member States to support rural areas and to draw up a public report on this basis in early 2024. They believe that this evaluation could pave the way for a rural strategy based on the mid-term review and a rural action plan in the 2028-2034 programming period. The Commission is invited to directly involve all relevant stakeholders and managing authorities in this evaluation.

A long-term Vision for the EU's Rural Areas - Towards stronger, connected, resilient and prosperous rural areas by 2040

The European Parliament adopted by 465 votes to 29, with 131, abstentions a resolution on a long-term vision for the EU's rural areas Towards stronger, connected, resilient and prosperous rural areas by 2040.

Challenges and opportunities

Parliament is convinced that policies and actions at EU level, combined with national, regional and local policies following a territorialised approach, are essential to ensure the prosperity and well-being of European citizens living in rural areas, as well as to address the challenges they face, namely population decline and ageing, higher risk of poverty and social exclusion, and fewer opportunities for quality employment.

Rural areas are crucial for food production and self-sufficiency, natural resources, landscapes and biodiversity, and cultural heritage. They can

play a role in addressing social, economic and environmental challenges, providing ecosystem services to mitigate climate change and environmental degradation.

Despite their strengths, rural areas, especially remote and less developed rural areas, face major challenges, leading to growing discontent among rural people. They feel that their needs are not sufficiently taken into account in political decision-making, which creates a breeding ground for civic and political disengagement. Rural areas are also facing other problems caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and the war in Ukraine.

A long-term vision for the EU's rural areas

Members endorsed the objectives of the Commission's communication on a long-term vision for the EU's rural areas and stressed that the development of rural areas must remain a top priority for the EU. They called on the Commission and the Member States to give the highest priority to the implementation of the proposed Rural Action Plan by setting clear binding quantitative targets to be achieved, to ensure that it is accompanied by the necessary resources for its effective implementation and to ensure that rural areas are indeed stronger, connected, resilient and prosperous by 2040.

Parliament recognised the need for a common EU-wide definition of functional rural areas. It welcomed the announcement of the creation of a rural observatory and stressed the importance of implementing a rural test mechanism for EU initiatives to assess the coherence and complementarity of EU policies and their potential impact on rural areas.

A path for the future of rural areas for 2040

Parliament insisted that rural citizens must benefit, like any other citizen, from equitable conditions for achieving their professional, social and personal goals, with a particular focus on more vulnerable groups, such as people with disabilities, older people and migrants, notably seasonal workers.

Rural communities must have equal access to services of general interest in order to ensure inclusive and equitable conditions of living and well-being, notably healthcare services, education, training for up- and reskilling and lifelong learning, social care, child and elderly care, connectivity and mobility, and housing, as well as postal and banking services, social meeting places and cultural activities and infrastructure.

In this respect, Members stressed the importance of public investment and public partnerships, as well as improved cross-border cooperation and cooperation between rural and urban areas. In addition, targeted interventions supporting young people and fostering effective generational renewal should be a priority, in order to encourage young people to stay in rural areas.

The resolution highlights the importance of:

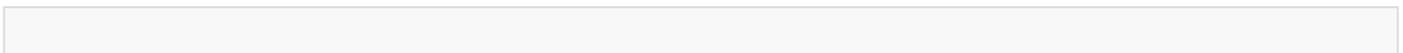
- recognising the important role that small and medium-sized farms and family farms play in maintaining rural populations and in preserving land and landscape management;
- supporting cooperation initiatives in the field of agriculture and social economy as a tool for rural development;
- promoting EU quality schemes;
- addressing the serious problem of unfair trade practices in the agricultural sector through additional measures to improve the distribution of value in the chain;
- promoting access to appropriate investment, research and innovation for sustainable agriculture;
- taking concrete steps to ensure the balanced coexistence of humans and large carnivores in rural areas;
- putting in place measures to support a just transition and diversification of the rural economy and encourage the creation of quality jobs in rural areas;
- making efforts to strengthen rural tourism;
- urgently developing and implementing measures to address gender gaps, including in relation to pay and pensions, and take targeted measures to address the specific problems women face in the labour market;
- highlighting the central role of rural areas in the transition to a circular and carbon-neutral economy, including a sustainable bioeconomy and forestry;
- mobilising all available instruments to reduce the risks of a widening rural digital divide and to improve the full roll-out of 5G networks, with particular support from EU cohesion policy funds and Member States' Recovery and Resilience Facility plans;
- considering smart villages as a flagship project of the EU Rural Action Plan.

First steps for defining a vision and strategy for rural areas

The resolution called on the Commission to ensure that the integrated and Community-led rural territorial dimension is properly addressed by all Member States and to assess its implementation and impact in the common agricultural policy strategic plans, the cohesion policy programmes, the European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund programmes and the Recovery and Resilience Plans.

Member States are urged to (i) address the specific challenges of rural territories and their communities during the implementation of the current multiannual financial framework programmes; (ii) make effective use of the various funding opportunities, to improve the prospects of SMEs in rural areas, and (iii) make better use of all available tools to support rural areas, including tax incentives for individuals and businesses looking to settle in rural areas.

The Commission is invited to: (i) present in early 2023 a targeted legislative proposal to allow for the transfer of resources between all funds under shared management when supporting rural territorial strategies and to strengthen synergies between funds and programmes; (ii) continue simplification and reduce administrative burdens; (iii) ensure that all EU policies in the future apply the principle of "no harm to cohesion", in particular in rural areas; (iv) maintain a direct and structured dialogue with the different levels of governance involved in the management of EU policies which have a significant impact on rural areas.



Transparency

CARVALHAIS Isabel	Rapporteur	AGRI	13/10/2022	European Coordination Via Campesina
CARVALHAIS Isabel	Rapporteur	AGRI	03/05/2022	FREE - Future of Rural Energy in Europe
TOLLERET Irène	Member	12/07/2022	European LEADER Association for Rural Development	