

Rural development: support by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD)

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The Council took note of a presentation by the Commission on a report on information and communication technologies (ICT) in rural areas adopted on 3 March 2009 (see COM(2009)0103).

This joint Communication responds to the request made by the Council, in its conclusions of 19 March 2007, that the Commission study the question of better access of rural areas to modern information and communication technology, with special reference to high-speed internet access.

The subject matter of this communication is closely related to the Commission proposal for a Council Regulation providing for additional funding to bridge the broadband gaps in rural areas, on which agreement was reached at the European Council meeting last week.

A sum of EUR 1.02 billion should be made available to Member States, either to improve broadband coverage in rural areas or to respond to new challenges, as defined under the Health Check legislative package.