

EUROPEAN UNION



Committee of the Regions

**116th PLENARY SESSION
10-11 February 2016**

**EN
NAT-VI/004**

AMENDMENTS

**DRAFT OPINION
of the
Committee of the Regions**

Innovation and modernisation of the rural economy

Rapporteur: Randel Länts (EE/PES)
Member of Viljandi City Council

AMENDMENT 1

Innovation and modernisation of the rural economy

NAT-VI/004

Point 4

Amend as follows:

BORBOLY Csaba
BRĂILOIU Ovidiu
DRĂGHICI Emil
MAGYAR Anna
MAJTHÉNYI László
NICA Alin-Adrian
RIBÁNYI József
SESZTÁK Oszkár
SZABÓ Róbert
ȚUȚUIANU Adrian

<i>Draft opinion</i>	<i>Amendment</i>
Many rural areas in the European Union are faced with similar problems: physical accessibility, distance from centres of decision-making and research, and inadequate technological infrastructure. This causes the technology gap to grow even wider. Labour market participation is lower in rural areas and fewer jobs are created there. On the other hand, rural areas also offer a whole range of advantages: countryside, a pleasant living environment and lower levels of pollution, to name but a few.	Many rural areas in the European Union are faced with similar problems: physical accessibility, distance from centres of decision-making and research and educational establishments , and inadequate technological infrastructure. This causes the technology gap to grow even wider. Labour market participation is lower in rural areas and fewer jobs are created there. On the other hand, rural areas also offer a whole range of advantages: countryside, a pleasant living environment and lower levels of pollution, to name but a few.

Reason
There are many regions where educational establishments are located at a considerable distance from students' homes. This situation is further exacerbated by poor infrastructure development. The absence or inaccessibility of education opportunities contribute to early school leaving, social marginalisation and illiteracy.

AMENDMENT 19

Innovation and modernisation of the rural economy

NAT-VI/004

Point 19

Amend as follows:

BORBOLY Csaba
BRĂILOIU Ovidiu
DRĂGHICI Emil
MAGYAR Anna
MAJTHÉNYI László
NICA Alin-Adrian
RIBÁNYI József
SESZTÁK Oszkár
SZABÓ Róbert
ȚUȚUIANU Adrian

<i>Draft opinion</i>	<i>Amendment</i>
<p>Fast telecommunications networks are vitally important for competitiveness and economic growth. Digital services can only be offered if fast and reliable internet is available. Although broadband coverage in the EU has greatly improved over the past few years, and the necessary infrastructure is now in place in some areas, many places are still lagging far behind. The contrast between rural and urban areas is particularly visible in this regard. In some areas with basic accessibility, end users still have to invest large sums of their own money for a connection.</p>	<p>Fast telecommunications networks are vitally important for competitiveness and economic growth. Digital services can only be offered if fast and reliable internet is available. Although broadband coverage in the EU has greatly improved over the past few years, and the necessary infrastructure is now in place in some areas, many places are still lagging far behind. The contrast between rural and urban areas is particularly visible in this regard. In some areas with basic accessibility, end users still have to invest large sums of their own money for a connection.</p> <p><i>This is why it is necessary to continue to support the advance of the virtual market, improved access to digital communication services at favourable prices and the development of online services in rural areas.</i></p>

Reason
<p>Internet availability, especially in geographically remote areas, must be treated as a basic precondition for securing vital access to information, education and development for these communities, which will help narrow the gap between urban and rural areas.</p>

AMENDMENT 21

Innovation and modernisation of the rural economy

NAT-VI/004

Point 21

Add a new point:

BORBOLY Csaba
BRĂILOIU Ovidiu
DRĂGHICI Emil
MAGYAR Anna
MAJTHÉNYI László
NICA Alin-Adrian
RIBÁNYI József
SESZTÁK Oszkár
SZABÓ Róbert
ȚUȚUIANU Adrian

<i>Draft opinion</i>	<i>Amendment</i>
	<i>The common agricultural policy governs agriculture and the key role it plays in rural development. At regional level, rural development and the development of agriculture are closely linked. Although rural area is not necessarily synonymous with agriculture, there is no doubt that without agriculture there would be no rural areas. Agriculture cannot be developed in isolation from everything else. It is important to continue to ensure convergence between the conditions and aims of agriculture and those of rural development, so that the development of agriculture contributes to raising the standard of living not only of rural communities and farm workers but also of the inhabitants of neighbouring towns.</i>

Reason
The common agricultural policy is one of the most important policies for the European Union, its Member States and their municipalities and rural areas. Rural development relies primarily on stable, prosperous agriculture.

AMENDMENT 31

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NAT-VI/004

Point 29

Add a new point:

BORBOLY Csaba
BRĂILOIU Ovidiu
DRĂGHICI Emil
MAGYAR Anna
MAJTHÉNYI László
NICA Alin-Adrian
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SESZTÁK Oszkár
SZABÓ Róbert
ȚUȚUIANU Adrian

<i>Draft opinion</i>	<i>Amendment</i>
	<i>to pay special attention to programmes aimed at regenerating or developing municipalities that are sparsely populated or at risk of depopulation and at promoting their historical and cultural heritage for tourism purposes;</i>

Reason
Rural tourism can be a competitive option and play a significant role in the development of rural areas. While it is clear that it is not an answer to all the problems facing rural municipalities, it can make a substantial contribution to increasing the revenues of local communities, which would in turn boost the local economy.