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

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The Council reviewed implementation of the European economic recovery plan approved by the European Council in December in response to the global financial crisis and economic slowdown. It held an exchange of views on the financial aspects of proposals aimed at providing additional support, under the European economic recovery plan, to investments in the field of energy and infrastructure, including broadband internet and rural development.

The European economic recovery plan provides a framework for measures taken by each Member State and identifies a number of actions to be undertaken at EU level.

In relation to energy and infrastructure, the Commission subsequently submitted proposals on the provision of an additional EUR 5 billion investment from the EU's budget, namely a Regulation and a Decision on **rural development**, involving a total of **EUR 1.5 billion**, including EUR 1 billion for broadband internet infrastructure and EUR 500 million for tackling challenges such as climate change, renewable energies, water management, biodiversity and measures to accompany the restructuring of the dairy sector.

To finance this investment, the Commission proposes for the rural development measures, to use the margin under the ceiling of heading 2 for 2009 of the financial perspective.