Creation of a European Rural Charter

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The committee on agriculture and rural development adopted the report by Mr Liam HYLAND. Focusing on the diversity of rural zones, the report called on the Commission to devise a coherent scheme for creating jobs both inside and outside the agriculture sector. This meant promoting the concept of integrated rural development in order to put a stop to rural depopulation. The report drew attention to the social and environmental cost, as well as to the crime problems generated by urban overpopulation. In order to combat this problem the report proposed to decentralise economic activity by providing support for medium-sized urban centres. Taking the view that agriculture should no longer be considered merely as a means of production, the report felt that a reform of the CAP should give priority to the following objectives: the development of quality controls and measures to safeguard public health, the protection of animal welfare and the environment, the development of agricultural produce intended for energy production, measures to support the growth in rural population, etc. In conclusion, the report called on the Commission to present innovative measures to promote rural development.