Rural development: Community strategic guidelines, support by the EAFRD, programming period 2007–2013

2005/0129(CNS) - 26/01/2006

The committee adopted the report by Mairead MCGUINNESS (EPP-ED, IE) amending the proposal under the consultation procedure. MEPs broadly approved the six Community strategic guidelines being proposed for rural development, but they wanted more emphasis to be placed on the modernisation of the agricultural sector and the needs of young farmers. They insisted on the importance of measures aimed at counteracting rural depopulation, preserving the rural heritage and landscape, and encouraging village renewal and development. They also stressed that differentiated rural development strategies were needed, given the diversity of situations in the various Member States in terms of terrain and climate. The report drew attention to the huge disparities in income levels in the agricultural sector between the new Member States and EU-15 and said that the cohesion principle must also therefore be implemented in rural areas.

Other references introduced into the guidelines focused on:

- the importance of crafts in the countryside as a source of job creation and passing on of traditional skills;

- promotion of the forestry sector as an important contribution to environmental protection;

- support for research into energy crops and biofuel production;

- the preservation and - in some cases - revival of rural culture as a source of economic added value (including tourism);

- improving the transfer between generations.