Basic information

2015/2279(INI) INI - Own-initiative procedure	Procedure completed
Cohesion policy in mountainous regions of the EU **Subject** 3.10.01.06 Less-favoured agricultural areas 4.70.02 Cohesion policy, Cohesion Fund (CF)	

Key players

European Parliament

Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
REGI Regional Development	IOTOVA Iliana (S&D)	14/07/2015
	Shadow rapporteur BOGOVIČ Franc (PPE) PORĘBA Tomasz Piotr (ECR) JAKOVČIĆ Ivan (ALDE) OMARJEE Younous (GUE/NGL) VANA Monika (Verts/ALE) ADINOLFI Isabella (EFDD)	

Committee for opinion	Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
AGRI Agriculture and Rural Development	DANTIN Michel (PPE)	28/10/2015

European Commission

Commission DG	Commissioner
Regional and Urban Policy	CREȚU Corina

Key events

Date	Event	Reference	Summary
29/10/2015	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
17/03/2016	Vote in committee		
04/04/2016	Committee report tabled for plenary	A8-0074/2016	Summary

09/05/2016	Debate in Parliament		
10/05/2016	Decision by Parliament	T8-0213/2016	Summary
10/05/2016	Results of vote in Parliament		
10/05/2016	End of procedure in Parliament		

Technical information	
Procedure reference	2015/2279(INI)
Procedure type	INI - Own-initiative procedure
Procedure subtype	Initiative
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 55
Other legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 165
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	REGI/8/04826

Documentation gateway

European Parliament

Document type	Committee	Reference	Date	Summary
Committee draft report		PE572.940	14/12/2015	
Amendments tabled in committee		PE575.218	28/01/2016	
Committee opinion	AGRI	PE573.109	24/02/2016	
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A8-0074/2016	04/04/2016	Summary
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T8-0213/2016	10/05/2016	Summary

European Commission

Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
Commission response to text adopted in plenary	SP(2016)486	23/09/2016	

Cohesion policy in mountainous regions of the EU

2015/2279(INI) - 10/05/2016 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 553 votes to 63, with 49 abstentions, a resolution on cohesion policy in mountainous regions of the EU.

Members recalled that mountainous regions in the EU are rarely in the focus of Cohesion Policy. Yet, **these regions represent a significant amount of EU territory** (around 30 %), and the entirety of the EU depends on their ecosystem services. These regions are structurally disadvantaged, owing to their extreme conditions and remoteness, to the extent that many mountainous regions face depopulation and ageing populations.

Parliament made a number of recommendations as to how the mountains of the EU can contribute to its targets, such as Europe 2020.

Coordinated approach and general considerations: given that there is no explicit definition of mountainous regions in EU regional policy, Parliament called on the Commission to start the process of creating a **working definition for functional mountainous regions** in the context of Cohesion Policy, complementing the definition of mountainous areas as used in the context of the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development, with the aim of improving coordination of the policies and measures concerned.

This definition must be wide and inclusive, taking into account different factors such as altitude, accessibility and slope. It should cover volcanic regions in islands and outermost regions, as well as areas that, while not mountainous, are largely integrated with mountain areas. Members welcomed the current initiatives for the Carpathian Mountains in the EU Strategy for the Danube Region and the progress made on the EU macro-regional strategy for the Alps.

Parliament considered that EU policies should have a **specific approach to mountainous regions**, as they have clear structural disadvantages.

The Commission is invited to:

- present a communication containing an '**agenda for EU mountainous regions'** and establish a specific, indepth programme to protect those European glaciers which are predicted to disappear by 2050;
- present a **White Paper** on the development of mountainous regions, based on best practices and involving local, regional and national authorities;
- encourage the **use of financial instruments** in mountainous regions in order to reach concrete results;
- **regularly assess the condition of mountainous regions** in the EU, and analyse data, such as the results of the implementation of Cohesion Policy operational programmes and indicators, in order to focus EU funding and policy implementation in a correct way;
- propose a **European Year** of Islands and Mountains.

The managing authorities are called upon to consider **increasing allocations of ESI Funds at national level** to support undeveloped mountainous areas, using a multi-sectoral policy approach, where possible.

Parliament also called for **synergies to be increased** by means of the coordination of EU policies, strategies and programmes that have an indirect effect upon mountainous regions, such as Horizon 2020, COSME, LIFE, Natura 2000, the EU Broadband Strategy, the EU Climate Adaptation Strategy, the EU Environment Action Programme, the Connecting Europe Facility, European Territorial Cooperation, ESI Funds and the European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI), as well as macro-regional strategy initiatives.

The European Territorial Cooperation (ETC) instrument offers an excellent opportunity to share best practices and knowledge among mountainous regions, which in many cases are located on national borders. Members called for a **specific mountain dimension** in the future ETC.

Jobs and economic growth in mountainous regions: in this regard, Parliament highlighted the need to:

- pay specific attention to the **development of SMEs** in mountainous regions, particularly areas affected by natural and climate-aggravated disasters, urges the Member States accordingly to give priority to investment in **infrastructure and services** in mountain areas;
- improve the **marketing of agricultural products** and including them within the general tourism products of a given geographical area; moreover, as mountain areas have strong potential for producing high-quality food products and to start the debate about introducing **special labelling** for mountain food products at EU level;
- emphasise, within the strategy, the **economic dimension of forestry taking into account the** economic and social role of forestry in mountain areas;
- put in place additional incentives to **preserve small processing enterprises and small and medium-sized mountain farms** in mountainous areas;
- use the ESI Funds for **economic sectors that do not pollute and are future-oriented**, such as sustainable tourism, cultural heritage, sustainable forestry, high-speed internet development, crafts, and renewable energy.

Sustainable growth, environment, accessibility: the resolution lays down the points that should be included in the agenda and the sector-specific policy. Members made the following recommendations:

- increase the qualifications of the workforce and **creating new jobs in the green economy** should be part of the investment priorities of the ESI Funds;
- **attract young people** into the agricultural sector by encouraging young entrepreneurs to branch out in areas relating to cultural heritage;
- the **CAP** should aim to compensate the natural and economic disadvantages that farmers face but should also give them the means to capitalise on their assets;
- ensure **sustainable milk production** in mountain areas;
- present specific recommendations for overcoming the **shortage of skilled labour in the tourism industry**, specifically addressing the challenges of unattractive jobs and insufficient remuneration;
- ensure the development and improvement of **healthcare facilities** and services in mountainous regions, inter alia through cross-border cooperation initiatives, including the development of cross-border healthcare establishments, where needed;
- encourage tailormade solutions adapted to local and regional needs to **access public services**;
- support innovative solutions, including IT-based ones, for access to basic quality **education**, as well as formal and informal education and lifelong learning opportunities, in remote mountainous areas;
- more effective implementation of the **Youth Guarantee** as a good opportunity to stop the outflow of young people from mountainous regions;
- focus on policies that encourage and facilitate the use of **renewables** in mountainous regions and place climate change at the heart of a future 'Agenda for EU Mountainous Regions'.
- create incentives for more active development of public-private partnerships in mountainous regions, in **transport, communication and energy infrastructure**, as the lack of economies of scale makes the provision of these services commercially unattractive.

Lastly, Parliament considered that the Internet, and more specifically, next-generation access technologies play a crucial part in overcoming the challenges faced by mountainous regions. It considered therefore that specific support from ESI Funds is needed for the **promotion of employment, social inclusion and empowerment in the emerging digital economy**.

Cohesion policy in mountainous regions of the EU

2015/2279(INI) - 04/04/2016 - Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading

The Committee on Regional Development adopted the own-initiative report by Iliana IOTOVA (S&D, BG) on cohesion policy in mountainous regions of the EU.

Mountainous regions in the EU are rarely in the focus of Cohesion Policy. Yet, **mountainous regions represent a significant amount of EU territory** (around 30 %), and the entirety of the EU depends on their ecosystem services.

This report focuses on how the mountains of the EU can contribute to its targets, such as Europe 2020. It contains the following recommendations:

Coordinated approach and general considerations: the report called on the Commission to start the process of creating a **working definition for functional mountainous regions** in the context of Cohesion Policy, complementing the definition of mountainous areas as used in the context of the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development, with the aim of improving coordination of the policies and measures concerned.

This definition must be wide and inclusive, taking into account different factors such as altitude, accessibility and slope. It should cover volcanic regions in islands and outermost regions, as well as areas that, while not mountainous, are largely integrated with mountain areas. Members welcomed the current initiatives for the Carpathian Mountains in the EU Strategy for the Danube Region and the progress made on the EU macro-regional strategy for the Alps.

The Commission is also invited to:

- present a communication containing an '**agenda for EU mountainous regions'** and subsequent to this, present a **White Paper** on the development of mountainous regions, based on best practices and involving local, regional and national authorities;
- encourage the **use of financial instruments** in mountainous regions in order to reach concrete results;

Members also called for **synergies to be increased** by means of the coordination of EU policies, strategies and programmes that have an indirect effect upon mountainous regions, such as Horizon 2020, COSME, LIFE, Natura 2000, the EU Broadband Strategy, the EU Climate Adaptation Strategy, the EU Environment Action Programme, the Connecting Europe Facility, European Territorial Cooperation, ESI Funds and the European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI), as well as macro-regional strategy initiatives.

The European Territorial Cooperation (ETC) instrument offers an excellent opportunity to share best practices and knowledge among mountainous regions, which in many cases are located on national borders. Members called for a specific mountain dimension in the future ETC.

Jobs and economic growth in mountainous regions: in this regard, the report highlighted the need to:

- pay specific attention to the **development of SMEs** in mountainous regions, particularly areas affected by natural and climate-aggravated disasters, urges the Member States accordingly to give priority to investment in **infrastructure and services** in mountain areas;
- improve the **marketing of agricultural products** and including them within the general tourism products of a given geographical area; moreover, as mountain areas have strong potential for producing high-quality food products and to start the debate about introducing **special labelling** for mountain food products at EU level;
- emphasise, within the strategy, the **economic dimension of forestry taking into account the** economic and social role of forestry in mountain areas;
- put in place additional incentives to **preserve small processing enterprises and small and medium-sized mountain farms** in mountainous areas;
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Sustainable growth, environment, accessibility: the report lays down the points that should be included in the agenda and the sector-specific policy:

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- **attract young people** into the agricultural sector by encouraging young entrepreneurs to branch out in areas relating to cultural heritage;
- the **CAP** should aim to compensate the natural and economic disadvantages that farmers face but should also give them the means to capitalise on their assets;
- ensure **sustainable milk production** in mountain areas;
- ensure the development and improvement of **healthcare facilities** and services in mountainous regions;
- support innovative solutions, including IT-based ones, for access to basic quality education, as well as formal and informal education and lifelong learning opportunities, in remote mountainous areas;
- more effective implementation of the **Youth Guarantee** as a good opportunity to stop the outflow of young people from mountainous regions;
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Lastly, Members considered that the Internet, and more specifically, next-generation access technologies play a crucial part in overcoming the challenges faced by mountainous regions. They considered therefore that specific support from ESI Funds is needed for the **promotion of employment, social inclusion and empowerment in the emerging digital economy**.