



**Memo for Ossi Martikainen**

**Joint NAT-RED conference**

**The impact of the resolution on addressing the specific needs  
of rural, mountainous and remote areas in the work of the  
European Parliament post-2020**

**12 November 2019**

**1. Introductory speech – 3 p.m.**

Ladies and gentlemen,

It gives me great pleasure to open this conference on the impact of the resolution on addressing the specific needs of rural, mountainous and remote areas in the work of the European Parliament post-2020. I am delighted to welcome so many of you to the European Committee of the Regions.

I would briefly like to outline the background to our joint meetings with the Rurality-Environment-Development (RED) association and members of the parliamentary Intergroup on Rural, Mountainous and Remote Areas.

At the first meeting, held here on 22 September 2015, the common objective that emerged for all the participants was the importance of a white paper on rurality as a necessary step on the path towards ensuring that European policies after 2020 are better suited to the dynamics of local development and innovation in rural areas. We pointed out that there was an urgent need to plug the growing development gap between rural and urban areas and stem the population drain from rural areas, especially among young people. We noted that it was necessary to ensure that rural areas and communities remained attractive places to live and work, by improving access to services and prospects for the people who live in these areas and by promoting a spirit of entrepreneurship, be it in traditional rural domains or in new sectors of the economy.

The second meeting organised on this same subject on 19 April 2016 allowed us to rally round this proposal for new support and to clarify our proposals for a rural agenda so as to take this proposal together to the September 2016 Cork conference on rural development.

At the third meeting, held on 4 May 2017, we formulated concrete proposals for rural territories to be able to contribute to the EU's ambitions for future European policies. These proposals were taken up in the European Committee of the Regions' opinion on the future of the CAP post-2020, requested by the European Commission vice-president, Franz Timmermans.

At the fourth joint meeting, held on 19 March 2018, we started a debate on bringing together the various funds relating to non-agricultural regional development, prior to the adoption of the multiannual financial framework (MFF).

On 3 October 2018, the European Parliament lived up to our expectations by adopting a resolution on addressing the specific needs of rural, mountainous and remote areas, in which it called on the European Commission to include in the future legislative proposals provisions addressing the specificities of these areas and to provide for adequate funding, especially from the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESI Funds), for cohesion policy post-2020.

Today, we come together once more, but this time to gauge the extent to which that resolution has been taken into account in the European Parliament's work on preparing for the new programming period 2021-2027. I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to all the members of the European Parliament, and especially to the rapporteurs who work on European policies that will have a major impact on the development of rural areas, for coming here today to present their work and discuss it with us. I would also like to thank the Finnish Presidency for being with us today to explain the European Council's position on the total funding for the rural development policy.

I wish you all a very fruitful conference.