

**Question for written answer E-005063/2025
to the Commission**
Rule 144
Aldo Patriciello (PfE)

Subject: Need for extraordinary EU stimuli to safeguard and rejuvenate very small municipalities

In many Member States of the European Union – and in particular inland and mountain areas – thousands of municipalities with a population of under 500 are experiencing gradual depopulation, with an ageing population and the loss of essential services.

Such municipalities are a mainstay of the local economy, culture and the environment, but are often excluded or disadvantaged when it comes to accessing the EU's primary funding instruments, which are designed with larger entities in mind.

In the absence of any targeted policies, these communities are liable to disappear forever, with serious consequences in terms of hydro-geological instability, the protection of cultural heritage and the territorial cohesion of the Union.

Could the Commission therefore answer the following questions:

1. Will it bring forward extraordinary EU instruments dedicated to municipalities with fewer than 500 inhabitants, providing for simplified access criteria and specific resources to combat depopulation?
2. Does it plan to mainstream policies on living in small municipalities, essential services there and their economic attractiveness into the cohesion funds and rural development programmes?

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