

Question for written answer E-003517/2026
to the Commission
Rule 144
Elsi Katainen (Renew)

Subject: Effects of the F-gas Regulation on village shops in sparsely populated areas and rural vitality

In order to comply with F-gas Regulation (EU) 2024/573, many village shops will need to modernise their refrigeration equipment in the coming years. In Finland, the average amount that will need to be invested is estimated to be around EUR 190 000 per shop. Many shops in sparsely populated areas, which are already not very profitable, are unable to afford the investment needed and may be forced out of business.

The closure of village shops would undermine services in rural areas and could mean that people have to travel unreasonably far to do their shopping. A deterioration in services has an adverse effect on regions' vitality, and, at worst, forces people to leave their home regions. This is at odds with the Right to Stay strategy, the aim of which is to ensure that Europeans have the opportunity to remain and build their future in the place they call home, rather than being forced to relocate because they cannot earn a living or access essential services.

In rural areas in particular, the situation is compounded by the fact that services are already under pressure owing to long distances and rising logistics costs, among other factors. The significant additional investment required under the F-gas Regulation may therefore make it even more difficult to keep local services going. Local shops offer a wide range of services, and if they close down it may also mean the end for pharmacy, postal and parcel services.

With the above in mind:

1. Has the Commission assessed what impact the implementation of the regulation will have on keeping grocery shops and other local services going in sparsely populated areas?
2. Is the Commission intending to prepare targeted exemptions, financial instruments or other support measures to ensure that the significant investment burden caused by the regulation does not lead to shops being closed, the deterioration of services and people having to travel unreasonably far to do their shopping?

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