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Answer given by Ms Ferreira
on behalf of the European Commission
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The Commission pursues actions for achieving economic, social, and territorial cohesion in the EU, one facet of which is supporting multi-pole development and promoting smaller urban centres and rural areas. In particular, through Cohesion policy, the Commission supports the development of territories with investments based on strategies designed by local authorities to respond to their needs, notably in relation to demographic challenges¹. A platform on Harnessing Talent² is also in place to support EU's territories to address demographic transition. The Long-Term vision for EU's rural areas³ aims at supporting stronger, connected, resilient and prosperous rural areas. It comprises an Action Plan⁴ which defines the actions undertaken by the Commission to address, among others, demographic issues and the Rural Pact⁵, a framework for cooperation for rural stakeholders.

For the Cohesion Policy programming period 2021-2027, Greek regions invest in non-urban areas, including villages, to address specific economic and demographic challenges, and reduce inequalities. Under the shared management principle, the project selection in each region is the responsibility of the designated Member State's authorities.

The Common Agricultural Policy also tackles depopulation, promotes social inclusion and local development in rural areas, through initiatives such as LEADER - community led local development approach and by providing support for setting up of young farmers and new farmers, rural business and start-ups.

¹ Regulation (EU) 2021/1060 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 June 2021 laying down common provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund Plus, the Cohesion Fund, the Just Transition Fund and the European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund and financial rules for those and for the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund, the Internal Security Fund and the Instrument for Financial Support for Border Management and Visa Policy <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2021/1060/oj>

² https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/policy/communities-and-networks/harnessing-talent-platform_en

³ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52021DC0345>

⁴ https://rural-vision.europa.eu/action-plan_en

⁵ https://ruralpact.rural-vision.europa.eu/index_en