

Seminar Invitation

**EU Regional Policy post 2020:**

***Leverage for Growth from the Sparsely Populated Areas***

Tuesday 19 June 15:00-17:00

European Parliament, Altiero Spinelli A5G-1

Hosted by **Elsi Katainen, MEP** (ALDE, Finland) &

**Aleksander GABELIC, MEP** (S&D, Sweden)

Dear Madam/Sir,

The OECD carried out a [Territorial Review](#) in 2017 on the fourteen regions of the Northern Sparsely Populated areas (NSPA) in northernmost Europe. Conclusions of the Territorial Review, as well as the preceding OECD [Regional Outlook 2016](#) and the *Arctic Stakeholder Forum* established through the [Joint Communication on Integrated EU Arctic Policy of 2016](#) are clear: **Remote and rural regions hold great potential and benefit the whole EU, if given the right adapted development support.** This calls for a balanced approach between rural and urban dimension in the post 2020 Cohesion policy, based on **genuine rural-urban partnerships.**

The NSPA regions are located on the periphery of Europe and are part of Europe's gateway to the Arctic. A changing climate and access to natural resources are changing the political and economic landscape, increasing the importance of these regions. The NSPA, like many other rural regions, host several excellent universities and are a source of innovation-led growth for Europe.

The sustainable development of rural and peripheral regions is crucial to managing such strategic risks and opportunities for the EU. NSPA regions also share permanent geographic and demographic characteristics with a cold climate, long distances to the European markets and a sparse population, which means additional means are needed to stimulate development. As pointed out by the OECD, such regions need to develop through adding value around their immobile assets. Hence, **Smart Specialisation has been a particularly successful policy from the point of view of these regions.**

The EU plays a key role in this context also in the future. We would like to invite you to discuss the impact of future EU policies on sparsely populated regions together with the Commission, key MEPs and the OECD at the European Parliament.

Please register [here](#) to the event by 8 June.

Best regards,

***Elsi KATAINEN, MEP and Aleksander GABELIC, MEP***