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ASSEMBLEIA DA REPÚBLICA

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Dear Colleagues,

The pandemic crisis has highlighted the importance of the Rural World as a pillar for affirming the resilience of communities and territories.

The commitment to Rural Development highlighted the existing potential and strengthened the strategic importance of the Rural World for communities, regions, countries and the European Union. This raises the need to consider the generation of new responses to the challenges of Rural Development, which can be achieved through greater convergence of CAP operational and funding instruments with those of Cohesion. The *Alqueva* Dam, in Portugal, is a good example of such virtuous convergence, with positive impacts on rural and regional development.

Further rural development will also mean greater cohesion and an enhanced capacity to respond to resilience and sustainability challenges.

On behalf of the Portuguese Parliament, I am pleased to invite you to participate in the Interparliamentary Conference on Rural Development, Agriculture and Territorial Cohesion, which will take place on 16 June 2021, within the framework of the Parliamentary Dimension of the Portuguese Presidency of the Council of the European Union. Although initially set for June 15, 2021, the invited speakers' agendas required a change in the proposed date, so the Conference will take place on **June 16, 2021**.

The pandemic crisis presented us with common public health challenges and the need to develop a new response capacity in Europe. Rural Development is part of the solution, of developing responses for a better future, one with identity, diversity and cohesion.

More than ever, it is crucial that parliamentarians contribute to developing answers for the Rural World and for citizens. We need a more developed Rural World and a more cohesive Europe.

In the hope that we can drive new solutions and share ideas and perspectives at this important moment for national parliaments and the European project, please find attached the draft programme for the Conference. The Conference will be held in virtual format, with the registration form and all additional information being sent to delegations in due course.

The Chair of the Committee on Agriculture and the Sea

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