



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

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REPORT

from : Special Committee on Agriculture
on : 24 November 2008
to : Council

Subject : **The Future of the CAP after 2013**
- Adoption of Council Conclusions

1. On 23 September 2008, the Member States had an exchange of views on "**How best to prepare for the CAP of the future**" during the informal meeting of Agricultural Ministers, in Annecy (France).
2. On the basis of the positions of the Member States as expressed at this occasion, the Presidency submitted **draft Council conclusions on the "Future of the CAP after 2013"**, which were discussed by delegations at the Special Committee on Agriculture, at its meetings on 17 and 24 November 2008.
3. The Presidency therefore invites the Council to adopt the draft conclusions as set out in Annex.

DRAFT COUNCIL CONCLUSIONS ON THE "FUTURE OF THE CAP AFTER 2013"

The Council:

- recalls the conclusions of the European Council in June 2008 and the recent political agreement on the CAP "Health Check" that will enable EU farmers to better respond to market signals, while ensuring fair competition and fostering sustainable agriculture across the EU and ensuring an adequate food supply;
- recalls that the following conclusions are without prejudice to the future discussions on the budget review and new financial perspectives for the period after 2013;
- recalls that agriculture is at the heart of issues crucial to our society, which is primarily to produce food for human consumption, and additionally to provide raw materials for non-food uses. It contributes to the preservation of natural resources, to the creation of jobs, and plays a role in the economic vitality of the European territory while providing public goods for Europe. Its multiplicity of functions makes the agricultural sector an important asset for the future of our continent, contributing to achieve the goals of the Lisbon strategy;
- emphasises that ongoing changes in global demand for food bring with them new opportunities for the agricultural sector, but it must also cope with new challenges, notable among which are:
 - the prospect of increasing global demand for food,
 - the uncertainties concerning the prospects of prices for certain commodities, with respect to their stability and their level,
 - increasingly stringent environmental requirements and new health risks requiring adjustment of the means of production,
 - the impact of unavoidable climate change,
 - the need to respond to the high and increasing standards demanded by our society that bring with them opportunities and challenges in a globalised economy,
 - and the need to strengthen the competitiveness of European products on the global market;

- considers that, given this context, it is necessary for the European Union to continue to have after 2013 a common and sufficiently ambitious agricultural policy. On the basis of its initial principles and the goals defined in the Treaty of Rome, the CAP has always adapted to its evolving environment, thus allowing our ambitious European model of agriculture to face the challenges of the global market. The future CAP must however be seen in the context of a broader vision in which sustainable development, competitiveness and global food balances are an integral part, such as to:
 - ensure adequate availability of supplies for European citizens in terms of quantity and quality,
 - strengthen competitiveness and economic dynamism of rural areas within and outside of agriculture - in particular in innovative sectors like quality products and renewable resources – thanks to further work on innovation, research and development,
 - contribute to global food balances in a world in which it will be necessary to double agricultural production if we are to feed a population of nine billion in 2050,
 - preserve proper balances in rural areas, maintain agriculture in its diversity throughout the whole territory of Europe, including outermost regions, and promote regional cohesion in order to ensure that economic activity and jobs continue to be located in rural areas in line with the Lisbon Strategy,
 - ensure agricultural sustainability and to play a role in contributing to sustainable development of rural areas, in particular by mitigating climate change and improving the environment in order to build an agricultural sector that reconciles economic performance and competitiveness with ecological soundness,
 - reward public goods delivered by agriculture;

- notes that in order to achieve these objectives, it will be necessary in particular to ensure that our future common agricultural policy:
 - takes due account of the increasing challenges related to climate change, health and food safety, and the economy,
 - assimilates innovation and research and development more effectively, notably to enhance agriculture's productivity growth, energy efficiency and ability to adapt to climate change,
 - and guarantees the wholesomeness of its products for consumers by promoting ambitious food safety, animal welfare and environmental standards both inside and outside the Union;
 - is committed to thoroughly examining the possibilities for development of the direct payment system in the Community and addressing the differing level of the direct payments between Member States;
 - declares that work should continue with the objective of obtaining further simplification of the regulatory burden facing farmers as well as national administrations regarding the implementation of the CAP.
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