

Paris declaration for a Common Agricultural and Food Policy

10 December 2009

(EU27 Member States except U.K., Denmark, Sweden, Netherlands and Malta)

We are at a crucial moment for the future of Europe and its agriculture. Ten days ago the Lisbon Treaty came into force, confirming, unchanged, the goals of the common agricultural policy laid down by the founding fathers: *“to ensure the rational development of agricultural production, to ensure a fair standard of living for the agricultural community, to stabilise markets, to assure the availability of supplies, to ensure that supplies reach consumers at reasonable prices”*. In a few weeks the new Commission will be taking office and the broad policy focuses of the next legislature are on the point of being defined.

Together, we are convinced that agriculture is central to the core issues for our society: food, preservation of natural resources, job creation, public goods, the economic vitality of rural areas and more generally the rural development. Agriculture is a key asset for Europe and its political and economic development, notably in the context of the future EU 2020 strategy.

To respond to these issues, we consider that a balanced approach is possible between markets and our collective choices in favour of food that is safe and of high quality, the environment and the rural areas. In the face of climate change, global political and food insecurity, the volatility of global market prices and the resurgence of health crises, only an ambitious, continent-wide policy with adequate resources can safeguard Europe's independence.

Together, we make the resolute choice of a European agriculture and food policy, the principles of which are as follows:

–To develop the European food model, characterised by great diversity to which we are all attached. With that in view, we want a policy that assures the supply of food that is at the same time, safe, healthy, balanced, of high quality and accessible to all. Europe must be able to respond to the needs of 500 million consumers and contribute to the world's food balance. And for that, European agriculture must be both competitive, sustainable and preserved in all areas of Europe in accordance with the European model of agriculture.

–To give farmers the means to better respond to market signals and build winning strategies for all the sectors. In order for them to be able to invest and develop Europe's agricultural potential, we must assure them a stable, decent income in the face of growing market volatility. That will require to

have a regulatory framework capable of addressing situations of crisis and extreme market volatility. That will also require to develop innovation and to promote fair relations between the partners in supply chains.

–**To address environmental challenges.** Agriculture is too strategic an activity to be seen as no more than an instrument to fight climate change. Yet, like any other economic activity, agriculture must take better account of the need to protect the environment and animal welfare. It is the very preservation of agricultural potential that is at stake. That is the reason why European policy must put our agriculture in a position to produce better and bring forth its contribution to the environment and green growth.

–**To assume our collective choices.** Security of food and health, preservation of the environment and of rural areas, maintaining traditional landscape and the diversity of agricultural holdings are all European public goods to which we are attached. But they come at a cost that farmers cannot bear alone. We must also ensure that products imported into Europe comply with all our standards.

Together, we are ready to examine, with enough open minds and with permanent regard to the need for simplification, all existing or new instruments that will allow these goals to be achieved, goals that remain at the heart of the political project for Europe. In this context, we are committed without prejudice to the new Financial Perspective for the period after 2013 to thoroughly examine the possibilities for development of the direct payments system, in the view of a reinforced legitimacy at the European level aiming at equal situations being treated equally.

Only a policy at the community level can make this possible by contributing significant European added-value compared to a sum of national policies unsuited to our unified internal market. We must have resources for action commensurate with our ambitions. Agriculture cannot be reduced to an adjustment variable.

We call on all those wishing to do so to take part in this great open debate. Because European agriculture is our employment. Because agriculture is our food. Because agriculture is our environment and our regions. Because agriculture means public goods and positive externalities. Because agriculture is our independence. Because agriculture is about our conception of our future in Europe and of the future of Europe in the world. European agriculture is the business of every European.

Europe, Food and Agriculture: significant facts

•Agriculture and the economy

Agriculture and the agrifood industries have a fundamental place in the economy and the whole of Europe's territory. Indeed, the European Union has 13.8 million agricultural holdings on which 27 million people are in permanent employment.

The food and beverage industry forms one of the biggest and most dynamic sectors in Europe. It comprises some 310,000 enterprises and employs over 4 million people. Generating total annual sales revenue of €800 billion, it supplies extremely competitive national and international markets with diversified, high-quality products.

The competitive performance of the European agrifood industries depends on the capacity of agricultural production to meet their requirements (quantity, healthiness, quality). Good performance downstream can therefore be attributed in large part to strengths upstream.

The agricultural and agrifood sector employs 14% of the working population in Europe, and it also provides, by virtue of its characteristics, economic services that although indirect are nevertheless crucial. This is so because it ensures that a degree of activity and employment is maintained across the whole of Europe, even in economically underdeveloped regions and less favoured areas. Moreover, it is a source of employment opportunities for certain categories of the working population in which the level of employment is low (young people of working age, poorly qualified workers).

•Agriculture and the environment

Farmland occupies approximately half the total land area of the European Union. Agriculture must help mitigate climate change by reducing its emissions, producing renewable energy and bioproducts and storing carbon in agricultural land. And indeed, the conservation of ecosystems through farmland management has a key role to play in the emergence of general resilience in the face of climate change.

Over and above the single issue of climate change, agriculture must also play a role in the responses to the many environmental challenges facing the EU: protection of water resources, protection of habitats and biodiversity, landscape upkeep and restoration.

● **Agriculture and the consumer**

The CAP has ensured that Europeans benefit from very high safety and health standards. It has also met the expectations of consumers by supporting the development of quality signs, geographical indications and organic farming.

Lastly, it has enabled improvements to be made in access to food for those with specific needs.

● **Agriculture and the world**

Europe is endeavouring to remove all global export subsidies. It is ready to abolish European export subsidies in the context of the Doha Round on condition of reciprocity on the part of the other members of the WTO. The role of export subsidies has steadily declined and today they account in fact for no more than 3% of CAP resources.

By 2050, the planet will need to feed some 9 billion people. That will entail an increase in global production of approximately 70%. In this context, Europe will be indispensable in achieving a global food balance.

● **The Common Agricultural Policy, a modern European policy**

As the first major common policy, it has made a very substantial contribution to the construction of Europe. The many reforms that it has been able to implement in 1992, 1999, 2003 and 2008 have enabled it to adjust to evolving challenges:

- Increasing market orientation of agricultural production,
- Feeding Europe by modernising its agriculture,
- Controlling surpluses,
- Inclusion of rural development as a goal,
- Developing a quality-focused policy,
- Inclusion of the environment.