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Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development

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DRAFT OPINION

of the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development

for the Special committee on the policy challenges and budgetary resources for a sustainable European Union after 2013

on policy challenges and budgetary resources for a sustainable European Union after 2013
(2010/2211(INI))

Rapporteur: Giovanni La Via

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SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development calls on the Special committee on the policy challenges and budgetary resources for a sustainable European Union after 2013, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions in its motion for a resolution:

1. Regards the current debate on the new Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) as important, given agriculture's role as a strategic sector in the European Union;
2. Recalls that the CAP, in addition to its fundamental objectives, has a multifunctional role in delivering public goods, such as environmental protection, high-quality food production, high animal welfare standards, and in shaping and improving the diversity and quality of valued landscapes in the EU; points out that it also plays a key part in combating land abandonment, rural depopulation and the ageing of the rural population in the EU by providing appropriate funding for rural communities;
3. Notes that this is the first CAP reform in an EU of 27 Member States and that it is important to take account of the varied types of agriculture carried on in European countries and territories, whilst avoiding any attempt to renationalise what is a common policy;
4. Notes that CAP's share of the total EU budget has steadily decreased, and will continue to decrease, from about 75% in 1985 to 39.3% by 2013, a figure which represents less than 0.45% of total EU GDP, even though the policy enhances food security for 500 million Europeans, provides 13.6 million jobs, and directly protects and maintains 47% of the whole territory of the European Union;
5. Considers that, given the wide range of objectives which agricultural policy is called upon to meet and the need to ensure real added value, the share of the budget allocated to EU agricultural policy must be at least maintained beyond 2013;
6. Considers that the duration of the multiannual financial framework (MFF) must be chosen in such a way as to allow for adequate and effective budget implementation capable of achieving the targets of a strong Europe and that a high degree of flexibility is needed, given the unexpected challenges the CAP will certainly have to face in the future;
7. Believes that, in light of past experience, short programming periods can generate inefficiencies in terms of both spending and the achievement of aims, and therefore proposes a period of at least seven years, so that problems and mistakes which have arisen or occurred in the recent past will not be repeated;
8. Calls for the MFF and current budget structure to be maintained in order to guarantee a single heading for agriculture and rural development.