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Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development

2011/2095(INI)

6.10.2011

OPINION

of the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development

for the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety

on a roadmap for moving to a competitive low carbon economy in 2050 (2011/2095(INI))

Rapporteur: Béla Glattfelder

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SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development calls on the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions in its motion for a resolution:

1. Believes that agriculture is well placed to make a major contribution to tackling climate change, creating new jobs through green growth and supplying renewable energy; stresses that the CAP post-2013 is expected to enhance this contribution; recognises that agriculture has already substantially reduced its emissions through improved production efficiency; notes, however, that, in the longer run, the emission-reduction potential of agriculture is substantial (by 2050 the agricultural sector will be able to reduce non-CO_2 emissions by between 42 % and 49 % compared to 1990-levels), but could be considered rather limited compared to other sectors; stresses that all the countries that are the main emitters must make an appropriate contribution; notes that greenhouse gas emissions reduction in the agricultural sector is a win-win-win situation as it increases farmers' long-term economic and agronomic viability, via increased climate resilience and reduced eutrophication, and lowers the external costs of pollution for society as a whole;

2. Stresses that clear emissions targets will stimulate the early investments needed in R&D, demonstration and deployment of low-emitting technologies and that defining a long-term strategy is paramount to ensuring that the EU is on track to achieve its agreed objective of reducing emissions by 2050; calls on the Commission to propose mid-term emissions reduction objectives for 2030 and 2040 for all relevant sectors, including agriculture; states that these targets should follow a linear trajectory between current emissions levels, the 2020 objective and the 95 % reductions to be made by 2050;

3. Considers that long-term competitiveness can only be achieved by having healthy, biologically diverse agro-ecosystems that are climate resilient and by taking due care of limited and finite natural resources, such as soil, water and land;

4. Notes that emission mitigation efforts are expected to increase the demand for bio-energy; stresses the potential of the agricultural sector to contribute to the Europe 2020 strategy by increasing the production of sustainable energy, through sources such as biogas, and thereby creating new jobs in rural areas; calls, therefore, for greater recognition of the contribution made by agriculture and forestry through the sustainable production of renewable energy, which is currently credited to the energy, transport and heating sectors when taking stock; stresses that biomass and biofuels must be produced sustainably, using robust sustainability criteria, efficiently, and without affecting negatively agrifood markets, land used for production, and food and land prices, avoiding the clearance and conversion of valuable natural ecosystems;

5. Emphasises the importance of new technologies in the development of renewable energies and the production of bio-energy and indicates that the EU should harness every available innovation in order to achieve its objectives for the reduction of CO_2 emissions;

6. Stresses that sustainable use of forests contributes to reducing CO_2 emissions and that it is therefore necessary to take measures under the second agricultural policy pillar to enable

forests to be managed even in difficult locations;

7. Recalls that as the world's arable land decreases, while its population increases, action on climate change and the need to ensure global food security are dual challenges which need to be pursued together; stresses that the need, on the one hand, to expand production and the need, on the other hand, to increase the sequestration of carbon in soil and biomass must not lead to a conflict of goals;

8. Notes that an internationally concerted approach towards a global climate agreement is needed, so as to ensure a level playing field with agricultural sectors in other economies;

9. Recalls that improved agricultural and forestry practices should increase the sector's capacity to preserve and sequester carbon in soils and forests; stresses at the same time that most forest owners are also farmers; stresses, furthermore, the EU's goal of curbing the deforestation occurring worldwide, in particular in developing countries, and of halting global forest cover loss by 2030 at the latest;

10. Emphasises the importance of developing suitable measures and/or mechanisms that enable real financial recognition of the role played by agriculture and forestry in conserving carbon;

11. Stresses that the Commission should emphasise climate mainstreaming to create coherence between policies, such as industry, research, energy, biodiversity, trade, development, agriculture, innovation, transport, animal welfare and the Europe 2020 strategy; sound and strategic management of the agricultural sector's potential would put Europe well on its way to becoming a competitive player in tomorrow's low-carbon global economy;

12. Calls for the necessary measures, including research funding, education efforts, investment aid and other incentive-based initiatives, in the CAP that would support and enable the use of agricultural and forestry residue in the production of sustainable energy;

13. Calls for the CAP to include targets for the use of sustainable energy;

14 Stresses that the food chain should be shorter and transparent and that the consumption of locally produced food should be encouraged, including support for local and regional markets, in order to reduce agricultural production's transport-related emissions; stresses that relocating European multifunctional production and processing to non-EU countries would have a negative impact on European added value and on climate goals;

15. Deplores the fact that too much agricultural waste is currently not used to its full potential; considers that agricultural waste should be seen as an asset; calls on the Commission and the Member States to put forward national strategies on the need for better management of bio-waste and of agricultural and forestry by-products; notes in this respect the use of animal waste and plant-based by-products and processing waste e.g. in biofermenters, to produce on-farm energy while at the same time also reducing farmers' production costs;

16. Notes that, with the knowledge and techniques available today, agricultural holdings may already become self-sufficient in energy with the possibility of both increasing

profitability and creating environmental gains through the local production of bio-energy from organic waste;

17. Notes that, for reasons of resource efficiency, farmers should be encouraged to make better use of the potential of biogas and biogas by-products to replace fertilisers;

18. Notes that biofuels have a key role to play in the long-term strategy to replace fossil fuels with renewable energy sources; calls for greater account to be taken of the diverse potential the raw material wood has as an energy source, a sustainable building material and a carbon pool;

19. Stresses that the Commission's forthcoming framework for land use, land use change and forestry (LULUCF) should avoid excessive regulation, which could undermine the EU's prospects for achieving the climate targets, and, due to Europe's diversity, should respect the principle of subsidiarity and the role of local and national governments;

20. Stresses the need for increased investment in energy infrastructure, such as smart grids and biogas distribution, to be able to handle the increased cloud energy production from renewable energy sources;

21. Supports the idea that EU funds, including the Rural Development Fund, should only fund projects for agricultural facilities that are energy efficient, especially those employing renewable energy sources that can reduce carbon emissions to a level as close to zero as possible;

22. Emphasises the importance of carbon-neutral farming; urges the Commission to promote this via the greening measures envisaged in the first pillar of the new CAP;

23. Emphasises, to this end, the importance of manure processing, which not only provides renewable energy but also reduces environmental pressure and is a substitute for artificial fertiliser in the form of mineral concentrates; emphasises in this respect that if manure is to be considered as an energy source, it is essential that processed manure be recognised as a substitute for artificial fertiliser in the Nitrates Directive;

24. Stresses that increased research efforts and funding are urgently needed to develop and mainstream climate-efficient agricultural practices, less energy-intensive and less polluting agricultural methods and more efficient energy production; notes furthermore that low-pollution and energy-efficient alternatives already exist; considers research and development in this area to be an essential part of full implementation of the strategic energy technology plan, and that this calls for additional investment; emphasises that it is necessary to ensure, in this connection, that the results of research are translated into practice at the level of holdings; welcomes the Commission's proposal to establish a new research framework – Horizon 2020;

25. Believes that better livestock feed management, including protein crops in arable rotations and increasing the diversity of protein crops in permanent pasture mixes, in order to grow more animal feed on-farm, would reduce dependence on animal feed imports with a high carbon cost; believes that this would also reduce animal feed costs for farmers, and result in better soil management, by increasing soil water retention, and also reducing

susceptibility to pests;

26. Stresses the need to improve energy self-sufficiency on farms, through incentives for on-farm renewable energy, such as wind turbines, solar panels and bio fermentation technology, which would reduce production costs and increase their economic viability by providing an alternative income stream for farmers;

RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE

Date adopted	6.10.2011
Result of final vote	+: 33 –: 3 0: 1
Members present for the final vote	John Stuart Agnew, Richard Ashworth, Liam Aylward, José Bové, Michel Dantin, Paolo De Castro, Albert Deß, Herbert Dorfmann, Lorenzo Fontana, Iratxe García Pérez, Béla Glattfelder, Martin Häusling, Esther Herranz García, Peter Jahr, Elisabeth Jeggle, Jarosław Kalinowski, Elisabeth Köstinger, Agnès Le Brun, Mairead McGuinness, Mariya Nedelcheva, James Nicholson, Rareş-Lucian Niculescu, Georgios Papastamkos, Marit Paulsen, Ulrike Rodust, Alfreds Rubiks, Giancarlo Scottà, Marc Tarabella, Janusz Wojciechowski
Substitute(s) present for the final vote	Luís Paulo Alves, Spyros Danellis, Bas Eickhout, Ismail Ertug, Giovanni La Via, Astrid Lulling
Substitute(s) under Rule 187(2) present for the final vote	George Sabin Cutaş, Pablo Zalba Bidegain