



2020/2217(INI)

20.10.2020

OPINION

of the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development

for the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy

on a European strategy for data
(2020/2217(INI))

Rapporteur for opinion: Juan Ignacio Zoido Álvarez

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SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development calls on the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions into its motion for a resolution:

1. Welcomes the fact that the Commission's communication entitled 'A European strategy for data' and its white paper on Artificial Intelligence highlight agriculture as a strategic sector of public interest for the digital era, and stresses the fact that the agri-food sector has been further proven to be a sector of high strategic importance during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic; recognises the potential of digital technologies for rural areas and proposes the development of a common European agriculture data space; insists, in this regard, on the need for greater financial support to boost the use of digital technologies in the EU agricultural sector and for greater use of these technologies to be made in the control systems; calls for further cooperation between Member States on measures to digitalise agriculture;
2. Commends the 2019 Declaration of cooperation on 'A smart and sustainable digital future for European agriculture and rural areas' which recognises the potential of digital technologies and the use of data to help tackle the important and urgent economic, social, climatic and environmental challenges facing the EU's agri-food sector and rural areas;
3. Recalls the potential of data to increase sustainability and competitiveness across the entire agri-food and forestry chains, reducing risks in agricultural and forestry production and to farmers' and forest owners' income; emphasises that wide access to data contributes to the development of innovative and sustainable techniques, such as precision agriculture and precision livestock farming, which will help use resources more efficiently and achieve the objectives of the farm to fork strategy; supports research and development in the agri-food sector following the guidelines of the horizon Europe programme, and notes the importance of the accessibility of innovative and sustainable techniques to all levels of the sector;
4. Highlights the role of data in improving the information made available to consumers, through the traceability and use of digital labels for agri-food products, its role in reducing food waste, as well as in enabling the efficient and timely use of resources in farm and forest production, potentially contributing to a more resilient and sustainable agri-food sector with major benefits for consumers, producers and the environment; in this context, highlights the role of data in the successful implementation of the farm to fork strategy;
5. Recalls the importance that digital technologies have had in achieving reductions in greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in EU agriculture while increasing its overall productivity; considers that innovation, new technologies and big data in particular can make a significant contribution to the 'Green Deal' and that they have the potential to bridge the gap between current and future environmental and social development targets while maintaining food security and the agri-food sector's competitiveness; notes that high quality data can play a role in reducing the agri-food sector's ecological footprint and achieving several of the Sustainable Development Goals defined by the United

Nations General Assembly;

6. Urges national and/or regional authorities to enhance the development of data-processing and data-based tools for sectors such as beekeeping, which are highly dependent on natural and human-driven external factors, and for which precise and up-to-date data is crucial;
7. Recalls that the EU is a world leader in terms of animal welfare standards; urges, in this context, Member States' authorities to improve data collection and processing with the aim of providing faster and better medical diagnosis and treatment of livestock animals such as, cattle, equidae, small ruminants, poultry and bees among others, also with the aim of decreasing antimicrobial resistance (AMR) among them;
8. Stresses the need for support measures to narrow the gap between urban and rural areas' access to business opportunities and services, including guaranteeing affordable, secure and widespread access to high-speed broadband for all rural areas; highlights that these broadband services enable the use of data-driven technology including the development of 'smart farming' or 'e-farming', which have the potential to create quality jobs and further economic opportunities, and will facilitate generational renewal in areas that are struggling with depopulation, while strengthening gender equality; calls for the empowerment of farmers and for farmers' access to digital services to be supported as a priority by the future digital Europe programme and the Connecting Europe Facility, and supports the setting up of digital innovation hubs at regional level, close to the end users and giving special support to SMEs, in order to speed up the development and uptake of digital innovations, and to create a regional innovation ecosystem; expresses its support for the inclusion of smart villages incentives and/or measures in the next multiannual financial framework (MFF) through programmes such as the rural development programmes (RDPs);
9. Considers it essential that the Commission continues to increase research and development (R&D) in relation to artificial intelligence tools, digital technologies, infrastructure, business models and short supply chains focused on the agri-food and forest sectors supported by EU tools, including, but not limited to, earth observation tools such as Copernicus and Galileo Data and Information Services and Data and Information Access Services (DIAS);
10. Underlines the importance of promoting the development of infrastructure and devices capable of processing agricultural data, as well as targeted investments to promote awareness raising, the improvement of digital literacy, and digital skills to support farmers, especially small farmers, SMEs in the agri-food sector and rural communities in the digital transition; emphasises the need for farm advisors to be given regular training to enable a better uptake of digital technologies by farmers; highlights that a strong agricultural education system in smart technologies is key; supports the creation and sharing of best practices to promote innovation;
11. Calls for the reinforcement of cybersecurity and emphasises the need for a robust legal framework that safeguards farmers' and forest owners' right to data sovereignty and that prevents distortion of competition and the deterioration of farmers' and forest owners' autonomy, while supporting the development of a data-agile economy; calls on

the Commission to develop a framework for the sharing and analysis of agri data to facilitate risk reduction and the preparedness of farmers and workers in the agri-food sector; stresses the need to put primary producers at the centre of the framework and ensure that everyone, including farmers with small and medium-sized holdings, can access technology and benefit from it, while being protected from unintentional and uninformed sharing of data;

12. Recalls the importance of accurate and up-to-date data on the import of goods and products, including agricultural goods and products, from third countries into the EU; further recalls that in its 2018 Special Report entitled ‘A series of delays in Customs IT systems: what went wrong?’ the European Court of Auditors found that delays in the implementation of the new IT system for the Customs Union suffered, among other things, from insufficient resources being allocated by the EU and Member States; is concerned that this delay might hinder the complete modernisation of the relevant customs processes, which could challenge the collection and/or use of reliable and accurate data on the export and import of goods and products; calls on all concerned stakeholders to provide the necessary resources for the completion of the new Customs IT system, preferably before, but not later than, the postponed deadline of 2025.

INFORMATION ON ADOPTION IN COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

Date adopted	22.9.2020
Result of final vote	+: 37 -: 5 0: 5
Members present for the final vote	Mazaly Aguilar, Clara Aguilera, Atidzhe Alieva-Veli, Álvaro Amaro, Attila Ara-Kovács, Carmen Avram, Adrian-Dragoş Benea, Benoît Biteau, Mara Bizzotto, Daniel Buda, Isabel Carvalhais, Asger Christensen, Angelo Ciocca, Ivan David, Paolo De Castro, Jérémy Decerle, Salvatore De Meo, Herbert Dorfmann, Luke Ming Flanagan, Cristian Ghinea, Dino Giarrusso, Francisco Guerreiro, Martin Häusling, Martin Hlaváček, Krzysztof Jurgiel, Jarosław Kalinowski, Elsi Katainen, Gilles Lebreton, Norbert Lins, Chris MacManus, Marlene Mortler, Ulrike Müller, Maria Noichl, Juozas Olekas, Pina Picierno, Maxette Pirbakas, Eugenia Rodríguez Palop, Bert-Jan Ruissen, Anne Sander, Petri Sarvamaa, Simone Schmiedtbauer, Annie Schreijer-Pierik, Veronika Vrecionová, Juan Ignacio Zoido Álvarez
Substitutes present for the final vote	Claude Gruffat, Michaela Šojdrová, Marc Tarabella

FINAL VOTE BY ROLL CALL IN COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

37	+
EPP	Álvaro Amaro, Daniel Buda, Salvatore De Meo, Herbert Dorfmann, Jarosław Kalinowski, Norbert Lins, Marlene Mortler, Anne Sander, Petri Sarvamaa, Simone Schmiedtbauer, Annie Schreijer-Pierik, Juan Ignacio Zoido Álvarez, Michaela Šojdrová
S&D	Clara Aguilera, Attila Ara-Kovács, Carmen Avram, Adrian-Dragoş Benea, Isabel Carvalhais, Paolo De Castro, Maria Noichl, Juozas Olekas, Pina Picierno, Marc Tarabella
RENEW	Atidzhe Alieva-Veli, Asger Christensen, Jérémy Decerle, Cristian Ghinea, Martin Hlaváček, Elsi Katainen, Ulrike Müller
ECR	Mazaly Aguilar, Krzysztof Jurgiel, Bert-Jan Ruissen, Veronika Vrecionová
EUL/NGL	Luke Ming Flanagan, Chris MacManus, Eugenia Rodríguez Palop

5	-
ID	Mara Bizzotto, Angelo Ciocca, Gilles Lebreton, Maxette Pirbakas
NI	Dino Giarrusso

5	0
ID	Ivan David
GREENS/EFA	Benoît Biteau, Claude Gruffat, Francisco Guerreiro, Martin Häusling

Key to symbols:

+ : in favour

- : against

0 : abstention