

WRITTEN QUESTION E-3070/06

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to the Commission

Subject: New framework rules on state aid for the agriculture sector for the period 2007-2013

The Commission recently presented draft framework rules on state aid for the agriculture sector for the period 2007-2013.

Compared with the rules currently in force, this draft contains some radical and unacceptable changes, above all for agriculture in mountain areas, for example a complete ban on the granting of national aid in the area of livestock breeding (herd books, yield tests, aid for keeping and purchasing breeding animals, ban on the granting of aid for land reparcelling, ban on the granting of aid to promote the sale of agricultural products).

Is the Commission aware that this would both spell the end for organised livestock breeding in mountain areas with their many native breeds that are only found locally and for small-scale farms, and also cause major difficulties for future land reparcelling specifically in mountain areas where structural changes are now needed more than ever? Is it aware that a ban on the granting of aid to promote the sale of agricultural products would in particular hit quality production in mountain areas very hard?

In the light of these considerations, could the Commission abandon this measure and retain the current rules? If not, what measures does the Commission envisage taking in future to safeguard small-scale farming in mountain areas and preserve the natural and cultural landscape?