
YEPP Resolution: Reform of the Common Agricultural Policy: Supporting Opportunities for Young Farmers

Adopted at the YEPP Council Meeting in Lisbon, May 2012.

Recognising:

- The agricultural sector is of huge economic importance to the EU. In 2011, the EU recorded an agriculture trade surplus of €7 billion, for the second year in a row. The value of agricultural exports from the EU increased by 16% to around €105 billion
- Negotiations are currently underway on the shape of the Common Agricultural Policy post-2013.
- Excessive demand in agriculture products is putting additional pressure on the sector and prices in Europe.

Acknowledging:

- The agriculture sector in the EU is facing a massive demographic crisis. Currently, under 35-year-olds account for a mere 6% of European farm owners, and in some EU Member States, as many as 40% of farm-holders are 65-year-olds, or older still.
- For European agriculture to be competitive on an international level, CAP needs to support informed, professionally trained, progressive, dynamic and adaptable farmers.
- Trained young farmers generally have the increased technical expertise and their energy and qualifications help them to drive development in the European agricultural sector.
- Farm installation requires considerable financial capacity, which creates difficulties for young farmers who do not have easy access to capital, savings or credit. The costs of farm start-up and farm takeover are a major barrier to entry to the industry.
- Current Rural Development Programmes include optional measures dedicated to young farmers (notably measure 112 on installation and measure 113 for the early retirement scheme). However, as renewal of generation remains unprioritised in

Member States, it is observable that Member States do not fully maximise the potential of these measures.

- Little data currently exists on the factors that influence young people in deciding to enter the farming sector, and on measures that could be taken to encourage more young people to enter the farming sector.

YEPP:

- Welcomes and supports the efforts made thus far by the European Commission and Commissioner Dacian Cioloș to prioritise young farmers in the reform of CAP.
- Urges the European Commission, European Parliament, and European Council to make generational renewal an overall priority in all remaining CAP discussions and negotiations.
- Calls on all EU Member States to commit to a mandatory top-up of direct payments under Pillars One and Two of CAP for young farmers for a five-year period after set-up when they are under 40 years of age at the time of set-up.
- Calls on the European Commission to coordinate an EU-wide survey of young people in the European agricultural industry, with the aim of analysing how many people seek to enter the farming sector, what factors influence this decision, and the success rate of these individuals, and what measures should be undertaken to further improve generation renewal.