

A federal strategy for sustainable, safe and healthy food for all Europeans

Resolution submitted by: Political Commission 2 – Internal European Affairs

The Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) has been central to the European project for more than 50 years. Over those years, CAP has worked to support European farmers and allowed the food sector to flourish. Today it does not only nourish European citizens but also people in far-flung countries. However, the challenges of food insecurity faced by European leaders in the 20th century, are no longer acute. More than ever, the common agricultural policy must adapt to 21st century challenges: today we have the technology to produce enough healthy food for all, but it needs to be done in a sustainable manner. Today, the grand challenge is to meet our dietary and nutritional needs, without also harming the environment. Providing safe, sustainable and healthy food to all inhabitants must become front and centre of an agricultural policy reform. COVID-19 has at the same time exposed vulnerabilities in international food supply chains and production systems, as well as fault lines in how we treat nature with current farming practices. These pressures have already had consequences: about 60% of new diseases are of animal origin, including the current pandemic.

A federal solution must be the answer: European countries need a harmonized approach, in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity, for securing the supply of food for all its inhabitants, while also making sure arable land is not degraded, nor ecosystems endangered. A federal-level strategy is crucial to create a level-playing field within the internal market with common rules and minimum criteria about food produce to ensure fair competition. This resolution focuses largely on food consumption for the European market. JEF Europe is cognisant of the fact that internal agricultural policy can have a harmful effect on other countries and their development, which will be further explored in a future resolution.

JEF Europe,

- *Recognizing* the historical significance of the CAP for the European project, as the historically most funded policy area that still makes up one of the biggest budgetary posts, and can have an oversized impact on the EU's overall sustainability goals;
- *Recalling* its resolution 'Environment does not stop at the borders', affirming the inherently cross-border nature of the environment and the interdependence of environmental challenges with economic and social systems in a globalised world;
- *Convinced* that Europe needs a federal-level approach to food policy, that ensures an equitable, secure and sustainable food supply and a harmonized single market in food products;
- *Underlining* that such an approach could become a green and sustainable model for food systems worldwide and contribute to greater and more ambitious cooperation among countries in key areas such as animal welfare, the use of pesticides and the

- fight against antimicrobial resistance;
- *Alarmed* by the fact that European natural resources are being degraded at an unprecedented rate, leading to almost half of Europe's native trees and more than 1,500 of its animal species being threatened with extinction¹;
- *Disappointed* that the world is not on track to achieve any of the 20 Aichi biodiversity targets for 2020, according to a recent UN review²;
- *Underlining* the fact that the agriculture sector is responsible for 10% of total European greenhouse gas emissions, while food accounts for over a quarter (26%) of global emissions;
- *Recognising* that some practices relating to food production and consumption for European consumers have a huge impact globally, which should be factored into policy decisions;
- *Regrets* the increasing use of intensive monoculture agriculture in European food production;
- *Convinced* that Europe needs to invest more in the education and support of young farmers to make the agriculture sector more accessible to diverse groups, as out of the EU's total land area, only 6% is managed by farmers younger than 35;
- *Concerned* that high rates of imports of feed products such as soy used to feed European livestock, contributes to the deforestation of rainforests;
- *Alarmed by* the overuse of nutrient fertilizers such as phosphorus and nitrogen that deteriorates European soil and ground water quality, at the local and regional level;
- *Disapproving* of the overuse of antibiotics in terrestrial and aquatic industrial livestock contributing to antimicrobial resistance (AMR);
- *Underlining* that every year 420,000 people die and 600 million fall ill from eating unsafe food, whereas the majority develop diarrhoeal diseases³;
- *Concerned* by the increased trade in live animals, despite the ambitions agreed to by the international community in the CITES agreement;
- While also *welcoming* the newly established animal transport inquiry committee in the European Parliament, whose objective is to investigate the implementation of animal transport [Regulation EC 1/2005](#) in favor of ensuring animal welfare in Europe;
- *Alarmed by* the increasing rate of contagious diseases that spread between animals and humans (so called zoonoses);

JEF Europe therefore,

1. *Calls for* a common strategy on European food that ensures safe and sustainable food by means of an inclusive, transparent and agricultural support-scheme;
2. *Declares* that European agriculture must shift towards regenerative practices;
3. *Believes* that the CAP funding model must be reformed within the framework of the European Green Deal, in particular with the targets from the Farm to Fork and Biodiversity strategies in mind, while maintaining an EU-wide approach;
4. *Promotes* the establishment of the European Food Policy Council under the auspices of the EESC with an advisory function on EU food policy issues with equal respect to agriculture, environment, health and nutrition;
5. *Calls for* a Vice President of the Commission for Sustainable Food Policy to lead the group of Commissioners for Agriculture, Environment, Health and Nutrition and Consumer Safety;
6. *Urges* the introduction of financial incentives for regenerative practices (e.g. payment for ecosystem services) and the removal of subsidies and quotas for those practices

¹ <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/headlines/society/20200519STO79424/endangered-species-in-europe-facts-and-figures-infographic>

² <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2020/sep/15/every-global-target-to-stem-destruction-of-nature-by-2020-missed-un-report-aoe>

³ <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/food-safety>

- that lead to loss of biodiversity, water depletion and land degradation, through transparent and equitable support for farmers;
7. In this sense, *calls for* legally binding greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction targets of the agriculture sector in line with the reduction targets of 60% by 2030 as in the European Climate Law proposal adopted by the European Parliament;
 8. *Calls upon* the Commission and Member States to ensure effective transparency and youth stakeholder inclusion in the EU CAP negotiations and national processes for the preparation of strategic plans;
 9. *Expects* a higher proportion of direct support payments targeted at young farmers, complemented by financial support under rural development and measures facilitating access to land and land transfers, the current scheme is not enough to attract significantly more young farmers;
 10. *Stresses* the importance of supporting alternative agricultural business models, such as short and direct supply chains and consumer co-operatives;
 11. *Expects that* the sector invests in the opportunities presented by technology to create direct channels with consumers in order to shorten supply chains and promote regional production, for instance through social network platforms;
 12. *Calls for* a European-level fight against food inequality that ensures that the same quality of food is available and affordable to all Europeans;
 13. *Demands that* at least one third of agricultural funds be earmarked for organic farming and that the Commission provides technical assistance to farmers on how to achieve EU-level certifications until at least 2030;
 14. *Expects* the Commission to impose strict maximum thresholds in the revised Sustainable Use of Pesticides Directive;
 15. *Calls for* setting targets for the share of polyculture cultivation, conservation agroforestry and permanent cover crops, in order to achieve the goals set out in the protect European biodiversity strategy and the pollinators initiative;
 16. *Expects* the EU and Member States to encourage and educate European consumers to reduce food waste at home and commit the industry to cut food waste by 50% by 2030 in all parts of the food chain;
 17. *Calls upon* food industry players to minimize the use of non-recyclable plastic food packaging and find circular alternatives for plastic packaging;
 18. *Encourages* the commission to promote dietary changes towards more locally sourced, seasonal and plant-based food through consumer information campaigns and by providing consumer guidance on alternative sources of protein;
 19. *Promotes* the establishment of an EU wide label for products to indicate the level of animal welfare and the ecological footprint, while expanding the nutrient information on meat products, warning of the maximum recommended daily meat intake, the label should be transparent and easily accessible to consumers;
 20. *Demands* that animal sentience considerations are integral to all CAP policy and legislative objectives, with Member States committing to phasing out the practice of caging wild animals as an important first step;
 21. *Expects* that meat imports meet the EU's animal welfare standards and that export of live farmed animals be banned, this should be a precondition for all trade in animal products and become part of WTO guidelines;
 22. *Calls for* action to rapidly reduce the usage of antibiotics in livestock farming, while combating the spread of diseases in the meat industry, by raising the *minimum* standard for spacing between each animal.