



European Economic and Social Committee

PRESS

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The President of the EESC calls for a more balanced, targeted and sustainable Common Agricultural Policy

The European agricultural model, which is now under reconsideration, must be supported and promoted in an even more determined and targeted way by a strong Common Agricultural Policy with a proper budget, says Staffan Nilsson, president of The European Economic and Social Committee (EESC). He welcomes the approach taken by the European Commission in the communication on the future Common Agricultural Policy (CAP).

Mr Nilsson is rather pleased with the Commission taking on board a great part of the EESC's recommendations in its opinion on the future CAP, but would like to point out some important elements which are at risk of being neglected in future debate:

The current policy framework should be reoriented and deliver on EU objectives. The European agricultural model must be based on the principles of food sovereignty, sustainability and the real needs of farmers and consumers. The Committee is clear on one thing: it is not enough to focus solely on boosting competitiveness to serve the global market.

Precise CAP aims are needed to be defined, together with the tools and costs they imply. The EESC considers it crucial that CAP funds are used in the future to maintain and develop a multifunctional and sustainable agriculture. That is especially important now when there is big pressure on farmers to adapt to the new criteria by specialising and rationalising their business.

Payments to farmers must be target-based, and they can no longer be based on past decisions or entitlements. Instead they are to be considered as compensation for specific services that are provided to society and which are not reflected in market prices.

The rural development programmes need to be further developed and made as effective as possible. We firmly reject any transfer of tasks of this kind to general structural or regional policy.

The EESC has set up a study group on the future CAP which will analyse the non-legislative communication on CAP launched by the Commission and to work on further recommendations. For this, a public hearing is also planned, and the opinion will be finalized by March 2011 by the Agriculture, Rural Development and Environmental section of the EESC, chaired by **Mr Mario Campi** (Various Interests' Group, Italy).

In March 2010, the EESC was the first EU institution to provide a comprehensive vision for the future of the CAP in an opinion signed by **Mr Lutz Ribbe** (Various Interests' Group, Germany).

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