Resolution 905 (1988)[1]

Part-time farming - par of agriculture's future

Parliamentary Assembly

The Assembly,

1. Considering the increasing occurrence of part-time farming in Europe, by which is meant a situation where the farmer and his wife spend a considerable part of their work-time in non-farm gainful employment ;

2. Recalling the Assembly's Conference ‘‘European Agriculture 2000", held in Switzerland in 1986, and Recommendation 1049 (1987), indicating to governments of Council of Europe member states new ways to meet the challenges facing the industry ;

3. Aware that policies in the past -as priority was above all given to increasing production and the size of farms -often acted to discourage part-time, as distinct from full-time, farming ;

4. Recognising however that, at the present timeof overproduction and great financial difficulties, especially of small and medium-sized farmers, agriculture pursued on a part-time basis may be the only way in which a farmer and his wife will be able to support their family and stay on their land ;

5. Believing that part-time farming, especially in disadvantaged regions, can have a number of advantages for society, such as less intensive production leading to reduced surpluses and less strain on the environment, less dependence of farmers on outside financial support, and a more populated countryside favouring regional development and tourism,

6. Calls on the governments of member states and the European Community :

6.1. to modify their legislation as well as their regional, agricultural and other policies, so as to facilitate the inevitable and on the whole positive development towards more part-time farming, especially in regions disadvantaged by distance or by the quality of the land ;

6.2. in particular, to make sure that any legal or other provisions discouraging part-time, as opposed to full-time, farming, are removed, for instance as regards compensation for production or other financial assistance, as well as the right to acquire and farm land ;

6.3. to pay particular attention, in this context, to ways of easing the heavy burden imposed on women in part-time farming, as they are often asked to take on additional responsibilities on the farm when their husbands engage in alternative employment ;

6.4. nevertheless to make sure that the above types of measures do not result in discrimination against full-time agriculture, or encourage ‘‘dilettante" farming to the detriment of land maintenance and the interests of regular farmers ;

7. Requests its President to forward this resolution to the European Parliament, to the Commission of the European Communities and to OECD.

1. See Doc. 5820, report of the Committee on Agriculture, Rapporteur : Mrs Hammarbacken. Text adopted by the Standing Committee, acting on behalf of the Assembly, on 30 June 1988.