



Resolution 1488 (2006)¹

Regrouping land in central and eastern Europe

Parliamentary Assembly

1. The Parliamentary Assembly underlines the importance of agriculture in many countries in central and eastern Europe, a sector which still employs a large proportion of the workforce (approximately 15% in Poland and Ukraine, 35% in Romania). In order to provide the groups concerned with better living conditions and adequate income levels, agricultural policy must be adapted and structural reforms carried out so that land is used more rationally, more effectively and more sustainably.
2. In some of the countries in question, agriculture is hampered in particular by land being divided into many small plots, often as a result of the privatisation process following the collapse of previous collectivist systems. There is often a lack of clarity surrounding ownership and, in some cases, there is no land register, plots are too small and the land is underused.
3. The Assembly believes that land consolidation measures can help to remedy some of these shortcomings with a view to improving living conditions in rural areas, especially those with less favourable climatic, geographical and topographical conditions.
4. It is also important to recognise the role which local and regional authorities can play in implementing such measures and to assign them the powers and financial and technical resources needed in this connection. The principles of local self-government, as set out in the European Charter of Local Self-Government (ETS No. 122), must be applied.
5. The Assembly recalls that land consolidation measures have already been tested and implemented in many countries. In some countries, these measures have not achieved significant results, but they have proved successful in others. The case of Switzerland, in particular, can be cited as an example, given the success of the land consolidation policy it has conducted for several decades in poorly accessible mountain regions where farming is difficult, which are often similar to those found in certain central and east European countries.
6. Land consolidation policies are complex and require both legal measures (land register, property regulations, land use) and technical ones, whether in areas such as regional/spatial development (transport infrastructure, water regime), the environment (protection of water, soil, landscapes and biodiversity) or agriculture (reorganisation of land, land improvement and fertility, crop rotation, etc.).
7. The Assembly believes that land consolidation boosts the efficiency of farming, optimises land use and improves the living conditions and standards of rural communities. It therefore encourages the implementation of the necessary reforms in countries where farms are too small and land is divided into too many individual plots.
8. It has taken note of the agricultural land reforms which have been carried out or are under way in several central and east European countries. It has considered land consolidation projects in Romania, in particular the RALF-RO pilot project being carried out in the municipality of Remetea, based on the Swiss model, which it supports as a good example of land improvement.

1. Text adopted by the Standing Committee acting on behalf of the Assembly on 17 March 2006 (see [Doc.10836](#), report of the Committee on the Environment, Agriculture and Local and Regional Affairs, rapporteur: Mr Maissen).



9. The Assembly therefore recommends that:
 - 9.1. the governments of central and east European member states:
 - 9.1.1. make provision for and implement measures to encourage land consolidation so as to reduce the division of farmland into too many small plots and enable more efficient and more profitable farms to be established, thereby raising farmers' living standards;
 - 9.1.2. take account of land consolidation experience already gained in Europe in societies of either Latin or Germanic cultural tradition and, to this end, follow the good example of other European countries such as Switzerland and the Netherlands, which are already co-operating in land consolidation projects, and have recourse to their technical know-how and the financial support available;
 - 9.1.3. inform farmers with a possible interest in land consolidation measures about the nature of and reasons for the measures and the benefits they can derive from them;
 - 9.1.4. consider granting the necessary technical and financial resources or tax concessions to municipalities which wish to carry out land consolidation projects in agreement with the farmers concerned;
 - 9.1.5. encourage the establishment of co-operatives for the production, processing and marketing of agricultural produce, particularly in regions where farms are small and especially in municipalities or regions where land consolidation has been carried out and has rationalised farms and boosted their productivity;
 - 9.2. the European Conference of Ministers responsible for Regional Planning include in its work programme an activity on land consolidation policies so that recommendations can be drawn up and addressed to the countries concerned on the basis of existing experience and best practice;
 - 9.3. the European Commission
 - 9.3.1. offer financial support for national land consolidation measures, in particular in the new member states of the European Union and the applicant countries;
 - 9.3.2. establish to that end a specific instrument for providing technical and financial assistance for land consolidation projects in these countries;
 - 9.4. the local and regional authorities concerned by land consolidation measures also have recourse to international co-operation in seeking the technical and financial resources needed from counterparts which have already had experience in the area.