



**Resolution 1814 (2011)<sup>1</sup>**

## **Reforms of the Common Fisheries Policy and the Common Agricultural Policy**

Parliamentary Assembly

1. Convinced that access to safe and nutritious food is a basic human right, the Parliamentary Assembly raises this important issue with a view to providing policy guidance to member states, especially in the current political context of ongoing reforms of the European Union's Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) and Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and their possible impact on non-European Union member states of the Council of Europe.
2. Food security has become a growing political issue worldwide. The challenge will be to produce and supply enough safe and nutritious food in a sustainable way for a growing global population, which is projected to reach 9 billion people by 2050. According to the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), the demand for food is projected to increase by 40% by 2030 and by 70% by 2050. On a *per capita* basis, food production in the least developed countries is already struggling to keep up with rapid population growth.
3. Due to globalisation and past European Union orientation towards intensive agricultural production with single-crop farming on the one hand, and following several decades of overfishing and declining fish stocks on the other hand, self-sufficiency in food production has become extremely rare. Most countries rely today on both import and export markets to feed their population and the supply chain consequently has become very sensitive to both economic and environmental factors. Biodiversity loss and climate change will inevitably pose additional severe risks to food security and to the viability of the agriculture and fisheries sectors.
4. Over the past decades, the Common Agricultural Policy has been criticised for its high cost, its incentives to over-production and its distorting impact on food prices on world markets, but above all for increasing intensive farming – such as single-crop farming and intensive livestock breeding – harmful to Europe's environment.
5. Intensive farming has increased pollution of soil, water and air, fragmentation of habitats and loss of wildlife. It has also engendered high energy consumption leading to high levels of greenhouse gas emissions. Wider structural change in the past has also led to the loss of labour-intensive farms, replaced by resource-intensive farms, with considerable impacts not only on the environment, but also on employment.
6. The Assembly deplores the fact that 85% of CAP direct payments go to just 18% of farmers, with the largest farms in the old European Union member states (EU-15) benefiting the most. Furthermore, some farmers working in the most disadvantaged areas receive the smallest payments.
7. Moreover, CAP expenditure was capped for the period 2004-2013, with the result that the inclusion of farming sectors of the 12 new member states has taken place at a constant cost and resulted in a very distorting and discriminating situation between old and new European Union member states. Total direct payments received in the new European Union member states (EU-12) currently represent only 12.14% compared to 87.86% of the total payments received by the old European Union member states (EU-15).

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1. Text adopted by the Standing Committee, acting on behalf of the Assembly, on 27 May 2011 (see [Doc. 12607](#), report of the Committee on the Environment, Agriculture and Local and Regional Affairs, rapporteur: Mr Korkea-aho).



8. The Assembly deplores this situation of inequity since there is no level playing field within the Single Market; in several new European Union member states, following the unequal distribution of direct payments within the CAP, local producers have lost ground even in their domestic markets.

9. The Common Fisheries Policy has been criticised for mismanagement and malfunctioning of its quota systems, which in practice have often led to illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing and discards at sea of up to 50%. According to the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea, 88% of European fish stocks are over-fished, compared to 25% elsewhere in the world. The Assembly condemns the industry's reliance on immature catches before the age of reproduction and regrets that overfishing and certain trawling techniques have also led to degradation of the marine environment.

10. The Assembly therefore considers that both the CAP and the CFP have to gradually evolve towards a broadening of their objectives and a redefinition of their policy approaches in order to meet the food security, environmental, biodiversity, climate, energy, rural and coastal development challenges of the 21st century. In addition, they have to help the farming and fisheries sectors remain economically and socially viable and become more sustainable, competitive and robust to cope with the economic crisis and increasingly volatile prices set by the global markets.

11. In view of the above considerations, the Assembly recommends the following policy guidelines to the member and non-member states of the Council of Europe, and particularly to the member states of the European Union:

11.1. introduce in the forthcoming CAP and CFP reforms more general and simpler rules at European level, concentrating on overarching principles and objectives;

11.2. reinforce the policy definition and management at regional level in order to adapt to the extremely diverse agricultural and fishing circumstances in the enlarged European Union;

11.3. while negotiating the CFP and particularly the CAP budget for the next funding period (2014-2020), reach a more equitable division of direct payments between old and new European Union member states in order to redress the current imbalance and achieve a level playing field for all producers within the Single Market;

11.4. encourage the negotiating parties to achieve a radical shift, both in the overall objective setting for the CAP and the CFP and in the definition of their delivery mechanisms, in order to fine-tune the European Agricultural Model and the European Fisheries Model so as to deploy sustainable practices that can provide long-term optimal yields, while using natural resources efficiently;

11.5. reinforce consistency of the first and second pillars of the CAP, and also between support systems under the second pillar and under the European Union structural funds;

11.6. defend the principle of family farms and small-scale coastal fisheries and set up a differentiated support regime within the CAP and the CFP which is adapted to their particular needs;

11.7. further develop support schemes for farmers and fishermen in disadvantaged areas and make more extensive use of such incentives in the member states to prevent land abandonment and depopulation in those areas in order to maintain agriculture in all areas of Europe;

11.8. set up special schemes to help young professionals in the farming and fisheries sectors to meet high start-up costs (access to credit, insurance, and so on);

11.9. reconcile the objectives of the CAP and CFP with the common trade policy, make prices more transparent at all stages of the distribution and processing of agricultural products and foodstuffs and enable producers to have a greater bargaining power in the food supply chain vis-à-vis the processing, distribution and retailing sectors;

11.10. consider the impact of the CAP and the CFP on third countries, including Council of Europe member states;

11.11. respect international humanitarian law (including the Hague Regulations concerning the Laws and Customs of War on Land), which stipulates that occupying powers cannot make use of natural resources in occupied territories without prior consultation with the local population and without it being in its interest;

11.12. within the Common Fisheries Policy, it would be necessary to:

11.12.1. manage fish stocks with long-term plans and with the primary objective of reaching maximum sustainable yields, preferably by 2015;

- 11.12.2. design a two-edged fishing fleet policy, consisting of a one-off temporary fleet overcapacity reduction scheme and a subsequent fleet renewal scheme requiring large reductions of active fishing vessels;
  - 11.12.3. invest in research and innovation in order to establish accurate scientific databases to achieve sustainable management of fish stocks and natural resources;
  - 11.12.4. eliminate discards by innovative gear design and fishing practices and the requirement to land all catches and count them against quotas;
  - 11.12.5. develop strong incentives and enforcement mechanisms to encourage “responsible behaviour at sea” by fishermen;
  - 11.12.6. reinforce and harmonise control mechanisms for the elimination of illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing and fully implement a culture of compliance;
- 11.13. within the Common Agricultural Policy, it would be necessary to:
- 11.13.1. reinforce the concept of multifunctionality of agriculture which delivers public goods and has positive externalities, such as the protection of the environment and natural resources, rural development, stewardship of landscape, and food quality and safety;
  - 11.13.2. reward good environmental practice, taking into account biodiversity and ecosystem functionality criteria;
  - 11.13.3. increase the use of agri-environmental payments under the second pillar of the CAP and develop special support schemes for organic farming and high nature value farming and the farming of traditional breeds and varieties;
  - 11.13.4. apply general principles of integrated production, and in particular encourage mixed crop farming and crop rotation, and re-establish the link between crop farming and livestock breeding;
  - 11.13.5. invest in research and innovation (agronomy);
  - 11.13.6. encourage local initiatives of co-operation at the level of river basins (systems) with a view to achieving “good status” in European freshwater systems and adjacent coastal waters;
  - 11.13.7. protect farmland from pressures of urban sprawl;
  - 11.13.8. encourage local production closest to the consumer and accommodate the needs of short food chains by, *inter alia*, adapting the cross-compliance system and allowing more flexibility regarding food safety and hygiene standards;
  - 11.13.9. adopt a genuine quality policy for agricultural products, ensuring minimum quality standards for all products and promoting high-end quality products, notably through quality guarantee schemes such as the PDO (protected designation of origin), PGI (protected geographical indication) and TSG (traditional specialities guaranteed) schemes, or the new “Euroleaf” logo for products derived from organic farming;
  - 11.13.10 improve traceability to allow consumers to make informed choices and raise public awareness, particularly of young people, with regard to dietary habits and choices.