Parliamentary Assembly
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COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Resolution 1039 (1994)[1]

Rural and agricultural reform in the new democracies of central and eastern Europe

Parliamentary Assembly

1. The Assembly considers that agricultural and rural development in the new democracies of central and eastern Europe should be given priority in order to guarantee inhabitants adequate access to healthy food and for the stabilisation and strengthening of democracy.

2. The Assembly refers to the results of the colloquy on investment policies for agricultural and rural development in central and eastern Europe, organised by its Committee on Agriculture (Warsaw, 8 June 1993), and recalls its earlier recommendations on biomass used for energy production and on agricultural and rural policy reforms in Europe, stressing that investment policies must be adjusted to take better account of the needs of rural society and the agricultural sector.

3. Consequently, the Assembly calls on governments of Council of Europe member states and states whose parliaments enjoy special guest status with the Assembly, the Commission of the European Communities as well as the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development:

3.1. to adopt market-oriented agricultural policies that avoid high subsidies and complex support programmes;

3.2. to focus, in agricultural reform programmes (privatisation, land-leasing, reconstruction of co-operatives), on the interests of rural populations, especially farmers and farm workers;

3.3. to carefully assess and monitor the social consequences of reform with a view to avoiding unnecessary hardship for those involved;

3.4. to foster professional competence among new private farmers and facilitate their access to adequate farm-land;

3.5. to maintain the possibility of farming on small private plots as a complement to other forms of gainful employment (part-time farming);

3.6. to create employment in rural regions and to assure educational, social and other services in order to maintain or improve the viability and attractiveness of the countryside and to protect the environment;

3.7. to upgrade marketing and distribution of agricultural commodities in the former eastern bloc countries in order for them to gain new markets and to enhance demand for their quality products;

3.8. to pay special attention in this context to the use of biomass for energy production;

3.9. to allow the protection of the internal agricultural market of these countries against dumping and other unfair trading practices, which undermine agricultural and rural development and, hence, social stability and food security;

1. See Doc. 7055, report of the Committee on Agriculture, Rapporteur: Lord Mackie of Benshie. Text adopted by the Standing Committee, acting on behalf of the Assembly, on 18 May 1994.

3.10. to create and strengthen agricultural and rural credit institutions capable of financing agricultural and rural development projects or to strengthen those which exist, in particular those which have adopted sound management practices;

3.11. to foster east-west co-operation by involving western practical expertise and finance in assisting reform and development in east European economies in transition.