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# REPORT

on how the CAP can improve job creation in rural areas  
(2015/2226(INI))

Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development

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## MOTION FOR A EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT RESOLUTION

### on how the CAP can improve job creation in rural areas (2015/2226(INI))

*The European Parliament,*

- having regard to Rule 52 of its Rules of Procedure,
  - having regard to the report of the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development and the opinions of the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs and the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality (A8-0285/2016),
  - having regard to the Commission communication on employment in rural areas: closing the jobs gap (COM (2006)0857),
- A. whereas rural areas represent more than 77% of EU territory and whereas many jobs in those areas – a high proportion of them non-relocatable – depend on agriculture and the agrifood industry;
- B. whereas, taken together, agriculture and the agrifood industry account for 6% of EU GDP, 15 million businesses and 46 million jobs;
- C. whereas, in many European countries over the past few decades, the number of farmers in rural areas has drastically decreased, as have the incomes of farmers and other agricultural workers, and agricultural employment in those areas has continued to decline; whereas between 2005 and 2014 there was a reduction of almost one quarter (-23.6%) in agricultural labour input in the EU-28<sup>1a</sup>;
- D. whereas, although agriculture remains the main form of land use in Europe, it nowadays employs only a fraction of the working population of rural areas; whereas the diversification of land use in rural areas, combining a productive economic function with the functions of accommodating residential and recreational use and of nature protection and conservation, is a considerable challenge in terms of development and employment in the various rural regions of the Union; whereas, although population decline has been reversed in some regions in recent years with an inflow of people who want to live in the countryside, generating, in most cases, a peri-urbanisation effect, there is also a tendency towards decline in much less prosperous regions, where remoteness is a problem and supporting development and employment is more difficult;
- E. whereas many rural areas face a series of challenges such as low income, negative population growth, a lack of jobs and a high rate of unemployment, slow development in the tertiary sector, a lack of processing capacity for food products, low skills and limited capital;
- F. whereas more than nine out of ten people in Europe consider agriculture and rural areas to be important to their future;
- G. whereas there is a relatively low income per labour unit for agricultural activities and

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<sup>1a</sup> Eurostat, 2016.

this is a point of concern;

- H. whereas the economic crisis hit all parts of Europe but none more so than rural areas; whereas such areas experienced unprecedented devastation as a result of austerity policies;
- I. whereas, in the face of the current economic crisis, the European Union has made jobs – in particular via the EFSI – one of its key priorities, and whereas, in that connection, the CAP must be made more effective and its legitimacy reaffirmed as one of the principal tools for EU action aimed at the retention and creation of employment and competitiveness in rural areas, mainly in the farming sector; whereas, in this context, it is necessary to evaluate the extent to which the CAP has an impact on the creation and maintenance of jobs in rural areas;
- J. whereas it is of crucial importance to maintain the two pillars of the CAP, since Pillar I prevents out-migration of small and family farms from the sector and maintains jobs in the agricultural sector, while Pillar II funds ensure job creation in other areas such as tourism, food processing and other related sectors;
- K. whereas European agriculture is facing a number of challenges relating to food production and security, the environment, biodiversity, sustainability, energy and climate change, and it is vital to reinforce the relationship between society and agriculture, develop innovative solutions to meet these challenges to ensure the resilience and competitiveness of the sector and rethink the objectives of a genuinely public policy that is in everybody's interests, this being one of the most important aspects of European integration;
- L. whereas, for too long, insufficient attention has been paid to shifting the focus of agriculture to make it territory-based once again – necessarily rooting production and employment in specific areas – and whereas we have a duty to sustain farming as a core activity performed by men and women in the areas where they live, in order to ensure that rural areas are dynamic and job-rich; whereas this refocusing will also make for a healthy balance between urban and rural development;
- M. whereas there is a growing role for, and interest in, urban and peri-urban agriculture and a changing consumption model that combines various factors, including a minimal environmental footprint, high-quality local production and recognition of the value of the work done by small and regional producers;
- N. whereas the foundations of the last CAP reform enabled aid to be redirected and distributed more fairly among the Member States and the various agricultural sectors, and reaffirmed the role of the CAP in economic terms and as a social stabilising factor for farms and rural regions;
- O. whereas, although studies have shown that direct payments through Pillar 1 do not directly create jobs, they play a vital role in maintaining jobs and keeping farmers on the land; whereas, should this policy support be withdrawn, 30% of European farmers would be forced to cease activities and exit the agricultural sector; whereas these payments keep small farmers and rural areas alive;

- P. whereas direct payment supports for farmers in peripheral areas farming on disadvantaged or marginal land are vital not only to ensure that these farmers remain on the land and earn a decent livelihood, but also to ensure that this land is protected and plays a role in attracting tourism to these areas;
- Q. whereas the primary objective of Pillar I of the reformed CAP is the security of the food supply which helps to maintain existing employment in agriculture and there is a requirement to ensure a fairer distribution of Pillar 1 payments to maximise the positive impact of this support;
- R. whereas experience on the ground shows that other kinds of agricultural development are possible, providing better results in terms of food quality and agronomic, environmental and socio-economic performance, that it is important to support and promote diversity of agricultural systems, and that small and medium-sized farms which are generally more diversified, innovative and highly flexible, are often well organised in terms of forming producer groups and co-operatives and are more inclined to be resilient and adapt more easily to the effects of a crisis, benefit the communities in which they are located, thereby supporting a rural economy, which is the key to the development of European agriculture;
- S. whereas the current crisis shows that, within the framework of a market-oriented CAP, it is essential to retain a common agricultural market organisation and to come up with appropriate new regulatory tools to ensure price stability and sustain agricultural jobs and income;
- T. whereas the Commission's own impact assessment on the effects of TTIP notes that 'predominantly rural areas focussed on specific activities and with limited alternatives are more vulnerable'; whereas rural areas and rural jobs are threatened by the movements away from traditional farming models that this agreement will bring;
- U. whereas European farmers operate in an increasingly global market and therefore experience greater exposure to price volatility than other sectors; whereas trade deals currently being negotiated, such as the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP), the EU-Canada Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) and the EU-Mercosur Free Trade Agreement, pose a threat to job creation and creation of the conditions to support agricultural livelihoods;
- V. whereas the payment system that currently exists in the food supply chain does not guarantee the sustainable distribution of added value, and often determines that the earnings of primary producers are not even sufficient to cover their costs;
- W. whereas, compared with urban areas, rural areas are usually characterised by statistically higher levels of unemployment and significantly lower residents' incomes, as well as less attractive infrastructure and less access to services, the costs of providing which are significant due to lower population density and accessibility;
- X. whereas job creation in rural areas must be part and parcel of a sustainable policy that is tailored to specific territories and involves the maintenance and development of agricultural activities and activities indirectly linked to agriculture and forestry sector-related, as well as rural activities, that forge links between the various stakeholders both

socially and in terms of solidarity and environmental enhancement;

- Y. whereas the future of rural areas does not depend exclusively on the development of the agricultural sector, but is also linked to the diversification and maintenance of other economic activities, such as forestry, crafts, and the development of small and medium-sized enterprises and integrated production capacities, rural tourism, recreational, educational and sports provision (e.g. horse-riding) and the sustainable use of farm and forest resources (including waste) to produce renewable energy or organic materials and products based on ecological processes; whereas there is a need for decentralised and integrated local policies linked to socioeconomic aspects and rural identity and culture and for a genuine territorial system, seeking synergies and jointly building on rural resources through collective and cross-sector approaches, including the use of other EU funds to stimulate rural development and employment, while ensuring that rural infrastructure is in place;
- Z. whereas, to that end, it is absolutely vital to focus on the fact that many jobs are dependent on place and activity-specific agriculture, which includes forestry, cannot be relocated and involve food and non-food services, such as landscape and water conservation and management;
- AA. whereas the current structure of the CAP has helped ensure that a significant proportion of recipients of CAP direct payments now receive those payments without undertaking agricultural activities, but simply due to the fact that they own agricultural land;
- AB. whereas support should be provided in particular to small family farms, i.e. to individual farmers who, alone or with others, run their farms responsibly, independently and effectively and who are able to deal with any problems by adapting their production decisions and/or their production methods and by diversifying their activities in order to tackle the constant structural change in the agricultural sector;
- AC. whereas the potential of women working and/or running a business in agricultural and rural areas should be analysed, recorded and promoted in all EU policies, and they should not be disadvantaged by any of them, as this will lay the groundwork for women to become drivers of development and innovation, helping the entire sector to emerge from the crisis; whereas women should be involved in sector development plans at local and regional level so that the latter can benefit from their needs, experiences and visions, and women should therefore be equipped with the skills required to participate actively in the design thereof;
- AD. whereas in 2010 only 7.5% of farmers were under 35 years old and more than 4.5 million of those now running farms are aged over 65, and Articles 50 and 51 of Regulation (EU) No 1307/2013 under the CAP include provisions to support new generational renewal in agriculture;
- AE. whereas in many Member States women in rural regions have limited access to employment in farming or other sectors of the labour market and experience a wider pay gap than in other areas, yet they play an extremely important role in the development and social fabric of rural areas, particularly on farms engaged in diversification (offering farm tourism, high quality produce, recreational, educational and sports activities and other services); whereas female entrepreneurship can represent

an important pillar in social, economic and environmental terms for sustainable development in rural areas; whereas unequal access to land is a factor in limiting the opportunities for women to develop a business in the agricultural sector; whereas on average 29% of farms in Europe are run by women;

- AF. whereas the number of crop varieties grown industrially is small, and local varieties and means of earning a livelihood are being displaced by industrial ones; whereas local breeds and varieties play a role in maintaining biodiversity and sustaining people's livelihoods in the regions and local production;
- AG. whereas the rural environment needs to be made more attractive to rising generations by promoting training geared to innovation and modernisation in the profession and in technologies;
- AH. whereas the universal framework provided by the Sustainability Assessment of Food and Agriculture systems (SAFA) was developed by the FAO;
- AI. whereas the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) provides medium-term assistance in housing, healthcare, education and employment in rural areas for marginalised communities; whereas the EAFRD can take into account the specific needs of refugees and can be used for vocational training and skills acquisition actions in the different sectors of activity in rural areas;

#### *Under the current CAP*

1. Calls on all the Member States to give young farmers long-term prospects in order to address rural depopulation, to implement a comprehensive generational renewal strategy and, in order to do this, to make full use of all the possibilities provided under the new CAP to support young farmers and new entrants to farming, including from outside the family, particularly the Pillar I and Pillar II measures for aid to young farmers, and also to facilitate new entrants to farming aged over 40 in setting up and entrepreneurship; notes too that such measures must be complemented by, and compatible with, provisions under national policies (on land-use, taxation and social security, etc.), including support under Articles 50 and 51 of Regulation (EU) No 1307/2013;
2. Notes that the vast majority of CAP direct payments are going to the richest farms, with just 13% of beneficiaries receiving 74% of CAP direct payment expenditures in 2014; believes that this does not assist job creation in farming, as small farms are more labour-intensive and 53% of farm labourers are working on a farm classified as being of small economic size; calls for a better distribution of CAP payments towards small farmers;
3. Encourages the Member States to step up their support for small and medium-sized farms, in particular by making more use of the redistributive payment; calls on them furthermore to institute arrangements which will favour businesses that are organised efficiently and those which use the legal instruments of clustering of undertakings;
4. Takes the view that the CAP should take greater account of territories with geographical handicaps (such as mountain areas, overseas territories, the most outlying areas and sensitive natural areas) since maintaining farming is an essential vector for economic,

social and environmental development that focuses on employment; adds, however, that the CAP must also consider the new dynamics of urban sprawl and lend support to areas on the fringes of such sprawl in facing up to the constraints linked to their particular features;

5. Points out that the Member States have made extensive use of the option of granting coupled aid – which, by developing production and enabling it to remain in a given place, secures jobs in disadvantaged areas – and calls on the Member States to increase the proportion of such aid for active farmers, to make it more flexible and to earmark more of it towards producing more plant proteins in the EU, which currently depends on imports from third countries for supply of this commodity; suggests furthermore that the level of voluntary coupled payments could be adjusted in line with the level of employment dependent on a given crop, which would provide further support for produce requiring the largest workforce;
6. Points out that, in the current programming period and in accordance with the Rural Development Programme, there is provision for targeted aid for the cultivation of local varieties and the keeping of local breeds, thus promoting regional employment and sustaining biodiversity; invites Member States to introduce mechanisms whereby groups and organisations of producers and farmers who cultivate and keep local varieties and breeds can receive targeted aid;
7. Points out that there is a need to implement the environmental dimension of direct aid, and that this must be part and parcel of ensuring that farms are sustainable and viable, and help maintain and create new jobs inter alia in the conservation of biodiversity, agro-tourism and management of the countryside, for example by country estates and historic residences; urges the EU to ensure simplification and that environmental regulations can be implemented in a simple, comprehensible and problem-free way; points out that the environmental dimension must not lead to a reduction in or abandoning of agricultural production, which is particularly sensitive in mountainous and peripheral areas;
8. Considers that, given the high mortality rate among honey bees in several EU countries and the essential role they, as pollinators, play in food security and the economy of many plant sectors, the Union should provide greater support for this sector by adopting a genuine European strategy for bee repopulation; adds that this would not require heavy investment but would create many jobs, either by diversifying activities in existing farms or by setting up new specialised farms, which, according to expert opinion, would require 200 hives to be viable and whose primary purpose would be to breed selected queens and swarms and, subsequently, to produce honey, of which the EU has a serious shortage; points out that such an approach, which builds on various European strategies – on innovation, social inclusion and job creation – is fully in line with the will to reorient the common agricultural policy and the development of farming towards greater sustainability;
9. Notes that to maintain on-farm jobs the sector must turn to new risk-management tools and increase utilisation of tools such as Producer Organisations under the Single CMO and in Pillar II in order to better respond to volatility and the demands of the global market; takes the view that the market measures and exceptional crisis and risk-

management measures provided for under the Single CMO and in Pillar II must be implemented much more rapidly and proactively, with EU budget support adapted as necessary to the specific situation of the outermost regions, mountain regions and other regions facing competitiveness challenges so as to limit the negative effects of falling prices on farming income; points out that the implementation of exceptional crisis measures has not fully achieved its objectives and should take greater account of Member States' existing infrastructure and capacities; urges the Commission, in the light of recent crises, to develop more rapid and effective intervention systems which can prevent the most negative effects;

10. Asks the Commission to make full use of the potential of the exceptional measures provided for in Articles 219 to 222 of Regulation (EU) No 1308/2013;
11. Takes the view that, in order to play their role of safety net, intervention prices must be adjusted regularly in line with trends in cost prices so as to have a direct impact on producers' income and the perpetuation of their activities, as well as on employment; calls for the EU to establish prevention tools along similar lines to the Milk Market Observatory in all major production sectors in order to monitor markets, which would help steer production and ensure a response to crises by means of flexible and responsive market management tools which would be activated when necessary;
12. Recognises that short supply chains linking farmers to local producers can stimulate rural job creation, and emphasises that quality schemes, geographical indications and organic farming represent an opportunity to develop the agri-food sector and potentially create rural-based jobs, and as such should not only be protected but also developed in order to create new jobs and to preserve regional culture and identity; underlines the need for better access to wider markets for these products, and for the introduction of quality, promotion and protection measures to improve their marketing and inclusion within the general tourism products of a given geographical area; recalls, in the light of legislative proposals under discussion, that these positive economic impacts are based on consumer confidence which should not be undermined by changes that could be perceived as reducing quality; highlights furthermore that the processes for attaining these quality standards can be burdensome and should be simplified;
13. Recommends that the Member States could make more extensive use of the Second Pillar Priority 6 areas concerning the preservation and creation of jobs and of the knowledge transfer and vocational and continuing training measures (including apprenticeships and in-service training and retraining of farm workers), so that they can be redeployed to perform other rural activities, as well as advisory and management assistance measures to improve the economic and environmental performance of farms; calls on the Commission and Member States to grant support for training to assist farmers, agricultural and rural workers to become more versatile and able to diversify their activities and initiatives, and to strengthen innovation;
14. Notes that the current rural development programmes are much less focused on social projects that defend jobs than those of the previous programming period (2007-2013), owing to the measures selected by the Member States in their rural development programmes and the smaller amount of funding earmarked for employment-related measures; therefore asks the Member States to reconsider their choices and calls for

greater flexibility in the implementation of rural development policy;

15. Considers that, since the level of complexity of rural development programmes significantly reduces the use of EAFRD funds and acts as a brake on projects conducive to job creation, it is necessary to simplify the implementation of rural development policy, to adopt more coherent approaches, along the same lines as multi-funds, and to stop the Member States and the Commission imposing overly painstaking administrative and financial checks;
16. Calls on the Member States to better advertise the potential of the second pillar of the CAP for the diversification of activities in rural areas (e.g. agro-tourism, production of renewable energy);
17. Points out that the risk factor inherent in innovation is insufficiently taken into account in both national and EU policy, a fact that acts as an obstacle to innovation and job creation, particularly for the many stakeholders who do not have sufficient financial strength to complete innovative projects;
18. Emphasises that rural development and job creation go hand in hand and consequently calls on the Member States and regions to maximise the potential of local and regional authorities, which are the most familiar with the challenges and opportunities of their areas, to achieve Pillar 2 objectives and respect the priorities of the CAP, including the promotion of social inclusion, poverty reduction and economic development; recalls the possibility of focussing rural development and operational programmes on job creation and retention, and on improving rural services, and calls on the Commission to assist them in achieving that objective; highlights the adaptation of sharing-economy models in rural areas with a view to boosting employment, making agricultural activities more efficient and reducing costs;
19. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to support enterprises and cooperatives in the social economy, including social farming<sup>1</sup>, in order to foster social integration and jobs in rural areas; notes the actions pursued under the Social Business Initiative and calls on the Commission to enhance the contribution made by the social economy to rural development, for instance through an Action Plan for the Social Economy;
20. Stresses that action to support the demographic development and family-friendly nature of rural areas is already a CAP objective and should be given more prominence in order to support families and make it easier to combine family and professional life, also in connection with issues relating to the labour market and economic development in rural areas;
21. Stresses the need to promote active measures and policies highlighting the positive role of migration in boosting economic growth and fostering social cohesion in rural areas;
22. Calls on the Commission and Member States to pursue policies which will promote rural areas by developing tourism, which, if appropriately structured and supported with incentives, could be a driver of the cultural, social and economic growth of areas which

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<sup>1</sup>cf: <http://www.eesc.europa.eu/?i=portal.en.nat-opinions.25458>

possess substantial natural, landscape, cultural and agrifood resources; stresses that the touristic development of rural areas and the diversification of farming (to include educational, cultural and recreational activities) also constitute an incentive to rising generations to take control of campaigns, in a spirit of initiative and enterprise geared to innovation and to the promotion of traditional products;

23. Emphasises that, with the help of the EAFRD and other European funds, establishing synergies between different policy areas will be essential to meet the challenge of providing jobs in rural areas, and to ensuring that agriculture is once again recognised as a key factor in territorial development; notes that Pillar 2 funds could be utilised as a dynamic financial tool to create increased synergies with alternative funding sources and programmes, making them accessible to rural areas in order to increase connectivity, competitiveness and economic diversification and to support entrepreneurship, taking into account the preservation of rural culture and identity;
24. Stresses that small, owner-run holdings are increasingly coming under pressure from agricultural land purchases by investors; stresses that preserving the area under cultivation and access to land are essential for the setting up and extension of agricultural holdings and vital to preserving jobs in rural areas; points out that the Commission's 'Report on the Needs of Young Farmers' in November 2015 showed that the availability of land to buy and to rent are the biggest problems facing young farmers and new entrants into farming; calls, therefore, on Member States to share best practices and develop instruments to make access to land possible in rural areas with high unemployment through, for example, participatory use and management of farmland in accordance with national practices, or the establishment of systems for managing and providing information on unused land or land that could be used for agriculture, the services of which young farmers and women would have the preferential right to use;
25. Considers it important that rural development programmes do more to improve relations between rural and urban areas so as to encourage cooperation and offer opportunities for businesses operating in rural areas that are crucial for the development of these areas and job creation; takes the view that villages play an important role in urban-rural relations by providing access to basic services for residents of the surrounding rural areas, and that the Member States should therefore promote services in villages as part of their territorial policies;
26. Calls on the Commission to submit a proposal for a medium-term reform of the Common Agricultural Policy which will be a response to the current scenario of prolonged crisis and to the serious impact on employment, particularly in rural areas, will limit red tape and the administrative burden for Europe's farmers, and will include greening measures which, from the environmental point of view, are more effective, measurable and ambitious, and at the same time simpler for farmers to implement;
27. Calls for the establishment of binding rules on fair payment in the food supply chain between food producers, wholesalers and processors to ensure that farmers receive an appropriate share of the value added which is sufficient to enable them to practice sustainable farming;
28. Stresses that the forestry sector, currently an underutilised asset in Europe, is a major source of jobs that should be better promoted in its various forms throughout the timber

industry; adds that the EU is currently suffering from a serious timber supply shortage that requires investment in the infrastructure necessary for the growth of this sector;

29. Emphasises that access to land is an essential prerequisite for the setting up and extension of an agricultural holding; points out that access to land is the biggest problem facing young farmers seeking to set up an agricultural holding;

#### *Under the future CAP after 2020*

30. Emphasises that the CAP procedures must be simplified and must have sufficient funding maintained, at least at the present level reflecting the significant European added value of the policy, in order to play an effective long-term role in fostering employment as part of a diversified European farming and forestry sector, promoting sustainable development and the appeal of rural areas; stresses that rural development policy – which enables more direct and more effective action to reduce social exclusion among rural inhabitants and boost employment and the dynamism of rural areas – should progressively be strengthened, without undermining first pillar support, which must also be reorganised to ensure, inter alia, that markets work better and demonstrate greater stability, which is crucial for safeguarding agricultural incomes, the European model of farming and food security and ensuring that rural areas retain their appeal (with a focus on quality of life) in comparison with urban areas;
31. Emphasises that within the CAP great importance should be attached to instruments geared towards modernisation and investment, which guarantee the competitiveness of economic sectors located in rural areas (including the agri-food, energy, processing and services industries and the social sector) in a sustainable way, in keeping with environmental rules, thus ensuring that jobs can be maintained; points out that those instruments will also make it possible to further bridge the gaps between Member States and between regions when it comes to agricultural and rural development;
32. Highlights the importance of the tourism sector as a source of income for farmers (e.g. farm holidays); urges the Member States and the Commission to institute programmes to support investment and entrepreneurship; considers it important to support the farms concerned by means of tourism campaigns;
33. Notes the CAP simplification measures implemented to date, but calls on the Commission to further develop and implement measures to introduce proportionality and flexibility in relation to reducing the CAP's administrative burden and increasing on-farm productivity;
34. Stresses that there are limitations to what can be achieved under the CAP as its primary aim is security of food supply, and that effectively addressing the many challenges affecting job creation and maintenance in rural areas will require a broader, cross-policy approach at both regional and Member State level;
35. Calls on the Commission to adopt a policy which supports a competitive and sustainable European agricultural model based on a family-run, diversified and multi-functional farming model that makes retaining territory-based and fairly paid jobs a priority, with particular emphasis on territories facing specific constraints as recognised in Article 349 TFEU and - in the production of food and non-food products - ensuring food security,

as well as food safety so as to protect health;

36. Calls on the Member States to develop land monitoring and regulation tools in order to help them gain a better knowledge of land markets and put an end to the widespread phenomenon of the concentration or grabbing of land and production apparatus;
37. Stresses the need to encourage the development, marketing and sale of high-quality agricultural products; calls for initiatives to open new markets as well as to introduce operational product programmes and marketing campaigns, in order to ensure product diversification and competitiveness of the European food chain;
38. Takes the view that the CAP must take account of European farming in all of its forms and all rural areas, including the most disadvantaged and most fragile amongst them (such as mountain areas and outermost regions), so as to ensure that the best possible use is made of all resources; believes that this also entails bringing farmland that has been abandoned or left fallow back into use;
39. Points out that diversification of agriculture and regional 'niche' markets increase and ensure employment in rural areas; calls for initiatives to support diversification of farms (e.g. direct marketing of agricultural products) and of the rural economy in general (e.g. facilitating the shift from agricultural work to other fields of employment);
40. Takes the view that the funds under the future CAP ought to provide more support to slow the loss of small and medium-sized farms and businesses grouped into producers' organisations, which, because they are generally more diversified, economical and autonomous, as well as being more easily transferred, are more effective in terms of creating added value and territory-based jobs and as an important economic and social pillar of their regions, and also continue to apply specific support to territories affected by specific constraints as recognised in Article 349 TFEU;
41. Points out that CAP direct payments should only be allocated to persons whose main area of activity is agriculture;
42. Points out that, in the outermost regions, the search for employment solutions in the event that the economy contracts is compromised by the lack of interconnectivity, and, given the importance of agriculture in these regions, takes the view that the funds under the future CAP ought to apply positive discrimination to these territories facing specific constraints as recognised in the TFEU, given that this would have a multiplier effect in terms of promoting other related activities, such as agro-industry, tourism, nature conservation, energy production and the circular economy, in a way that would complement the multi-fund strategy; stresses that this strategy should take account of the positive differentiation factors identified for the outermost regions, which could act as a laboratory for original innovative solutions in agriculture that could be applied to other less extreme and more comprehensive contexts, relating to farm structure, soil and climate conditions and characteristic biodiversity;
43. Considers that group farming should be promoted and financially supported, as it reduces farm production costs, in particular mechanisation costs, and promotes solidarity between farmers and the transfer of innovation, know-how and best practice, creating a dynamism conducive to development and employment;

44. Calls on the Commission to stimulate diversification and competitiveness of small agricultural holdings, also with regard to social farming and a service-oriented agriculture;
45. Emphasises that it is important that the CAP should provide more support for the positive effects that agriculture brings in terms of jobs and the environment, and that it should provide more effective support for organic and biodynamic farming and all other sustainable production methods, including integrated farming and agroforestry in the context of agro-ecology, which will entail simplifying the current regulations and adopting regulations which can be implemented in a simple, comprehensible and problem-free way; believes that the values of these positive effects in terms of employment and the environment are of interest to society as a whole and are a component which should be included in farm incomes;
46. Recalls the positive example of 'organic districts', namely areas where, by means of a coordinated set of measures, products of local arable and livestock farming produced by organic methods and all the economic operators which depend on them (agrifood, gastronomic and touristic undertakings) are promoted, an instrument which has already shown that it can increase local income and assist the defence of the land by means of conservation of the countryside and of traditional products;
47. Highlights the potential of sustainable farming and food systems, especially organic farming, as well as of sustainable management of soil, water, biodiversity and rural infrastructure, with a view to preserving and creating decent employment in farming and thriving rural economies;
48. Takes the view that regaining control of the European market must remain the primary principal action under the future CAP, before turning to and without neglecting markets outside the EU; in this regard, considers that trade agreements such as TTIP, CETA and the EU-Mercosur Trade Agreement can pose a real and significant threat to European agriculture and employment markets; believes that free trade agreements should not lead to unfair competition affecting small and medium-sized farms, and should not undermine local economies and jobs or work against policies aimed at stimulating local production and supporting agricultural livelihoods;
49. Takes the view that, in order to improve the currently inadequate organisation in the fruit and vegetable sector, EU support for projects among the newly-formed fruit and vegetable growers' associations should be reinstated;
50. Emphasises that, against a backdrop of deep uncertainty as regards the future of low and volatile agricultural prices, the EU must achieve the Treaty aims of the CAP, by doing more to correct the erratic effects of the markets where they are failing, and to ensure the resilience and competitiveness of the agricultural sector by establishing effective safety nets and prevention and crisis management systems so as to strike a balance between supply and demand, as well as creating risk management tools founded on new, innovative systems and involving the farmers themselves in the financing, drawing for example on countercyclical aid, thus allowing farmers to benefit from fairer prices; considers that the share of funding for measures to stabilise agricultural markets should be increased and, in particular, that the CAP must also strengthen insurance schemes for protecting farmers against the various climate, health and economic risks; believes that

in the face of the risks associated with global warming, the EU must do all it can to enhance the positive role that agriculture can play, through measures including agronomy and improved soil management for better carbon capture, and that it is important to provide technical and financial support to farmers to enable them gradually to change their practices and to innovate;

51. Emphasises furthermore that direct payments should remain a CAP instrument beyond 2020, in order to support and stabilise farm incomes and compensate for the costs arising from complying with high EU standards (as regards production methods, and environmental requirements in particular), and to maintain agricultural production in the least-favoured regions; points out that direct payments should therefore be geared towards ensuring that farming is economically stable, as well as guaranteeing food and environmental security; points out, in that context, that it is essential to level out direct payment rates in order to ensure a level playing field for competition in the EU single market, as well as for the sustainable exploitation of agricultural resources at EU level;
52. Feels that, since there are significant differences in the levels of cooperation between farmers in individual Member States and since a lack of cooperation adversely affects farmers' ability to resist crisis situations and market pressures, the CAP should comprehensively promote the development of cooperation among farmers, particularly in the production and processing sectors;
53. Calls for the Member States to prioritise, under the second pillar of the CAP, the European Innovation Partnership (EIP); calls on the Commission to prioritise Horizon 2020 and to ensure better access for farmers to EIB funding options, support for innovative, sustainable agricultural and forestry models for the production of food and non-food goods and services (renewables, bioeconomics, rural tourism, and new prospects for farmers for the supply of raw materials in the post-petroleum industrial era), and developing each rural area's resources;
54. Expresses its firm belief that it will be necessary even in the future to promote continuing vocational training for farmers and agricultural workers and to make sure that scientific knowledge and innovations are disseminated, thus ensuring adaptability to the changing environment and making it easier to engage in economic activity;
55. Takes the view that bottom-up approaches to local development such as LEADER/CLLD have proven to be effective in terms of numbers of jobs created and of low levels of public expenditure per job created, and that they should therefore be further strengthened, promoted and implemented in all Member States by means of multi-fund approaches and by strengthening the role of local and regional authorities; stresses in particular the role of Local Action Group (LAG) leaders in providing technical and service support for initiatives aimed at getting projects which promote employment off the ground; calls for the LAGs to have the broadest possible autonomy in order to maximise their effectiveness; adds that mechanisms should be put in place to ensure the meaningful involvement of the social partners, and calls on the Commission to come forward with models of good practice with regard to transnational LEADER II projects;
56. Notes that difficulty in accessing information with regard to relevant national and EU programming and funding is a barrier to the development of the rural economy;

57. Calls for investment provided under the rural development policy, as a support for employment in rural areas, to be prioritised with a focus on jobs, changes in unemployment, the efficiency of the recipient businesses, and creating incentives to recruit employees, and recommends that rural development programmes include a strengthening of microfinancing, since this is particularly useful in helping agricultural and non-agricultural businesses get off the ground;
58. Stresses that the importance of the second pillar for job creation can be enhanced by allowing much more flexibility according to region-specific needs;
59. Takes the view that, for the future, there is a need to continue to develop high-quality, territory-based food systems supplying raw or processed food products by promoting individual responsibility and the involvement of stakeholders – either grouped together as producers, processors, distributors and consumers or as producer-consumer communities, or else bringing together all the economic operators in the agrifood and food tourism sectors – in qualitative and contract-related activities designed to ensure food supplies and food safety, as well as fair incomes, so that farmers can earn a decent livelihood and sustain employment on their farms; notes that such food systems can, in particular but not solely, take the form of short supply chains and/or local markets; takes the view that more EU resources should in future be devoted to the development and operation of certain special food quality systems, and the further development of globally renowned European gastronomy; considers it essential to that end to better adapt the legislation on public tenders, so that local authorities can promote local production;
60. Draws attention to the need for additional support for agriculture and for the creation of agricultural jobs in less favoured areas and in areas on the EU's external borders;
61. Considers that multi-stakeholder partnerships involving farmers and other rural stakeholders should be promoted because they make it possible to develop many activities which create direct and indirect employment, such as the structuring of local food and non-food chains and the implementation of various services (rural tourism, maintenance of private and public space, etc);
62. Believes that the Commission and the Member States should incentivise farmers, through the CAP and other policies, to diversify their sources of income, thus insulating themselves from downturns in the market; considers that such diversification could include ecotourism, the development of renewable energies such as wind and solar, adding value to agricultural produce through processing, and farm shops;
63. Calls on the Commission to establish more support for local cooperatives in order to help them regain control over their prices and products;
64. Notes that the tourism sector offers significant opportunities for generating revenue and direct and induced employment in agriculture and rural areas, allowing the historical, cultural, gastronomic, landscape and environmental heritage of each region to be enhanced; notes, also, that a region's attractiveness to tourists is based not only on its history, but increasingly also on the quality of its food products, its landscapes and its environment; believes that for all these reasons the tourism sector should receive more support from rural development policy;

65. Invites the Commission to consider setting definitions for what it means to be a local producer, in order to stimulate this type of production;
66. Stresses that the challenges linked to climate change and the environment call for significant public and private job-creating investment, with support from the emergence of new professions, in order to ensure that rural resources are maintained and preserved and that the quality of degraded ecosystems is restored, to tackle floods and fires more effectively, and to improve the protection of water, soil and air quality and biodiversity; notes that while this certainly involves cooperation between agriculture and other rural stakeholders, it offers new opportunities for income diversification in agriculture;
67. Calls on the Commission to assess the social impact of the present agricultural crisis, particularly in terms of job losses, especially in rural areas; calls on the Member States to consider how the competitiveness of farming can be improved so that the sector can create jobs and generate added value which is shared equitably throughout agriculture and the agri-food industry, ensuring fair competition and minimising the damage done by social dumping and by precarious and non-standard employment conditions which disproportionately affect certain groups; notes that many farm family members do not have social status or legal recognition or are not covered by a social protection scheme; stresses that agricultural businesses must comply with national employment and social legislation; considers that any introduction of additional conditionalities into CAP first pillar payments would considerably increase the administrative burden on farmers and limit their job-creating potential; calls for a stronger role for social partners alongside management authorities, and calls on the Member States to recognise and guarantee the social rights of farmers, ensuring that all workers in agriculture, part-time or full-time, are covered by social protection systems; calls on the Member States to transpose Directive 2014/36/EU on seasonal workers into national legislation; calls on the national health and safety authorities to be allocated resources to spreading information about farm safety;
68. Notes that agriculture is one of the more dangerous occupations, with particular risks of injury or death from machinery and livestock (there were 194 fatalities in Ireland alone in the last ten years); calls for appropriate national laws to eliminate major risks, and for adequate compensation schemes for life-changing accidents;
69. Calls on the Commission to introduce the indicators proposed by the FAO in its Sustainability Assessment of Food and Agriculture systems (SAFA), in particular those geared to employment and social wellbeing;
70. Recalls that the average European farmer holds a mere 12 hectares of land and that 70 % of agricultural holdings have a surface area of less than five hectares; notes that owing to their size and structure agricultural holdings cannot always afford to take on full-time employees or highly qualified workers; encourages the Commission and the Member States, therefore, to put in place measures to encourage employer groups;
71. Takes the view that it is vital to ensure that public and private services are in place to ensure the attractiveness of rural areas and make it possible to maintain and develop employment there; considers that people in rural areas have a right to equal access to quality public services such as education and social and healthcare; considers it essential that all - local government, regional government (where it exists) and the local

private sector - should work together to promote investment and ensure that rural and remote areas have essential infrastructure such as public and private transport links, a secure supply of energy and reliable and fast broadband technology, as well as finance and credit schemes for rural entrepreneurs, micro-enterprises and SMEs, without which rural enterprises and households will be at a permanent disadvantage and migration to urban areas will continue;

72. Takes the view, with regard to the recent animal epidemics – such as African swine fever, which hit the Baltic states and Poland, and avian influenza, which struck France – and the recent food safety scandals, such as the 2011 E. coli outbreak, the 2013 horsemeat scandal, and the current counterfeit honey scandal – that a significant increase in the amount spent on food and feed security – as set out in the third heading of the Multiannual Financial Framework – is needed, since the EUR 1.93 billion allocated for the current seven-year period is completely inadequate;
73. Stresses that farmers have to deal on a large scale with CAP-related administrative costs and that these costs vary substantially among Member States; calls on the Commission and Member States to decrease administrative burden by cutting red tape and simplifying the CAP, as well as ensuring its cost-effective transposition;
74. Stresses that access to basic services such as education, healthcare and housing, as well as the continuity of those services, are prerequisites for an environment conducive to job creation and for meeting the vital needs of people living in rural areas;
75. Considers it vital to ask public authorities to create extension services and services to assist farm management in rural areas, with a view to modernising European farming and doing away with obsolete traditional methods;
76. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to encourage and facilitate women's equality in the labour market and the compatibility of work and private life in rural areas, particularly regarding wages and social and pension rights, promotion of new qualifications and offering prospects and opportunities for women in agricultural and non-agricultural employment, in line with the principle of equality and non-discrimination in EU policies and programmes; also calls on them to better exploit the opportunities for targeted online information platforms, action and aid to new entrant and established women farmers and women in rural areas, particularly in the framework of the EAFRD and other EU funds encouraging project development, and to help retain essential infrastructure and services that are important in everyday rural life, thereby helping to limit the exodus of women from rural areas; likewise draws attention to the need, especially in rural areas, for sustainable strategies to maintain, encourage and support women's networks and organisations and their role in decision-making in agriculture and in rural areas; calls, furthermore, for easier access to education, finance and information to facilitate women's entrepreneurial initiatives (e.g. through e-business), rural business ownership and development;
77. Urges the Member States to strengthen the role of the social partners and social welfare organisations working alongside the authorities in monitoring compliance with employment legislation, combating undeclared work and monitoring adherence to social welfare and safety standards that promote the social and economic integration of migrant workers, including female seasonal workers, migrants and refugees; calls for

arrangements to be put in place to ensure that women can take part in all levels of the process;

78. Calls on the Commission to propose arrangements for adequately financing a specific EU programme in the form of a 'European Guarantee for Women from Rural Areas', modelled on the European Youth Guarantee;
79. Points out that the amount of farmland in the EU is becoming smaller by the year; emphasises that it is vital to preserve arable land in order to guarantee jobs in rural areas; calls on the Member States to promote improved access to land in areas with high levels of rural unemployment, calls, in this connection, for action to be taken to ensure that young women farmers have access to credit and are able to participate in land management;
80. Draws attention to the fact that women account for 45 % of the farm labour force; calls on the Commission to revise the definition of 'family farm', in order to facilitate women's access to training and professional advice, as well as to capital and benefits;
81. Calls on the relevant national, regional and local authorities to encourage the participation of women in local action groups and the development of local partnerships under the LEADER programme, as well as to ensure gender-balanced participation on their management boards;
82. Calls on regional actors, drawing on funding from the second pillar, to implement awareness-raising programmes aimed at emphasising gender neutrality in all occupations and overcoming the persistent highly traditional distribution of roles in farming;
83. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and the Commission.

26.5.2016

## OPINION OF THE COMMITTEE ON EMPLOYMENT AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS

for the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development

on ‘How can the CAP improve job creation in rural areas?’  
(2015/2226(INI))

Rapporteur: Paloma López Bermejo

### SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on Employment and Social Affairs calls on the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions into its motion for a resolution:

- A. whereas rural areas represent more than 77 % of EU territory and whereas many jobs in those areas are linked to agriculture and the agro-food industry;
- B. whereas, taken together, agriculture and the agro-food industry account for 6 % of the GDP of the EU, 15 million businesses and 46 million jobs;
- C. whereas the universal framework provided by the Sustainability Assessment of Food and Agriculture systems (SAFA) was developed by the FAO;
- D. whereas the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) provides medium-term assistance in housing, health care, education and employment in rural areas for marginalised communities; whereas the EAFRD can take into account the specific needs of refugees and be used for vocational training and skills acquisition actions in the different sectors of activity in rural areas;
- E. whereas the potential of women working and/or running a business in agricultural and rural areas should be analysed, recorded and promoted in all EU policies, and they should not be disadvantaged by any of them, as this will lay the groundwork for women to become drivers of development and innovation, helping the entire sector to emerge from the crisis; whereas women should be involved in sector development plans at local and regional level so that the latter can benefit from their needs, experiences and visions, and women should therefore be equipped with the skills required to participate actively in the design thereof;
- F. whereas demographic changes such as an ageing population and migration flows could be an important factor in the development of mountainous or disadvantaged rural areas that

are subject to depopulation or an ageing population;

1. Highlights the importance of agriculture and the agri-food sector to social and territorial cohesion owing to its role in sustainable economic growth, quality job creation and maintaining rural communities; stresses the need to maintain the CAP budget and to strengthen its social and economic role, with a particular focus on micro- and small-scale farming and taking into account regional specificities; emphasises that the efficient implementation of the CAP should contribute to social inclusion in rural areas, to decent living and working conditions and to good future prospects;
2. Supports the comprehensive development of geographical indications to protect specific regional features and cultural diversity, since they represent a crucial source of high-quality new jobs in rural communities;
3. Supports a coordinated approach between the CAP's second pillar and other EU funds in order to strengthen their effectiveness and avoid inefficiencies or duplication; highlights the synergies with the European Social Fund, which does not provide direct financial support to farmers but can be mobilised to support training and adaptation to changes in farming and the rural economy, as well as social inclusion and the fight against poverty; underlines the importance of involving local and regional administrations, and other relevant community actors, in the management and design of rural policies, and of improving the preparation of administrations dealing with the issues associated with European funds;
4. Stresses the importance of territorial cohesion in the EU, which should be guaranteed by economic development policies that are adapted to the challenges facing rural areas; highlights the strong connection between rural systems, small communities and municipalities, and calls for a better synergy between Cohesion Policy instruments and the CAP; highlights the importance of ITI and CLLD in this regard; considers that re-territorialisation<sup>1</sup>, where existing links between employment and agriculture and a given territory have traditionally existed, should be supported in order to maintain dynamic rural areas and bring back jobs;
5. Calls on Member States to adequately resource the LEADER Programme, given its acknowledged success in creating employment in rural areas;
6. Believes that a market-oriented CAP leads to price volatility and over-competition, which have a negative effect on rural incomes and employment, as evidenced by the crisis situation in the dairy sector following the abolition of the quota system; calls on the Commission and the Member States to guarantee prices that take due account of the work done by producers in order to provide them and their employees with a decent standard of living, also through supply measures; shares the concerns about the potential negative impact on agricultural labour of the free trade agreements currently being negotiated, such as the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership, and urges the Commission to assess their impact on agriculture; notes that the EU's high food safety, health and animal welfare standards, which are vital for ensuring the confidence of EU consumers, should

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<sup>1</sup> cf. <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+COMPARL+PE-580.547+02+NOT+XML+V0//EN>

not be compromised or negotiated away through trade agreements;

7. Calls for adequate compensation for those sectors and countries already at risk following the Russian embargo or as a result of current free trade agreements, such as those with Tunisia and Morocco;
8. Calls on each Member State, in the present context whose salient features include the Russian embargo, the decline in demand, the abolition of milk quotas, the collapse of prices, increased production costs, increased competition and environmental challenges, to consider how the competitiveness of its farming can be improved so that the sector can create jobs and generate added value which is shared equitably throughout agriculture and agro-food industry, particularly in the case of artisanal and small-scale production; highlights the importance, in this connection, of maintaining farms on the land, recognising their multifunctional character which enables them, over and above their prime function of producing agricultural raw materials, to perform several other important functions, such as preserving the environment and contributing to the vitality of rural areas and the balance of regional development;
9. Stresses that economic development in rural areas should also be seen in the context of their social and demographic development, and due account needs to be taken of action to support families and make it easier to combine family and professional life;
10. Stresses the need to support sustainable farming and food systems, including organic farming, as well as the sustainable management of soil, water and biodiversity, in order to preserve and create decent employment in farming and thriving rural economies, while moving towards greater sustainability and a reduction in the use of pesticides;
11. Stresses that European farming is currently facing an unprecedented crisis, which is impoverishing farmers, creating risks of bankruptcy and leading to rising numbers of suicides; calls on the Commission to assess the social impact of this crisis, particularly in terms of job losses, especially in rural areas;
12. Calls for producer organisations to be strengthened, since they play an essential role in safeguarding the interests of smallholder farmers and family farms in particular, and for them accordingly to become more actively involved in social support for those working in the sector;
13. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to support enterprises and cooperatives in the social economy, including social farming<sup>1</sup>, in order to foster social integration and jobs in rural areas; notes the actions pursued under the Social Business Initiative and calls on the Commission to enhance the contribution made by the social economy to rural development, for instance through an Action Plan for the Social Economy;
14. Urges that action be taken to put an end to the abusive practices of large food distribution groups in the supply chain, with the aim of guaranteeing a fair price for farmers that will safeguard the job creation potential that farming has in rural areas;

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<sup>1</sup>cf: <http://www.eesc.europa.eu/?i=portal.en.nat-opinions.25458>

15. Is concerned that at present the CAP first pillar favours large agricultural producers, leading to extreme market concentration and a lack of incentives for employment in the respective sectors; calls therefore for urgent reforms in this regard;
16. Calls for a strong CAP first pillar that promotes sustainable production, quality jobs, profitable farms and decent incomes, as well as respect for relevant collective agreements and social and labour legislation without placing new burdens on farmers;
17. Calls on the Member States to transpose Directive 2014/36/EU on seasonal workers into national legislation; calls on the Member States to ensure the correct application of the above-mentioned Directive and calls on the Commission to carry out a report on the state of play regarding its implementation by September 2019; calls on the Commission to analyse the scope of illegal hiring systems in the EU through investigations, surveys and statistical data, especially in those European regions where undeclared work and farming work exploitation are more widespread; stresses the need to put in place effective instruments, including adequate inspections and controls, to guarantee decent working and living conditions for seasonal workers in all EU regions, especially where this phenomenon is more prevalent, and stresses the need to ensure compliance with employment rights, labour standards and high quality working conditions in general;
18. Welcomes the CAP simplification measures implemented to date, but calls on the Commission to further develop and implement measures to introduce proportionality and flexibility in relation to the CAP's administrative burden; considers this beneficial to farmers and the smooth functioning of the CAP as a whole;
19. Stresses that action to support the demographic development and family-friendly nature of rural areas is already a CAP objective and should be given more prominence, also in connection with issues relating to the labour market;
20. Calls on the Commission to introduce the indicators proposed by the FAO in its Sustainability Assessment of Food and Agriculture systems (SAFA), in particular those geared to employment and social well-being;
21. Stresses that agricultural businesses must comply with national employment and social legislation; considers that any introduction of additional conditionalities into CAP first pillar payments would considerably increase the administrative burden on farmers and limit their job-creating potential;
22. Calls for a stronger role for social partners alongside management authorities and, where appropriate, civil society organisations in the development and implementation of common agricultural policy in order to create quality jobs, ensure compliance with labour legislation, fight against undeclared work, secure high health and safety standards and foster the social and economic integration of all rural workers, including refugees, migrant and seasonal workers;
23. Stresses the need to promote active measures and policies highlighting the positive role of migration in boosting economic growth and fostering social cohesion in rural areas;
24. Stresses the importance of quality vocational training that encompasses training through apprenticeships and the acquisition of skills, including ICT skills, by farmers and

agricultural workers, particularly for young people entering the workforce, in order to be able to adapt to changes in agriculture and the agri-food sector in a changing global environment while guaranteeing sufficient and high-quality food production;

25. Emphasises that access to ICT infrastructures and the deployment of broadband coverage in rural areas, as well as training in digital skills, are essential for modernising agricultural holdings and improving the life-long learning of agricultural workers and farmers, as well as for the creation of jobs and businesses in rural areas;
26. Stresses the need for digital development in rural areas as a key element in creating additional sustainable jobs, as well as the need for a concept of ‘digital villages’ that goes far beyond broadband infrastructure per se;
27. Encourages the Member States to promote the ERASMUS+ programme among young farmers in training, including its apprenticeship component, in order to encourage them to acquire new technical and linguistic skills abroad;
28. Highlights the particular benefits of work-based learning and apprenticeships in rural areas which often have high unemployment rates and where access to training centres is limited;
29. Recalls that the area of agricultural land is diminishing each year in the EU; stresses that preserving the area under cultivation is vital to preserving jobs in rural areas; calls on the Member States to share best practices and develop additional instruments to make access to land possible in rural areas with high unemployment, not only, for example, through ownership, but also through participatory use and management of farmland, in accordance with national practices; stresses, in this context, that improving access to land through instruments such as land banks, the recovery of abandoned fields, the establishment of social cooperatives, public subsidies and improved access to credit will contribute to agricultural employment, particularly for young people and women; recalls the essential nature of measures enabling generational turnover and the setting-up of young farmers;
30. Recalls that the average European farmer holds a mere 12 hectares of land and that 70% of agricultural holdings have a surface area of less than five hectares; notes that, due to their size and structure, agricultural holdings cannot always afford to take on full-time employees or highly qualified workers; encourages the Commission and the Member States therefore to put in place measures to encourage employer groups;
31. Stresses the importance of putting in place provisions to facilitate the transfer of agricultural holdings, given their often important heritage value;
32. Believes that farming, and especially family farming, is the single most important influence in preserving the economic and social fabric of rural areas; believes, in this regard, that family farming would be made increasingly sustainable by incentivising consolidation of existing holdings and thereby maximising consequent employment in local areas;
33. Notes the essential contribution made by women to the rural economy; is concerned at the low participation of women in rural and agricultural employment, where they make up 45 % of the workforce even though they represent 50 % of the population; points out that

women are disproportionately affected by precarious and non-standard employment conditions; stresses that the situation is even more serious in terms of access to farm ownership, since only 29 % of land is owned by women<sup>1</sup>; urges that the gender gap in rural areas be addressed in order to improve women's labour conditions and access to land; notes that, in rural areas, the gender pay gap is over 10 % higher than elsewhere; highlights that a gender focus needs to be adopted in the EU's agricultural and rural policies; highlights, in this connection, the importance of up-to-date statistics on farm ownership and women's employment in rural areas;

34. Calls for the defence of the right to public services such as schools and healthcare facilities in rural areas and small mountainous communities so that they remain dynamic and attractive, for existing jobs to be kept while new ones are created, and for an end to be put to the problem of depopulation in rural areas by encouraging people to stay and settle; notes that innovative solutions, such as multimodal platforms, which facilitate rapid and effective access to services for rural populations, may contribute to the protection of access to public services; supports the development of minimum income schemes at Member State level to ensure a decent income for rural inhabitants and to promote social cohesion in each Member State, given the high rate of poverty and social exclusion in rural areas.

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2015/536466/IPOL\\_STU%282015%29536466\\_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2015/536466/IPOL_STU%282015%29536466_EN.pdf)

## RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

<b>Date adopted</b>	24.5.2016
<b>Result of final vote</b>	+: 39 -: 7 0: 5
<b>Members present for the final vote</b>	Laura Agea, Tiziana Beghin, Vilija Blinkevičiūtė, Enrique Calvet Chambon, Ole Christensen, Martina Dlabajová, Lampros Fountoulis, Elena Gentile, Arne Gericke, Thomas Händel, Marian Harkin, Danuta Jazłowiecka, Agnes Jongerius, Jan Keller, Agnieszka Kozłowska-Rajewicz, Kostadinka Kuneva, Jean Lambert, Jérôme Lavrilleux, Jeroen Lenaers, Javi López, Morten Løkkegaard, Thomas Mann, Dominique Martin, Anthea McIntyre, Joëlle Mélin, Georgi Pirinski, Marek Plura, Terry Reintke, Maria João Rodrigues, Claude Rolin, Anne Sander, Siôn Simon, Jutta Steinruck, Romana Tomc, Ulrike Trebesius, Marita Ulvskog, Tatjana Ždanoka
<b>Substitutes present for the final vote</b>	Michèle Alliot-Marie, Maria Arena, Amjad Bashir, Lynn Boylan, Rosa Estaràs Ferragut, Paloma López Bermejo, Edouard Martin, Joachim Schuster, Csaba Sógor, Helga Stevens, Ivo Vajgl, Tom Vandenkendelaere, Gabriele Zimmer
<b>Substitutes under Rule 200(2) present for the final vote</b>	Fernando Ruas

12.7.2016

## **OPINION OF THE COMMITTEE ON WOMEN'S RIGHTS AND GENDER EQUALITY**

for the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development

on how the CAP can improve job creation in rural areas  
(2015/2226(INI))

Rapporteur for the opinion: Elisabeth Köstinger

### **SUGGESTIONS**

The Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality calls on the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions into its motion for a resolution:

- A. whereas, in many Member States, access for women from rural areas to the labour market is limited, and their chances of developing a business in the agricultural sector are relatively poor;
- B. whereas women represent slightly less than 50 % of the total working population in the rural areas of the EU, and about 45 % of the total economically active population in 2011<sup>1</sup>; whereas on average 29 %<sup>2</sup> of farms in Europe are run by women and whereas female entrepreneurship represents an important pillar in social, economic and environmental terms for sustainable development in rural areas;
- C. whereas the economic crisis has affected the entire European Union, with rural areas especially experiencing devastating levels of unemployment, poverty and depopulation, which affect women in particular;
- D. whereas the gender pay gap in rural areas is 10 % wider than in other areas and whereas there is a need to pay more attention to establishing up-to-date statistics on female land ownership, and on the working conditions of women in rural areas;
- E. whereas the proportion of female farm holders accessing Rural Development Programme aid is lower than the share of women-operated farms in the EU<sup>3</sup>;
- F. whereas the principle of equality of opportunity for men and women must be consistently

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<sup>1</sup> Eurostat (2013). Eurostat regional yearbook 2013. Focus on rural development.

<sup>2</sup> Study 'International Day of Rural Women 2015', Policy Department C, European Parliament.

<sup>3</sup> Dower, J. (2015). 'The role of funding under the Common Agricultural Policy for rural women'. EPRS, International Day of Rural Women 2015.

applied in the CAP, and whereas a gender-sensitive approach must be applied not only in the CAP, but also in cohesion policies in rural areas;

- G. whereas, in the predominantly rural areas of the EU, only 61 % of women between the ages of 20 and 64 were employed in 2009<sup>1</sup>;
- H. whereas the constant exodus of women from rural areas has an adverse impact not only on the social infrastructure, for example because of the loss of many women who engage in voluntary activities, but also on the labour market, and whereas this exodus can only be halted if a framework is created in which women can achieve their personal and professional goals in rural areas;
- I. whereas the promotion of equality between men and women and non-discrimination is one of the principles applicable to the ESI funds, including the EAFRD;
1. Notes that rural women are not a homogenous group and that their roles, needs and situation differ from one Member State to another; considers, therefore, that the steps taken to improve their opportunities in life and employment prospects should be diverse; stresses, nevertheless, the unequal access of women to farmland ownership; notes that women on farms are therefore often only family members of the owners, women being classified as the holder's spouse, corresponding to 80.1 % of all spouses in 2007<sup>2</sup> and accordingly often have no income of their own, so that their economic independence is often not guaranteed;
  2. Deplores the gender gap in rural areas and calls for women's working conditions to be improved and for their access to land to be facilitated;
  3. Takes the view that women farmers have a significant role to play towards ensuring the continued existence of smallholdings with prospects for the future, and that greater support should therefore be given to their innovative potential through aid for diversification measures such as direct marketing, farm holidays, social services and care services; highlights the importance of the concept of farm diversification, including the wide spectrum of environmental, economic and cultural goods and services, as these can create associated scope for supplementary income for women on farms and at the same time significantly facilitate work-life balance for men and women;
  4. Expresses its concern about the potential impact on European agriculture of agreements that are currently being negotiated, such as the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP), the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement with Canada (CETA), and the EU-Mercosur Free Trade Agreement;
  5. Points out that promoting gender equality is a core objective of the EU and its Member States and that gender mainstreaming should therefore be part of the CAP; calls on the Commission to improve CAP monitoring and evaluation indicators to identify women's 'invisible' work and to disaggregate, where possible, indicators by gender; emphasises the need to identify targets and objectives based on gender impact assessment, to promote

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<sup>1</sup> European Commission (2011), 'Agriculture and Rural Development. EU Agricultural Economic Briefs. Rural Areas and the Europe 2020 Strategy – Employment', Brief No 5 – November 2011.

<sup>2</sup> European Commission (2012), 'Agricultural Economic Briefs. Women in EU agriculture and rural areas: hard work, low profile', Brief No 7 – June 2012.

sustainable career prospects and paid employment opportunities for women in agriculture and enhance economic efficiency;

6. Stresses the high proportion of self-employed workers in rural areas with a lack of appropriate social protection and the high proportion of ‘invisible’ work that affects women in particular; calls, therefore, on the Member States and regions with legislative powers to improve the legislation regarding gender equality in the labour market, in particular regarding wages, ownership rights and decision making, and to ensure social security for both men and women working in rural areas;
7. Calls on the Member States to exploit more efficiently the opportunities for aid to women farmers and women in rural areas which can be realised in the framework of the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) and to support relevant simplification measures; calls on the Commission to propose new targeted actions aimed at supporting and encouraging women’s participation in the labour market in rural areas, and on the Member States to include in their rural development programmes specific sub-programmes to support female entrepreneurship, strategies to create jobs for women that will ensure pension rights, policies to promote women’s representation in political, economic and social forums in the agricultural sector, and the promotion of equal opportunities in rural areas;
8. Urges the Member States to strengthen the role of the social partners and social welfare organisations working alongside the authorities in monitoring compliance with employment legislation, combating undeclared work and monitoring adherence to social welfare and safety standards that promote the social and economic integration of migrant workers, including female seasonal workers, migrants and refugees; calls for arrangements to be put in place to ensure that women can take part in all levels of the process;
9. Calls on the Commission to propose arrangements for adequately financing a specific EU programme in the form of a ‘European Guarantee for Women from Rural Areas’ modelled on the European Youth Guarantee;
10. Points out that the amount of farmland in the EU is becoming smaller by the year; emphasises that it is vital to preserve arable land in order to guarantee jobs in rural areas; calls on the Member States to promote improved access to land in areas with high levels of rural unemployment, calls, in this connection, for action to be taken to ensure that young women farmers have access to credit and are able to participate in land management;
11. Draws attention to the fact that women account for 45 % of the farm labour force; calls on the Commission to revise the definition of family farm, in order to facilitate their access to training and professional advice, as well as to capital and benefits;
12. Calls on the Commission to implement gender budgeting for the financial aid under the CAP first and second pillars;
13. Calls on the Commission, together with the Member States, to improve conditions for women in rural areas, and to provide not only adequate information material concerning support possibilities specifically aimed at women farmers and women in rural areas, but

also access to education and credit, as well as promoting the establishment of associations and the provision of wide-ranging professional diversification advice, so that the women concerned are encouraged to put their own projects into practice in rural areas; notes, in this context, the need for information material also to be made available on online platforms so as to afford flexible access to information about grants for women in rural areas; underlines that introducing information courses designed for women on the rules and requirements for company creation and management can have a positive impact as it can provide women with the confidence they need to start their own businesses;

14. Calls on the relevant national, regional and local authorities to encourage the participation of women in local action groups and the development of local partnerships under the Leader programme, as well as to ensure gender-balanced participation on their management boards;
15. Stresses the importance of measures to promote education, vocational training and new qualifications for women farmers and women in rural areas, including by promoting greater access to postgraduate training and specialist courses for entrepreneurs and agricultural producers, so that long-term employment in rural areas can be guaranteed and adaptation to changes in farming and food production can thus be facilitated; calls on the Commission, in this connection, to give due consideration, as regards aid measures under the second pillar of the CAP, to the promotion of training and counselling for women on farms, including specific training to enhance women's skills and competitiveness in agriculture and to facilitate their formal employment opportunities; emphasises the importance of advising and supporting women to enable them to develop innovative farming activities in rural areas, including primary agricultural production enterprises;
16. Stresses – inter alia with reference to part-time working and teleworking – the importance of digital development in rural areas and the development of a holistic approach (the 'digital village'), and calls in this context for greater use to be made of programmes under the second pillar to facilitate the entry into self-employment; stresses that improving the quality and accessibility of essential infrastructure, such as transport links, a secure supply of energy, and reliable and fast broadband technology, which can also make it possible for highly qualified women to work in rural areas (e.g. through e-business) and everyday institutions and services in rural areas, is essential in order to enable men and women to achieve a work-life balance, and calls on the Member States to adopt mobile approaches to rural development, in close cooperation with municipalities and regions;
17. Emphasises the importance of supporting and promoting the participation of women farmers in decision-making; points out that women can contribute to the development of their communities and of agricultural businesses;
18. Emphasises that rural areas across Europe are prone to population ageing, low population density and, in some areas, depopulation; calls for additional measures to be taken to develop living and working conditions in rural areas that offer women and their families reasons for staying and leading a successful life there;
19. Calls on regional actors, drawing on funding from the second pillar, to implement awareness-raising programmes aimed at emphasising gender neutrality in all occupations and overcoming the persistent highly traditional distribution of roles in farming;

20. Draws attention to the difficulties that women farmers face when it comes to obtaining financing; notes that better access to capital for investment is pivotal to improving the socio-economic situation of women in rural areas and supporting female enterprise, and calls on the Member States to promote, support and provide access for women farmers to sources of financing and to specific training that can facilitate this access;
21. Is aware of the special challenges with regard to the compatibility of private and work life on farms, and the importance of the situation of parents and a family-friendly employment environment on family farms; underlines the crucial role of public services in increasing women's participation in the labour market as these services reduce the burden on women who usually spend more time than men in taking care of the children and other dependants; calls on the Member States and regional and local governments to implement policies that will protect, upgrade and promote good-quality, accessible and affordable infrastructure, facilities and services for everyday life in rural areas;
22. Calls on the Member States to improve social security and legal recognition measures for women farmers so as to ensure that they enjoy the same rights as men, because they often work long hours for the family business without social security or legal cover;
23. Emphasises the need to maintain, encourage and support entrepreneurial initiatives, associations, cooperatives and women's organisations in agriculture and in rural areas, which will foster the exchange of best practices at local, regional and national level and will stimulate women's access to the labour market; points out, furthermore, the importance of developing information hubs and networks in order to raise awareness of the social and economic situation of women in rural areas.

RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

<b>Date adopted</b>	12.7.2016
<b>Result of final vote</b>	+: 26 -: 0 0: 3
<b>Members present for the final vote</b>	Daniela Aiuto, Maria Arena, Beatriz Becerra Basterrechea, Malin Björk, Vilija Blinkevičiūtė, Anna Maria Corazza Bildt, Iratxe García Pérez, Anna Hedh, Teresa Jiménez-Becerril Barrio, Elisabeth Köstinger, Agnieszka Kozłowska-Rajewicz, Maria Noichl, Marijana Petir, Terry Reintke, Jordi Sebastià, Michaela Šojdrová, Ángela Vallina, Beatrix von Storch, Elissavet Vozemberg-Vrionidi, Jana Žitňanská
<b>Substitutes present for the final vote</b>	Ildikó Gáll-Pelcz, Arne Gericke, Kostadinka Kuneva, Constance Le Grip, Marc Tarabella, Monika Vana, Julie Ward
<b>Substitutes under Rule 200(2) present for the final vote</b>	Rosa D'Amato, Jens Nilsson

## RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE RESPONSIBLE

<b>Date adopted</b>	29.9.2016
<b>Result of final vote</b>	+: 32 -: 7 0: 0
<b>Members present for the final vote</b>	John Stuart Agnew, Clara Eugenia Aguilera García, Eric Andrieu, Richard Ashworth, José Bové, Paul Brannen, Nicola Caputo, Matt Carthy, Albert Deß, Norbert Erdős, Edouard Ferrand, Luke Ming Flanagan, Beata Gosiewska, Martin Häusling, Esther Herranz García, Jan Huitema, Jarosław Kalinowski, Elisabeth Köstinger, Urszula Krupa, Zbigniew Kuźmiuk, Philippe Loiseau, Giulia Moi, Ulrike Müller, James Nicholson, Maria Noichl, Bronis Ropé, Jordi Sebastià, Jasenko Selimovic, Maria Lidia Senra Rodríguez, Czesław Adam Siekierski
<b>Substitutes present for the final vote</b>	Jean Arthuis, Jean-Paul Denanot, Jens Gieseke, Maria Heubuch, Norbert Lins, Stanislav Polčák, Sofia Ribeiro, Vladimir Urutchev, Miguel Viegas