

**BUILDING ALTERNATIVES:
VYTVÁŘÍME ALTERNATIVY:**
2ND CONGRESS OF THE  **EuropeanLEFT**
PRAGUE, NOVEMBER 23-25, 2007

ADOPTED MOTION

Platform of the Party of the European Left on Common Agricultural Policy in the European Union

The European Left has to deal with the situation of the farmers and all people living in the rural areas. The directions of new CAP press in all the countries of the EU the daily life of the farmers, particularly of the family agriculture, and cause the most important problems of their social situation. Therefore, the 2nd EL Congress discussed these problems and agreed on the main axes of an alternative agricultural policy. On the other hand, the re-examination of the CAP ("check Health") in the near future will focus on new problems and perspectives of CAP towards 2013 and after which we have to discuss in the agricultural network of the European Left.

The main axes of an alternative agricultural policy, that are proposed to constitute the frame of positions of the European Left in agricultural and rural issues, are the following:

1. Introduction

The application of the new CAP, created big difficulties of survival of family agriculture in all the states of the EU. In many countries, the curtailment of subsidies led to the shrinkage of production, increase of cost, reduction of incomes and great uncertainty for the future. At the same time the promotion of "free trade agreements", in bilateral and regional level, with the developing and Mediterranean countries, as well as the neoliberal directions of the WTO, create additional difficulties in the small and medium-sized farmers, as well as in Europe and in developing countries. Unfortunately the ruling circles of the EU, in order to achieve an agreement on the "industrial" products and in the "services", show ready to "sacrifice" agriculture (that means the family agriculture), for the guarantee of the free access of European multinationals in the markets of developing countries, disregarding the consequences on their development and the secure of millions of farmers. Finally, the forecasted review of CAP in 2009 and the tendency of reduction of agricultural expenses from the budget of the EU, worsen the conditions of remaining in the countryside of the great majority of farmers, with serious economical, social and environmental consequences.

2. The consequences of the new CAP in the small and medium-sized farmers

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The experience from the application of new CAP, showed that the system of “decoupling” subsidies from the production, the curtailments of subsidies via “modulation” and various “retentions”, the criteria of “cross-compliances”, etc., do not benefit the small to medium-sized producers and the family agriculture. They mainly serve the big agricultural enterprises, the processing industries and big exporters of products that enjoy the main volume of subsidies, reproducing the model of “intensive agriculture”, with negative consequences in the quality of foods, in the agricultural employment and in the environment, intensive use of pesticides causing chemical pollution on the ground.

The new CAP affects particularly hardly the “qualitative” and “Mediterranean” agriculture and small farmers of the European South. The revision of the “Common Market Organisation”, in different products (olive oil, cotton, tobacco, sugar, wine, fruits-vegetables, etc.), causes serious hurt in the production and income of family exploitations. From the other side the subsidies of the second “pillar” of supporting of agricultural development are very limited.

The small and medium-sized farmers and particularly the younger ones do not have substantially margins of survival in the new conditions. With the system of “decoupling”, the unequal way of distribution of subsidies in favour of the big agricultural exploitations (the 25% take 75% of subsidies) is perpetuated. On the other hand, the last annual report of the Commission on the prospects of agricultural products is limited almost exclusively in the cereals, meat and dairy. Obviously from the ruling circles of the EU, there is a conscious choice, of covering the main volume of needs in fruits, vegetables, wine, poultry, etc., from countries of low cost, with lower social and environmental standards, with return the opening of market in the industry and services, in profit of the European multinationals and chains of super-markets. This policy will cause an “explosion” of long distance transports with high economic, social and environmental costs.

3. Which model of Agriculture needs Europe?

The big majority of European farmers and consumers wish a CAP that will regulate the volume of production for the limitation of surpluses, while it supports the income of small and medium-sized farmers. They want also to produce healthy and safe foods, with compatible environmental production ways. The ultimate of economic competitiveness of the model of “intensive agriculture”, led to the “madness cows” and to “dioxins” in foods. Big and unanticipated dangers encompass also the use of “Genetically Modified Organisms” (GMO) in the production of foods and foodstuff. Strict control for the localisation of toxic elements in foods (dioxins, nitric acids, heavy metals, antibiotics, etc.) and undertaking of the legal and economic responsibility from the industries of manufacture of products (upstream), as well as of production of agricultural supplies (downstream), for each damage that results in the human health, in the animals and in the environment.

In consequence food should become the centre of the discussion, not only as quantity, but mainly as quality, as a culture of diet, as relations of producers-consumer, as relation of tradi-

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tion, culture and production, instead of the interests of the multinationals. The use of GMOs' should be prohibited and the international Protocol on "Biosafety" should be applied immediately. The qualitative agriculture and the sustainable agricultural development in combination with the promotion of the "Mediterranean diet" must become the fundamental axis of the agricultural policy.

Basic element of "Common Agricultural Policy" should be the principle "people's food sovereignty", that is supported in the decentralisation of production according to the needs of local societies, regions, and countries and supplementary the production for exports. The elements of production of healthy and qualitative products, the employment, the respect in the diet models, the maintenance of seeds and species, the rational use of water resources, the protection of biodiversity, the application of measures of support of family agriculture, the abolition of "dumping", etc., constitute the fundamental elements of the principle of "people's food sovereignty".

From this point of view, the development of agricultural production and the employment opportunities should constitute the central criterion of development of the countryside, with the application of sector-based policies, support of agricultural veterinarian biodiversity and rural employment, particularly young people and women. The agricultural subsidies should be given with economically, social and environmental criteria and no to the profit of big producers of certain sectors and certain countries. An additional income support must be ensured to the farmers of mountainous, obscure and remote regions that face a bigger cost of production. Also objective of the agricultural policy should be the control of multinationals, the reduction of the gap of prices of producer-consumer, the total insurance of agricultural production, the benefit of agricultural pensions for decent existence, the investments in projects of technical infrastructure and social services, the promotion of agro tourism, the protection of people's culture, local traditions, etc.

4. Axes of radical reform of the CAP

The European Left Party considers that a radical turn in the applied agricultural policy in European level is needed. It is opposite to the idea of abolition of the CAP and is coming out in favour of a radical reform.

The fundamental axis of the reform, should be the fairer distribution of subsidies in favour of the small and medium-sized producers and in favour of the deficit agricultural products, particularly "Mediterranean" (fruits, vegetables, olive oil etc.), and the application of community preference, in connection to the "Mediterranean diet".

Increase of the funds for the agricultural development and for the support of qualitative agriculture (local traditional, products with name of origin, integrated farm management and organic), as well as for the development of less developed regions. For the cover of needs for the agricultural and regional development, as well as other kind of policies mainly on social issues, a direct increase of the budget of EU in proportion to the GNP is required.

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The support measures of the agricultural households should not be based on the hectares but on the number of the employed. Motives must be given for the installation of new farmers and for renting of land to small and medium-sized producers.

The concentration of the land and production in less and less hand must stop and the basic mass of farmers in the countryside must maintain. The maintenance of a significant number of workers in the agricultural sector, is not a phenomenon of economic “decay”, but “added value” for the society.

The radical reform of the CAP means application of a new agricultural policy, with target the production of healthy and qualitative products for the needs of local societies and foundation the principle of “people's sovereignty” in foods.

Priorities are given to the development of family agriculture and cover of internal market in basic foods, instead of production with only target the exports.

Protection of the income of farmers, with formation of prices in the products, accordingly with the cost of production and a small profit. Control various “cartel” and oligopolistic structures, in the processing and marketing of products.

Guarantee of equality of rights and opportunities of men and women, essential improvement of the position of “worker-farmers” and particularly the “economic immigrants” that work under miserable conditions in the agricultural sector.

Reduction of the cost of production, with improvement of infrastructures, control of prices of agricultural supplies by abolishing the oligopolistic structure (seeds, fertilizers, fuels, equipments, etc), supply of credit with favourable terms, free agricultural advices, etc.

Support of collective forms of organisation of farmers, particularly first-level productive co-operatives and groups of producers, with guarantee of their central role in the distribution, transportation and marketing.

Protection of plant multiplicative material (research, production, certification, control, marketing), and the right of farmers to have their own seeds.

Application of programs of development of organic agriculture and livestock farming and prohibition of the use of “genetically modified organisms” (GMO) in the production of foods and foodstuff. Reinforcement on the criteria supporting the working people on organic agriculture.

The international trade of agricultural products should arise from the principle of “people's food sovereignty”, which excludes all kinds of “dumping”, suppresses the export subsidies and ensures the income of small and medium-sized farmers, so much in the developed what in developing countries.

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In the formulation of agricultural policy and foods, the WTO and the multinationals cannot play a decisive role. The agricultural products and the public goods (water, health, education, energy, etc.) should remain apart from regulations of the WTO.

UNCTAD (UN) in collaboration with the FAO could undertake the elaboration of rules of an international trade of agricultural products and their supervision could be from an independent institutional body of the UN.

Basic objective of the agricultural policy should be the promotion of a new productive model, compatible with the healthy diet and the protection of the environment as opposed to the carbon dioxide emission. For the greenhouse effect and the climatic changes, serious responsibilities has the agrochemical model of conventional agriculture (chemical pollution, desertification, over pumping of underground waters, etc.), which, should change because it is against the farmers, consumers, people and biodiversity of the planet.

Finally critical factor of an alternative left policy, is the development of a radical agricultural trade-union movement, that will express the interests of small and medium-sized producers and will promote the common action with other movements (co-operative, labour trade-union, consumers, ecological, etc), against the neoliberal policy, in national, European and international level. Particular importance is the attendance and support of initiatives of international agricultural movement of "Via Campesina" and CPE (Coordination Paysanne Europeenne) in European level.