

POSITION OF LATVIA ON THE FUTURE OF THE CAP

Agriculture and food sectors are of strategic importance for the EU providing food production and food sovereignty.

EU Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) has to continue as a separate EU policy with a separate dedicated budget envelope in the new Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF).

INCOME SUPPORT

CAP direct payments have a crucial role in supporting agricultural activity.

In order to ensure a level playing field for all EU farmers the external convergence of direct payments must be completed. Direct Payments for Latvia must be 100% of EU average level starting from 2028. (Whereas the current level for Latvia will gradually attain only 80% at the end of the existing period).

Direct payments must remain 100% EU funded.

Direct payments should be primarily targeted at income support to maintain the viability and competitiveness of farmers.

Coupled income support must be maintained in the framework of direct payments. The current system of conditionality must be simplified.

RURAL AREAS

Strong, targeted 2nd pillar for rural development is needed, which is an indispensable and key instrument for the development of rural areas.

It is crucial that RD envelope for Latvia is raised – given the difficulties in the rural regions and that last two periods our RD envelope was cut leading to insufficient funds for all the various objectives that CAP entails.

Special EU support is necessary for the Eastern regions bordering Russia and Belarus. These are rural areas of particular vulnerability and concern and need particular support.

CAP IMPLEMENTATION

The result-based delivery model must be throughout simplified and continued with less administrative burden, i.e., by abolishing the unit amount approach CAP Strategic plans in the future should be genuinely strategic. CAP must be fundamentally simplified - both for farmers and for Member State authorities.

ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE

Emphasis for the next period must be on the simplification of the existing requirements, making implementation efficient and targeted, while not introducing ever new or stricter requirements.

Farmers should be incentivised and adequately remunerated for the implementation of environmentally friendly and climate mitigation practices.

There must be balanced approach for farmers in sense of expenses, administrative burden and capacity and profitability. Requirements must take into account the structural differences between farms and the specificities of the Member States.

It must be recognised that the agrifood sector has limitations in terms of mitigation compared to other sectors of the economy.

CARBON FARMING

Income diversification for farmers' resilience is the right direction and these alternatives should be available to all farmers. However, alternative sources of income, such as nature or carbon credits, should not replace active farming - food production must remain the core mission of agriculture.

BENCHMARKING SYSTEM

We are sceptical about the Commission's proposal to establish a voluntary benchmarking system, given that the collection and input of such data may create additional administrative burden.

FARMERS POSITION IN FOOD SUPPLY CHAIN

Latvia supports the need to strengthen the position of farmers in the food supply chain. However, Latvia is sceptical about the requirement for mandatory written contracts given that each country has a different legal system and possibility of raising burdens.

PRODUCER ORGANISATIONS

Latvia supports the incentivising of farmers cooperation. However, it is necessary to review and simplify the existing recognition and support conditions, which currently discourage many farmers from forming recognized producer organizations.

TRADE

Commission should develop concrete proposals to increase the competitiveness of EU farmers and producers vis-à-vis third-country producers. Given that EU farmers and producers have to comply with high EU standards, which require additional costs and thus create disbalance in comparison with farmers from third countries.

Reciprocity is needed for fair competition, particularly when it comes to plant protection products and animal welfare.

FORESTRY

We point to the importance of promoting the production and development of high value-added products in the forestry, while fostering the circular economy.

Latvia considers forestry to be an integral part of rural development and the economy, making an important contribution to strengthening the local economy and employment. EU rural development policies and funding mechanisms should ensure a fair approach to support, including forestry as a full part of rural development.

Carbon-neutral management initiatives in forestry can strengthen carbon sequestration and promote the monetisation of forest ecosystem services, thereby supporting sustainable forestry and reducing dependence on fossil resources.

A realistic approach is needed, taking into account that GHG emissions and CO₂ sequestration from agriculture and forestry are also driven by natural processes.

Sustainable forestry is a long-term process that can ensure both carbon sequestration and the availability of timber resources, as well as building more resilient forest stands to climate extremes.

BIOECONOMY

Latvia supports the need for innovation in the future development of agriculture, and therefore we support the inclusion of the bioeconomy in future financial mechanisms, such as the EU 10th Framework Programme for Research and Innovation, especially taking into account the need for access to finance and the creation of higher added value for bioeconomy products.

NATIONAL RESOURCES AND PEAT SECTOR

National resources must be exploited in an economically viable way, including peat, a resource that remains important in various sectors, in particular agriculture and forestry.

LIVESTOCK SECTOR

Livestock sector as an essential part of EU agriculture.

In efforts to reduce emissions it is important to take into account also valuable effects of the sector on environment and climate, maintaining biodiversity must be taken. Animal density is and must be taken as criteria that shows the intensity of agricultural activity.

PLANT PROTECTION PRODUCTS

When making decisions on the banning of active substances, it is necessary to assess whether there are effective and proportionate alternatives to plant protection for safe and competitive crop production, quarantine measures and the control of invasive species.

COUNTRY OF ORIGIN LABELLING

Latvia appreciates the Commission's initiatives in the field of consumer protection, especially so that consumers receive full information about the true origin of products. Latvia supports the expansion of the list of products with regard to mandatory indication of the country of origin at the EU level.