

CONSULTATION REGARDING THE FUTURE OF THE COMMON AGRICULTURAL POLICY OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

Contribution of the Romanian National Rural Development Network

Following the launching of the public debate regarding the future of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) at the European level and as discussed in the additional meeting of the Coordination Committee of the European Network for Rural Development of 14 April 2010, the Romanian National Rural Development Network (NRDN) has in its turn launched a consultation process among its members, regarding the rural development component of the CAP. Furthermore, positions on this topic have been requested from the members of the Monitoring Committee of the National Rural Development Programme. The position of the Romanian Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development concerning this subject is also included in the present synthesis. This stance may be subject to further modifications or additions, depending on future consultations.

The respondents were the following organisations:

- World Wide Fund for Nature – Danube-Carpathians Programme Romania
- Romanian Investment and Advisory Group
- Romanian Hungarian Farmers' Association
- RuralNet
- Ornithological Romanian Association
- Romanian Ministry of Public Finances – the Authority for the Coordination of Structural Funds
- Romanian Sugar Patronage

The answers were centred on the three main questions proposed by the Contact Point of the European Network for Rural Development, namely:

1. What should be the objectives of the future rural development policy?
2. How can the policy instruments be made more effective?
3. How can the management of the policy be improved?

The positions transmitted by the organisations taking part in the consultation emphasised several central aspects and principles, which are presented hereunder.

1. What should be the objectives of the future rural development policy?

- Promoting innovation
- Protecting producers' rights
- Ensuring food safety
- Sustainability and integrated approach
- Financial solidarity
- Eliminate discriminations among beneficiaries (e.g. by harmonising the national and community legislations, the types of beneficiaries should be the same under the CAP in all Member States)
- Promoting the maintenance of diversity
- Environment, biodiversity, water management and climate protection and the promotion of animal welfare

- Addressing social problems such as employment, preserving traditions and rural inheritance and promote social inclusion
- Integrating rural development and agriculture
- New tools for improving the management of agricultural surfaces
- Increased importance of Pillar 2
- Transparency of the use of funds
- Correctly assessing the potential of the rural areas and focusing on specific measures that address the particular problems of the rural areas
- Stimulate the preservation of the specificities of the rural areas and of traditions
- Competitiveness of agriculture
- Promoting production efficiency
- Fostering the creation of public-private partnerships
- Fostering inter-regional, human experience and good practices exchanges
- Support equitably and fairly the agriculture based on small farmers and the agriculture based on big farmers, both playing important and often complementary roles.
- Ensure and benefit from complementarity with the Cohesion Policy

2. How can the policy instruments be made more effective?

- Integration of rural development and agriculture
- Promoting diversity and sustainability
- Correlating the objectives and provisions of the national strategies with the European one
- Correlating the CAP with national support programmes
- The introduction of specific support schemes, such as: a Basic Farm Sustainability Scheme, a HNV System Support Scheme, a Organic System Support Scheme, Targeted Agri-Environment schemes, Natura 2000 and Water Frame Directive compensation schemes, Support measures for sustainable farming and land management, Capital investment grants, Support for management planning and cooperation, Support for rural communities threatened by abandonment
- Ensuring flexibility of the EAFRD (permitting the redefinition of the interventions domains by acknowledging the specificities of the territories)
- Correlation and complementarity with the Cohesion Policy objectives
- The creation of a new type of contract between farmers and society (the first should be rewarded for producing public goods – e.g. biodiversity, environment preservation, etc.)
- Maintaining and improving the creation and functioning of the national rural development networks

3. How can the management of the policy be improved?

- Emphasis on the management of financial resources
- Better management of the human resources
- Better knowing the rural environment
- Bureaucracy reduced (use of outcome agreements and simple contracts)
- Improved communication between the potential beneficiaries and the authorities (information on the CAP should be available permanently in the form of comprehensive manuals available for the rural stakeholders)
- The use of progress reports as regards the evolution of the objectives set within the NRDPs and overall policies
- Emphasis on public goods and the role of farmers in producing and delivering them

- Correlation with the objectives of the Cohesion Strategy
- Increasing (or at least maintaining) the current level of the budget allocated
- Emphasising solidarity among Member States
- The use of a homogeneous payment system among Member States
- Contractual basis – payments are designed to support the delivery of public goods and are based on a written agreement between society and the recipient
- Targeting – all payments are clearly aimed at the achievement of specific and well defined policy objectives;
- Programming – guidelines and European priorities are decided in common, with MS and regions determining the details of schemes, relative budget allocations and national/regional priorities for approval by the Commission
- Strategic approach – MS need to develop an overarching strategy for the deployment of CAP schemes, and to obtain Commission approval before the elaboration of national and regional plans
- European money for European goals – the principle that European funding should support European objectives would inform funding decision and priorities
- Partnership principle (consultation)
- Accountability – beneficiaries of public payments should be fully accountable with respect to complying with the terms of the agreement;
- Budget – the budget allocations to MS is decided on the basis of objective criteria and solidarity principles ensuring fair treatment among old and new MS and reflecting the European importance of public goods associated with farming in different countries
- Monitoring and evaluation
- A dynamic and cost-effective system
- Coherence
- Transparency
- Trade distorting effects
- Decentralization regarding the programming and fund management
- The creation, at the level of the European Commission, of a common coordination mechanism for the structural funds and EAFRD
- Strategic planning
- Public participation enhancing democracy in the rural environment

The position of the Romanian Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development

Due to the world economic crisis, more attention should be given to the development of the economy of rural areas and to reducing the disparities between the rural and urban ones, by taking into account the specificities of each Member State. Rural areas have a significant growth potential and they have a vital social role, since rural communities contribute to the overall economic growth.

Another important aspect regarding the insurance of the greater CAP impact refers to the exchange of experience and know-how between the Member States. In this framework, mainly the results of research in different Member States are taken into account, considering that these should be available free of charge to the European producers.

Romania is going to continue undertaking and supporting activities for a better informing of the farmers and of the great public concerning the CAP and of the measures resulting from it.

As it has been highlighted in the previous debates, the objectives of the CAP should refer to the following issues:

- Ensuring food safety by increasing agricultural productivity, based on the introduction of large scale innovation
- Improving the protection of the environment
- Food safety and public health
- The role of the EU on international markets
- Offering clear perspectives for the producers by maintaining a budget at least equal to the current one
- Constraints introduced through the negotiations with the WTO
- Ensuring a balance between the opening of markets and internal support
- Rural development measures regarding mainstreaming and promoting the role of women and the further pursuance of the measures concerning young farmers.

Romania considers that the future CAP should take into account the fact that rural aspects are inherently related to agriculture, especially in the new Member States.

The rural development policy can contribute to the objectives and priorities of the EU 2020 Strategy by:

- Promoting “green” innovative technology
- Reducing greenhouse gas emissions
- Investing in the development of skills, training and private initiative
- Increasing the efficiency of the use of natural resources and their sustainable management
- Increasing the competitiveness of agriculture
- Delivery of public goods