

THE GEMBLOUX DECLARATION

This text was written in the context of the public debate called for by the European Agriculture Commissioner with the aim of involving and giving responsibility to European civil society in the construction of a common agriculture and food policy.

It should also be read in the light of the strengthening of the legislative powers of the European Parliament in agricultural matters. With the extension of the codecision procedure, the Parliament is becoming a real crucible for public expression in which a democratic culture is being built up where decisions on shared interests are negotiated and taken together.

It has been issued by four interdisciplinary European think tanks: the Groupe de Bruges, the Groupe Saint-Germain, the Magyar Agrarakadémia, and Terra Nova.

Reinventing Europe's agriculture and food industry and environmental

Fluctuations, instability and volatility in prices and incomes, conflicts between exporting powers, growing malnutrition, environmental dead ends. European agriculture is currently going through a series of unprecedented crises. At the same time, it is wracked by increasing doubts as to its future. We know that agriculture has occupied and continues to occupy a key place in the development of human societies, ensuring the stability of our continent.

I) An agricultural policy at the service of a Community for peace.

Agricultural Europe today is shaped by the desire of the countries of Europe for reconciliation and to unite to peacefully pursue a common destiny. In other words, it is not a bureaucratic aberration, nor just an abstract ideal dreamt up by politicians far detached from reality. This mutually supportive alliance of peoples and nations is the historical strategic response to international crises, and was constructed by politicians who had vivid memories of the past: the collapse in agricultural produce prices in 1929, the war, rationing and shortages.

The writers of the Treaties foresaw that setting up a common agricultural policy was a step in a more general mission for the Community, promoting balanced and harmonious economic development, solidarity between the Member States and a rise in the standard of living for farmers. Agriculture was thus not marginalised in the Community integration process. Indeed, it gave it substance.

This policy was supposed to satisfy our more vital needs, to feed ourselves and to become self-sufficient in food. This was made possible through common management of the public aid which allowed European agriculture to develop rapidly and modernise to an unimaginable extent. These results were also achieved by a general mobilisation of European farmers, aware that their futures depended largely on the European project.

II) A food and agriculture policy that meets the challenges of the 21st century

A) A more open, less stable context

The world is currently undergoing several crises which are not without an impact on agriculture.

The phenomenon of globalisation, marked by the deregulation of markets in agricultural raw materials and the domination of the economy by finance, produced the crisis which is felt all over the world today. But the world too has changed with the emergence of new policies and economic powers which are at the same time agricultural powers.

The environmental crisis, combining the global warming issue, the degradation of biodiversity and natural resources and generating new fractures between the regions of the world. This environmental deal brings into question the very survival of man on Earth. It is therefore a challenge that has to be faced now at the outset of the 21st century.

The food crisis which is the sad result of the increase in inequality and the persistence of poverty in the world. The leap in prices of agricultural raw materials and speculation have had dramatic consequences, particularly for the most vulnerable populations: hunger riots, and more than a billion people suffering from malnutrition, of whom nearly 80 % are farmers.

More than ever, these three challenges require that Europe keeps an ambitious public policy for its agriculture and which is recognised by all the citizens. As the general crisis favours withdrawal temptations and the selfishnesses of all kinds, it appears more than ever necessary to reassert the common feature of this policy, by rejecting all attempts which are aimed at its weakening, its renationalisation or even its dismantling. On the contrary, this time in history must lead us to exceed this uncertainty and pressure together, which not only affects agriculture but the Community project itself. For these reasons the common agriculture policy has to be reinvented, taking as point of departure the contribution that it can bring to the revival strategy of the European Union for 2020 and also the role it can play in the major food balances of the world.

B) Europe needs to reinvent its agricultural policy

The common agricultural policy has frequently been reformed since 1992, but without changing the dominant trends in agricultural development which started in the 1960s. The period of crisis through which we are passing, to which must be added the growing concerns of farmers about their future and increasing criticisms expressed by the public, is forcing us to an in-depth rethink of the longest-standing integrated EU policy.

The time has thus come to move towards a shared agricultural, food and environmental policy.

There can be no question of subjecting agriculture to market forces alone, but rather of drawing up a global plan that commits agriculture to moving towards a new form of development and human organisation. It is time to lay the foundations for a new agriculture capable of feeding humanity and providing real answers to the environmental challenges facing each region, of promoting agriculture with high economic, environmental and social value. The last wave of enlargement in 2004 and 2007 considerably broadened the diversity of European agricultures and inequalities in production structures and levels of development.

In future public agricultural, food and environmental policy will need adequate support, distributed more fairly to provide for the modernisation of all the different types of agricultures in the near future.

This agricultural project is not aimed at farmers alone. We want to construct it with them, but also with all of Europe's citizens. We feel that this approach needs to be shared with the other regions of the world.

We aim to translate this in the form of a contract linking European societies with all the professions of agriculture and the food industry who aspire to become once again key players in the European and global balance.

This agricultural, food and environmental policy must be organised around the following two approaches:

- An agricultural Europe for security of supply
- An agricultural Europe capable of creating environmental benefits and public goods
- An agricultural Europe that regulates its own markets
- An agricultural Europe for all territories

1) An agricultural Europe of food security

Price-related tensions and health risks in tandem with very low worldwide levels of stocks threaten the food supply for the planet. In common with every region of the world, Europe needs to be involved in its own security of food supply.

The European Union has to feed its 500 million consumers. But it also has to consider that 80 million of them live below the poverty threshold and 16 million know hunger, leading them to approach charitable associations each winter in order to be able to eat. Certainly, with only half the cultivable land of the USA, the European Union manages to feed 200 million more inhabitants, but we must not let this positive situation hide these human realities. That is why food needs to be accessible to all, with the requirement for healthier, more diversified nutrition, on the basis of raw or processed agricultural products from farmers or the food industry in Europe. For the future we will insist that a particular stress is carried on the relationship between food and health which is subject of increasing concern in European society. Such a contribution of common agriculture policy will help to reduce the growing burden on the budgets for social welfare and health.

For Europe, guaranteeing our food security means:

- Preserving all the diversity of its agricultural production. No area of agriculture, animal or vegetable, can be abandoned.
- To strengthen an agriculture of nutritional, culinary and health quality, and more centred on health requirements.
- To maintain and extend programmes of access to the people that are worst off.
- Not to sacrifice its agriculture to the interests of the industrial or services sector in international trade agreements To provide better for the food security of the planet the European Union must demand that bilateral or multilateral trade negotiations include respect for social, environmental and protective clauses, measures to protect high quality products, etc.

2) An agricultural Europe capable of creating environmental benefits and public goods

At the heart of life itself, agriculture has an impact on natural resources, bio diversity and animal welfare, and shapes the countryside. It is in the front line to respond to environmental challenges, and in particular those that concerns climate change. Environment no longer has

to be regarded as a constraint but as an asset which makes it possible not only to include European agriculture in the 2020 strategy of the Union, but also to better justify the support that it receives from the community.

With the aid of the common agricultural policy and of society, farmers have to tackle environmental challenges, by rethinking production systems; by economising on the use of scarce natural resources such as water, soil and energy; by contributing to the development of renewable energy and agricultural materials for biomass production, by protecting biodiversity.

In the name of the creation of all this irreplaceable collective wealth, agriculture merits the budgetary efforts of society, since the market does not reward the production of these public goods through agricultural activity.

The environment must no longer be perceived as a constraint, but as a factor in new green forms of growth closely associated with new economic and social development.

For Europe, creating the environment and public goods implies:

-To reconsider the existing aid arrangements in order to better reward these environmental public goods.

-To embark more firmly and through a holistic approach in the fight against change climate, the degradation of soils and the loss of biodiversity and for of a better water and natural resources management.

-To develop incentives to promote production methods more sustainable and efficient (differentiated aids, advise services, research involving scientists and farmers).

3) An agricultural Europe that regulates its own markets

In order for farmers to be able to plan for the future and simply to do their job, to produce more and better and thus to provide us with security of supply, they must be sheltered from excessive price volatility.

The new agricultural policy needs regulation to reduce the fluctuations in the prices for agricultural raw materials and the excesses of the obscene speculation which is playing an increasing role on international markets. This public intervention, demonstrating a will for collective control of the markets, is demonstrably needed more than ever in order to support agricultural incomes of which a large proportion of revenues currently comes from direct aid under the agricultural policy .

For Europe, regulating the markets means:

- Creating a stability pact for agricultural markets based on new tools for public regulation, bringing together more effective safety nets, crisis management tools, improved collective organisation of producers and sectors, and social and fiscal harmonisation.

- Taking agricultural and food products out of the realm of speculation, thus preventing turbulence on the forward markets.

- Undertaking a reform of finance at an international level.

4) A Europe of every type of agriculture to bring life to every area.

In the 27-nation EU nearly 60% of the population lives in rural areas, that themselves account for 90% of EU territory. For these areas agriculture often represents the main economic activity and plays a crucial role in employment and society. It is therefore important for a shared agricultural, food and environmental policy to recognise all of the widely diverse forms of European agriculture.

A common agricultural policy must therefore permit the coexistence of multiple types of agriculture which can be presented as follows:

- High added value agriculture whose produce, high-quality products and processed products enable it to play a role in the major world markets.
- Agriculture providing widely-known products with high economic value, open to regional markets
- Local agriculture targeting markets close at hand. Part of this agriculture includes smallholders who draw a modest income from their work and who, should they have to leave the business, would, for reasons of age, qualifications or life choices, have great difficulty in finding employment elsewhere, particularly during a time of recession and high unemployment.

This diversity of types of agriculture harbours enormous potential which, managed sustainably, must contribute to collectively constructing a new form of development. Making the most of this requires a series of measures and aid that can be adapted to each of these types of agriculture.

The next common agricultural policy will have to endeavour to provide more support for employment in sectors such as high quality foodstuffs, of the organisation of short circuit food supply chains, renewable energy, green chemicals (agromaterials, organic medicines, etc), the environment, green tourism: new jobs which have the advantage of being difficult to delocalise.

For Europe, bringing life to the land means

- To develop all forms of European agriculture, helping them to innovate and to turn to new, more sustainable production models that take account of the different resources in each area.
- To support the creation of new employment notably in the field of environmental innovation
- To provide more solidarity and a fairer distribution of the support of all types, between European farmers, the regions and the nations and their territories

III) A Europe that is a partner in the balance between food supply and the environment in the world

Europe must affirm that it wishes to play an active role in the major global balances of food and nature to allow more fairly shared development and more international stability. Many of its policies can contribute to this objective of governance for the world. European agricultural and food policy is the first to be cited alongside its policies on development cooperation, trade, environment, research, etc. For reasons of efficiency it seems important to seek consistency between these policies. Europe must take the lead in this huge project. It possesses the culture, the skills and the knowledge. It has, above all, the duty, by virtue of both its geography and its history.

The challenge is not an easy one. Today, more than a billion men and women are suffering from malnutrition because the emphasis on generalised competition over the last forty years has led people to believe that the only solution is to put peoples and their natural resources in competition with one another. This proves that a policy of globalised trade must be accompanied by a global policy of redistribution.

In thirty years' time, we will have to feed nearly three billion more people. Unless we are to accept a tripling of suffering and hunger, we must meet the challenge of the fight against poverty. Only by implementing real development policies based in first place on agriculture and food can we guarantee that all people will be able to feed themselves, to put the common interest ahead of "each for his own" and to remove the threat of widespread famine.

For Europe, playing a part in the global balance of food means

- Proposing to other international actors that emergency and security reserves should be established, which would be managed by an International Council for Food Security and Development, which, while including the current "Food Security Committee", would operate under the mantle of the UN and work in tandem with the FAO, the World Bank and the IMF
- Restoring priority to the construction of agricultural policies in its cooperation and development policies, and thus helping the development of the local capacity production.
- Opening the possibility for the developing countries to protect their agriculture against external competition that hinders and prevents their development
- Demanding a revision of the rules of international trade to incorporate social and environmental standards.
- Setting up cooperation on the basis of reciprocal interests,. particularly with certain regions of the world: a favoured partnership in the Mediterranean; stronger cooperation with Africa

Conclusions

We are living in a demanding era. One story has come to an end. Another has yet to be written in the sharing of a common vision for an agricultural, food and environmental Europe operating for the common good. For that reason, agriculture merits significant support from the whole of society. This must be provided sustainably over time and in that of the destiny of mankind.

All the challenges which confront us as European citizens and citizens of the world must be tackled together in order to give back a purpose to our Community. And above all, to give back a purpose to Europe.