Agriculture and agronomy research within the common agricultural policy CAP reform

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The committee adopted the own-initiative report by Friedrich-Wilhelm GRAEFE zu BARINGDORF (Greens/EFA, D) on agriculture and agricultural research in the framework of CAP reform. The committee called on the Commission to make the sustainability of agriculture and rural development a focus of research policy in the 6th and 7th framework programmes for research. MEPs argued that a substantial part of the research budget for food technology and agriculture should be used for practical research into sustainability and for comparative investigations of different farm systems. They called for research into alternative forms of production and sources of income in rural areas to be a priority, and for more research on strengthening the links between consumers and producers in the interests of food quality and safety. Organic farming and other low-input farming methods should also be made a specific research priority. The report also stressed the need for research into non-food uses of agricultural raw materials, which may contribute to new economic activity in rural areas, as well as to sustainability. The Commission was asked to ensure that coexistence measures used in Community funded biotechnological agricultural research were scientifically monitored. Finally, MEPs called for increased transparency of Community research funding and a better communication of research findings, both within the scientific community and to agricultural practitioners and rural development players. They added that a public debate must be held on the purpose of research and the evaluation of findings when granting public funds for research.