Agriculture and agronomy research within the common agricultural policy CAP reform

2003/2052(INI) - 11/02/2004 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted a resolution based on the own-initiative report drafted by Friedrich-Wilhelm GRAEFE zu BARINGDORF (Greens/EFA, D) on agriculture and agricultural research. (Please see the document of 22/01/04.) Parliament believed that research into improving food quality and safety by strengthening links between consumers and producers (the 'fork-to-farm' approach) should remain a priority, but that additional research is needed. The complex interrelationships between nutrition, food quality, actual dietary behaviour and health will be an even greater priority of European research, with greater attention being devoted to the aspect that raw materials for food do not only come from agriculture but have for years increasingly been coming from the production of additives and substitute materials by means of pharmaceutical, synthetic and genetic-engineering processes. A public debate must be held on the purpose of research and the evaluation of findings when granting public funds for research. The Commission should guarantee public involvement in this debate within expert bodies. Parliament also observed that the costs of scientific research for the purpose of approval of veterinary medicines for less common animal species and active substances and plant protection products for use on crops which are not widely cultivated are sometimes unaffordable for the businesses concerned. It asked the Commission to investigate how a solution can be found to this problem by means of regulation and via the European research budget. Parliament went on to call for increased funding of on-farm research, with an emphasis on the diversification of agricultural activity and appropriate farming practices, in particular with regard to breeding. Organic farming and other low-input farming methods must be made a specific research priority, as part of which funding should also be provided for research into animal husbandry systems which respect animal welfare. Favourable conditions for biotechnology research should exist in the Union, so that such advanced research can develop successfully in the Union and return to the Union. Parliament stressed that biotechnology research is an essential element in the Lisbon strategy and can contribute to high-quality, sustainable agriculture. Finally, Parliament called on the Commission to submit a communication on the future direction, structure and funding of agricultural research in Europe. This communication should also take into account the importance of policy research for the further development of the common agricultural policy.