Multifunctionality and reform of the common agricultural policy CAP

2003/2048(INI) - 05/06/2003 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted a resolution based on the own-initiative report drafted by Maria RODRIGUEZ RAMOS (PES, Spain). (Please see the summary of 20/05/03). Parliament rejected the proposal for the total uncoupling of direct aid based on the past production levels of individual farms, since such a measure would perpetuate the existing imbalances and prompt the abandonment of production in the most marginal areas. In principle, it welcomed the proposals on conditionality of direct aid, as an instrument that may serve to consolidate both the joint production aspect of agricultural activity and the social legitimacy of the CAP. Parliament felt, however, that the Commission's proposals needed to be revised with a view to ensuring their practical and uniform implementation throughout the EU so as to avoid distortions of competition. Furthermore, permanent compensation is required to offset the resulting cost disadvantages for European agriculture. Parliament went on to state that a priority objective is the need for agricultural production to continue in those rural areas in which it is essential to the preservation of nature. The greater costs associated with environmentally sound cultivation techniques would justify the provision of appropriate environmental compensation. Modulation should incorporate the granting of various exemptions, so as to ensure that cuts in aid do not threaten the viability of many farms. The conditionality criteria should include the 'territorial' (as opposed to the strictly 'commercial') character of a given farm. These 'territorial' farms must be exempted from modulation and regressivity. Another priority of CAP reform is measures designed to assist young farmers who are already set up in business. The Commission is asked to deal specifically with the problem of the handover from one farming generation to the next. Finally, Parliament asked the Commission to provide extra funding for the Community's Leader + programme, which has produced significant results in terms of the multifunctional development of Community farms by successfully integrating them into other sectors such as tourism, the agri-food business, traditional crafts and biodiversity protection.