

**Declaration of the Members of the Parliamentary Committees on Agriculture  
of the Visegrad Group countries plus Bulgaria  
concerning the future of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP),  
adopted during the meeting held in Warsaw on 30 November – 1 December 2008.**

Representatives of the Parliamentary Committees on Agriculture of the Visegrad Group countries, who attended the Warsaw summit, accompanied by representatives of Bulgaria, agreed upon a joint declaration regarding the future of the CAP.

Agriculture is of vital importance in the European Union while maintaining its unique significance for the basic components of the functioning of Member States' societies – starting with food production, through ensuring basic public goods connected, inter alia, with preserving the natural resources and environmental protection, up to the social and cultural dimension.

The principal rules on which the Common Agricultural Policy is based – first and foremost principle of financial solidarity – remain further on quite current despite the changing conditions – both internal and external.

The main issue remains further on the need to provide the agricultural sector in the whole European Union with equal competition environment by abandoning historic criteria for allocating direct aid, along with preserving the Community character of the CAP. Preserving the financial resources needed for the implementation of rural development policy after 2013 at the same level remains of particular importance.

New, current and clear criteria for supporting agriculture and rural areas need to be developed – directed also to providing fair remuneration for the farmers for the provision of public goods.

Through such policy, the Community priority should cover the elimination of lags and gaps in the level of development of respective rural areas in different regions of the European Union, as well as reducing the distance between rural and urban areas while preserving all unique values of rural areas.

Family farms, which play a very important role in shaping the landscape and environmental protection, as well as in preserving biological diversity, are bound to be uncompetitive. Therefore, support for this kind of farms should become one of key tasks of the CAP.

It is necessary to preserve mutual solidarity, while retaining the readiness to take on new challenges, such as intensifying work in the field of environmental protection and counteracting climate change, along with the adaptation to new conditions, where the effects of these climate changes finally will need to be faced.

Therefore, the Visegrad Group Countries, along with Bulgaria:

- call for the development of new rules for supporting agriculture, based on current and objective criteria covering all farmers in the European Union;
- call for retaining all elements of current Common Agricultural Policy: direct payments, market mechanisms and rural development policy as checked and correct means for achieving current and newly defined goals set before the policy;
- point out that apart from other branches of Community policies, rural development instruments constitute an extremely important element of catching up with the “old” Member States in terms of technology and development, and as such they should be promoted;
- stress that agriculture possesses great potential in terms of counteracting climate change and adaptation to the new conditions;
- call for appropriate use of this potential by well geared assistance under the CAP and other fields of Community policy.

Warsaw, 1<sup>st</sup> December 2008

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