



Conseil des Communes et Régions d'Europe
Council of European Municipalities and Regions

**To the Members
of the European Parliament**

Brussels, 15th June 2011

Plenary vote on the report 'CAP Towards 2020':

The Report does not provide a comprehensive response to the economic and societal challenges of rural areas

Dear Member of the European Parliament,

The Common Agricultural Policy and rural development policy are having to tackle major challenges both today and in the future. Demographic change in the European Union, climate change, globalisation and the need to secure our food supply, require not only flexible action, but also a sustainable political framework.

On 22nd June, you will be voting the report of the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development in Plenary "the CAP towards 2020: meeting the food, natural resources and territorial challenges of the future". The report proposes to set priorities for the future Common Agricultural Policy on food production and direct payments to farmers and farms.

The CEMR as the European umbrella organisation representing local and regional authorities from all EU Member States, considers the view taken by the Dess report to be too limited and not in line with a sustainable policy for rural areas. We believe, rather, that the EU needs a policy to improve employment and to create new ways to make a living for *all* inhabitants of rural areas, a policy which aims to improve their economic and social situation irrespective of their sector. This also leads to an improvement for farmers and the people working on farms.

In particular in the newer EU Member States in Central Europe, increased efficiency will lead to bigger sizes of farms, a reduction in numbers of farms and a serious loss of jobs in the farming sector. They will have to follow the same path as the farmers in the 'old' Member States which have over the past years successfully taken measures to adapt to a more competitive environment. Therefore, it is important to provide a broad political framework to fund economic and social measures in rural areas, aiming to create jobs and economic growth.

The Common Agricultural Policy and the Cohesion Policy of the European Union provide different instruments to address the manifold challenges. Therefore, we consider it very important that the broad range of instruments is taken into consideration in the debate on the report on the future CAP.

The strict focus of the report on direct payments for farmers and the strengthening of a sectoral agricultural policy does not provide a comprehensive response to the challenges we are facing in rural areas. Therefore, we would like to invite you to seriously consider a broader development perspective for rural areas, as expressed often in the opinions of other Committees during the preparation of the report.

In particular, we would like to ask you to support the following points:

- Opinion of the Committee on environment, public health and food safety: points 23, 24, 26 and 34
- Opinion of the Committee on industry, research and energy: point 5
- Opinion of the Committee on regional development: points 3, 5 -7, 20, 21, 23, 24, 27, 30, 31 und 33.

Please find attached CEMR's position paper on the future of EU rural development policy.

For the sake of the people living in Europe's rural areas, we would be grateful if you could take our view into consideration in your vote and thank you in advance for your support. For further questions, please do not hesitate to contact me (Tel.: 02 500 05 40; email: angelika.poth-moegele@ccre-cemr.org).

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "A. Poth-Mögele". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Angelika Poth-Mögele
Director of Policy