



EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

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Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety

2010/2112(INI)

30.11.2010

OPINION

of the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety

for the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development

on the recognition of agriculture as a strategic sector in the context of food security
(2010/2112(INI))

Rapporteur: Sergio Berlato

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SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety calls on the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions in its motion for a resolution:

1. Reaffirms that the right to food is a fundamental human right; points out that the rights of all the Member States to food sovereignty and food security are essential to the European Union and that continuous efforts are needed to ensure that those rights are guaranteed at the EU and world level given that every day 25 000 people starve to death or die from hunger-related disease and given that, according to FAO data, an increase in the world population of between 7 and 9.1 billion will necessitate a 70% increase in food supply by 2050;
2. Recognises that food security and food safety are two complementary concepts and stresses that respecting food sovereignty constitutes an important contribution to guaranteeing food security, which goes always hand in hand with the safeguarding of high standards of food safety;
3. Stresses the importance of the security of food supply for not only the Member States but also the developing countries; calls on the European Union to undertake to assist the developing countries in achieving an adequate level of food self-sufficiency by means of more diverse food production, with a view to freeing themselves from their dependency on monoculture (coffee, cocoa, bananas etc.), which is frequently intensive and highly polluting, forcing them to import almost all the food they need;
4. Is deeply concerned at the effects of the recent economic and financial crisis, which, despite shrinking financial resources in all economic sectors with severe repercussions for the food chain, should not result in reduced vigilance over the safety of food products; calls on the Commission and Member States to strengthen existing programmes to guarantee food safety in the Member States;
5. Stresses that food products must be affordable for consumers and that producers must receive appropriate prices for their products, condemns the agreements entered into by large-scale retailers and calls for measures to be taken to end such practices and ensure transparency in the way in which final-consumer and food-producer prices for food products are formed;
6. Stresses the need to halt and reverse the decline in the diversity of cultivated plant species and varieties and the erosion of the genetic base on which human and animal nutrition depends; urges that action be taken to promote the effective use of traditional agricultural varieties specific to certain regions and encourage sustainable small and medium-scale production linked to local and regional markets and consumption;
7. Is concerned that 2008, the year of the global food crisis, was also the greatest wheat-producing year in world history;
8. Is dismayed at the conclusions of the 2010 United Nations Summit on the Millennium Development Goals (MDG), pointing out that developed countries are a long way from

meeting the commitments given in terms of official development assistance;

9. Commends the initiative taken by the World Bank at the 2010 United Nations Summit on the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) to increase its support for the agricultural sector, so as to boost incomes, employment and food security, particularly in low-income areas;
10. Calls for food safety controls in the Union to be improved and strengthened and endorses the conclusions of the report from the Commission to the European Parliament and to the Council on the overall operation of official controls in the Member States on food safety, animal health and animal welfare and plant health (COM(2010)0441), which calls for consideration to be given to implementing a series of measures, in close cooperation with the Member States, to make the compiling, analysis and presentation of information on controls more efficient and comprehensive, so as to enable the national authorities and the Commission to give EU citizens every assurance that control systems are effective;
11. Calls on the Commission and Member States to ensure that the public have access to information on the outcome of the controls in order to increase transparency on a European level;
12. Stresses the fact that to ensure the production of food, the agricultural sector has to rely on sufficient water resources of good quality, thus having the obligation to implement good agricultural practices to adhere to the highest standards of both water quantity and quality;
13. Given the expected increase in global food demand and the consequent pressure on natural resources, stresses the need to meet the requirements of food security whilst ensuring the conservation of biodiversity and urgently tackling environmental problems such as soil degradation, biodiversity loss, etc.;
14. Stresses the need to promote the launching of an information campaign for consumers regarding efforts by farmers and the agricultural sector in terms of environmental protection and food security;
15. Calls on the Commission and Member States to encourage research, particularly into new generations of biofuels, efficient use of farm waste, environmentally friendly fertilisers and new farming technologies, minimising land-use impact and underpinning the leading role of the EU regarding environmental protection initiatives;
16. Calls on the Commission and Member States to avail themselves to the full of the opportunities offered by the Seventh Framework Programme for Research and Development in the field of research and technological innovation so as to improve productivity, while respecting energy efficiency and sustainability criteria;
17. Calls for measures to improve on-the-job training for young people in areas such as EU food safety standards and to create job opportunities for those with the requisite qualifications, the principal objective being to encourage employment in this sector;
18. Considers it essential to improve the organisation of the food supply chain so as to reduce the environmental impact of food transport and promote the marketing of local traditional food products;

19. Notes that small and medium-sized undertakings are the cornerstone for development and growth in the Member States and the Union; stresses the importance of stimulating investment in productive activity and access to credit;
20. Stresses that the incentives for sustainable energy crops currently being planned should not in any way compromise food security for the public;
21. Stresses that seed oligopolies have devastating effects on the sustainability of small-scale farming, fostering dependency on a limited number of corporations for the purchasing of seeds and specialised fertilisers;
22. Notes with regret that in many cases EU rules place an undue burden on the sharing of traditional seeds and varieties and hinder time-honoured traditions of sharing knowledge and farming practices;
23. Welcomes the widespread action taken by thousands of farmers, environmental groups, scientists and citizens for the in-situ conservation and propagation of local genetic material; recalls further that the diversity of seeds adapted to local conditions is a necessary prerequisite for food security, especially in the face of climate change;
24. Points out the desirability of focusing on supporting and increasing the resilience of organic, small-scale farming systems producing for local and regional consumption;
25. Stresses the importance of organic farming practices with a view to better worldwide food security;
26. Calls for the introduction of specific support for urban agriculture, as this will entail multiple benefits for food security, employment, environmental education, recreation and the urban climate;
27. Calls for public aid to farming to be made conditional on practices which respect biodiversity and protect the land;
28. Believes that, to ensure effective adaptation to the challenges of climate change and its consequences, particularly increased extreme weather events and pest outbreaks, a wide diversity of locally-adapted crops and breeds is needed and efforts to maintain this genetic diversity must be intensified;
29. Calls on the Member States to develop and implement programmes containing concrete agricultural measures aimed at mitigating and adapting to the effects of climate change;
30. Stresses that, in order to maintain food security and pursue the EU 2020 Strategy, efficient use of resources and innovation in farming with regard to sustainability must be encouraged;
31. Takes the view that the common agricultural policy (CAP) after 2013 should properly reward EU farmers for their efforts to provide a high-quality food supply while ensuring an efficient and sustainable use of natural resources;
32. Considers that the common agricultural policy (CAP) needs to accord far more substantial support to local and regional farmers, thereby encouraging biodiversity and organic

farming, which afford many benefits both to the consumer and to the environment;

33. Calls on Member States and the Commission to provide objective information and education for consumers regarding seasonal and regional foods; considers that this would support farming and preserve well-tended landscapes in the local area, as well as avoiding long supply routes and unnecessary carbon dioxide emissions and guaranteeing fresh and high-quality food for consumers;
34. Recalls that food is a valuable and limited resource which has a considerable impact on health, the environment and development; urges the Commission to propose to the Union a comprehensive food policy which, instead of a sectoral approach, brings together under the umbrella of a single comprehensive policy aspects which are currently considered in a fragmented manner;
35. Considers that the EFSA (European Food Safety Authority) has a major role to play in the assessment and notification of all risks associated with the food chain as part of a set of measures designed to protect the health and wellbeing of the public; hopes that all Member States will set up corresponding national bodies to collaborate with the EFSA.

RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE

Date adopted	30.11.2010
Result of final vote	+: 44 -: 0 0: 6
Members present for the final vote	Elena Oana Antonescu, Kriton Arsenis, Pilar Ayuso, Sergio Berlato, Milan Cabrnoch, Martin Callanan, Nessa Childers, Chris Davies, Anne Delvaux, Bas Eickhout, Jill Evans, Elisabetta Gardini, Gerben-Jan Gerbrandy, Julie Girling, Nick Griffin, Françoise Grossetête, Cristina Gutiérrez-Cortines, Jolanta Emilia Hibner, Dan Jørgensen, Jo Leinen, Corinne Lepage, Peter Liese, Linda McAvan, Radvilė Morkūnaitė-Mikulėnienė, Gilles Pargneaux, Andres Perello Rodriguez, Mario Pirillo, Pavel Poc, Vittorio Prodi, Frédérique Ries, Oreste Rossi, Dagmar Roth-Behrendt, Carl Schlyter, Richard Seeber, Theodoros Skylakakis, Catherine Soullie, Salvatore Tatarella, Anja Weisgerber, Sabine Wils, Marina Yannakoudakis
Substitute(s) present for the final vote	Marisa Matias, Judith A. Merkies, Bill Newton Dunn, James Nicholson, Alojz Peterle, Rovana Plumb, Bart Staes, Csaba Sándor Tabajdi, Giommara Uggias, Thomas Ulmer