

**The Rural Affairs Committee of the Riigikogu of the Republic of Estonia,
the Economic, Agricultural, Environmental and Regional Policy Committee of the Saeima of the
Republic of Latvia,
the Committee on Rural Affairs of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania**

JOINT DECLARATION

On the Common Agricultural Policy of the European Union after 2013

On 12 April 2013 in Riga, at their joint meeting, the representatives of the Rural Affairs Committee of the Riigikogu, the Economic, Agricultural, Environmental and Regional Policy Committee of the Saeima and the Committee on Rural Affairs of the Seimas adopted the following Joint Declaration:

We recognise the importance of the Common Agriculture Policy (CAP) as one of the basic policies of the EU and its considerable role not only in food supply but also in ensuring the economic viability of rural areas and sustainable conservation of the environment and natural resources.

We welcome previous CAP reforms which started to shift the focus from supporting products to ensuring better market-orientation of farming, facilitating adaptation of farmers to the economic environment and improving the competitiveness of the agricultural sector and the viability of rural areas.

We point out that since the Baltic States' accession to the EU, Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian farmers receive the lowest level of direct payments in comparison with other EU member states, a condition which prevents Baltic farmers from exercising equitable opportunities within the European single market.

We emphasise that due to reverting of land which is currently abandoned and unused to active farming in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, the number of eligible hectares will increase and that will influence the rate of payments per hectare in these countries.


We conclude that the focus of the CAP is increasingly placed on the multifunctional nature of the European agricultural model, and priority is given to the role of farmers as land managers who provide a wider range of consumer goods beyond food supply.


We invite the EU member states, the European Parliament and the European Commission in the final phase of the negotiations on the future CAP:

- to establish a CAP that would ensure genuine development of rural areas by providing adequate funding for both direct payments and the rural development policy;
- to set fair and equitable competition conditions for all farmers of the European Union;
- to ensure that direct support from the CAP is targeted at active farmers who provide society with real agricultural production;
- to facilitate cultivation of agricultural land currently abandoned in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania;
- to introduce "greening" component into the direct payments regime by respecting existing contributions to environmental protection in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania;
- to set measures that would ensure greater market orientation and the overall efficiency of the CAP in the global market.

We believe that by pooling our efforts we will succeed in finding reasonable ways to enhance public confidence in the CAP. Our joint efforts must send an unambiguous signal that the future Common Agricultural Policy of the EU will ensure a truly strong and competitive environment for all farmers of the EU member states, including Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, as well as development of rural areas in order to meet upcoming challenges in the near future.


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