



P9_TA(2023)0376

Generational renewal in the EU farms of the future

European Parliament resolution of 19 October 2023 on generational renewal in the EU farms of the future (2022/2182(INI))

(C/2024/2658)

The European Parliament,

- having regard to Articles 39 and 174 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union,
- having regard to Council Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2020/2093 of 17 December 2020 laying down the multiannual financial framework for the years 2021 to 2027 ⁽¹⁾,
- having regard to Regulation (EU) 2021/2115 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 2 December 2021 establishing rules on support for strategic plans to be drawn up by Member States under the common agricultural policy (CAP Strategic Plans) and financed by the European Agricultural Guarantee Fund (EAGF) and by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) and repealing Regulations (EU) No 1305/2013 and (EU) No 1307/2013 ⁽²⁾,
- having regard to the study requested by its Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development entitled 'The Future of the European Farming Model: Socio-economic and territorial implications of the decline in the number of farms and farmers in the EU', published by the Policy Department for Structural and Cohesion Policies of its Directorate-General for Internal Policies of the Union in April 2022,
- having regard to the Commission staff working document of 8 April 2021 entitled 'Evaluation of the impact of the CAP on generational renewal, local development and jobs in rural areas' (SWD(2021)0078),
- having regard to Regulation (EU) 2021/2116 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 2 December 2021 on the financing, management and monitoring of the common agricultural policy and repealing Regulation (EU) No 1306/2013 ⁽³⁾,
- having regard to Regulation (EU) 2021/1060 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 June 2021 laying down common provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund Plus, the Cohesion Fund, the Just Transition Fund and the European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund and financial rules for those and for the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund, the Internal Security Fund and the Instrument for Financial Support for Border Management and Visa Policy ⁽⁴⁾,
- having regard to the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals,
- having regard to its resolution of 13 December 2022 entitled 'A long-term vision for the EU's rural areas – Towards stronger, connected, resilient and prosperous rural areas by 2040' ⁽⁵⁾,
- having regard to the Commission communication of 30 June 2021 entitled 'A long-term vision for the EU's rural areas – Towards stronger, connected, resilient and prosperous rural areas by 2040' (COM(2021)0345),
- having regard to the results of the 2020 agricultural census published by Eurostat,

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 433 I, 22.12.2020, p. 11.

⁽²⁾ OJ L 435, 6.12.2021, p. 1.

⁽³⁾ OJ L 435, 6.12.2021, p. 187.

⁽⁴⁾ OJ L 231, 30.6.2021, p. 159.

⁽⁵⁾ OJ C 177, 17.5.2023, p. 35.

- having regard to its resolution of 27 October 2016 on how the CAP can improve job creation in rural areas ⁽⁶⁾,
- having regard to its resolution of 4 April 2017 on women and their roles in rural areas ⁽⁷⁾,
- having regard to its resolution of 30 May 2018 on the future of food and farming ⁽⁸⁾,
- having regard to the Commission communication of 11 December 2019 on the European Green Deal (COM(2019) 0640),
- having regard to the Commission communication of 20 May 2020 entitled 'A Farm to Fork Strategy for a fair, healthy and environmentally-friendly food system' (COM(2020)0381),
- having regard to the Commission communication of 20 May 2020 entitled 'EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 – Bringing nature back into our lives' (COM(2020)0380),
- having regard to the Commission communication of 18 December 2020 entitled 'Recommendations to the Member States as regards their strategic plan for the Common Agricultural Policy' (COM(2020)0846),
- having regard to the Commission communication of 17 January 2023 entitled 'Harnessing talent in Europe's regions' (COM(2023)0032),
- having regard to its resolution of 20 October 2021 on a farm to fork strategy for a fair, healthy and environmentally-friendly food system ⁽⁹⁾,
- having regard to its resolution of 9 June 2021 entitled 'EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030: Bringing nature back into our lives' ⁽¹⁰⁾,
- having regard to the Commission report of 17 June 2020 on the impact of demographic change (COM(2020)0241),
- having regard to the Commission green paper of 27 January 2021 on ageing – fostering solidarity and responsibility between generations (COM(2021)0050),
- having regard to the Commission study entitled 'Farmers of the future', published by the Joint Research Centre in 2020,
- having regard to the report entitled 'The challenge of land abandonment after 2020 and options for mitigating measures', published by the Policy Department for Structural and Cohesion Policies of its Directorate-General for Internal Policies of the Union in December 2020,
- having regard to the UN Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas, adopted by the Human Rights Council on 28 September 2018,
- having regard to the Youth Declaration adopted at the 67th UN Department of Public Information / Non-Governmental Organizations (DPI NGO) Conference on 22 and 23 August 2018,
- having regard to General Recommendation No 34 (2016) of the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women on the rights of rural women, adopted on 7 March 2016,
- having regard to Rule 54 of its Rules of Procedure,
- having regard to the report of the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development (A9-0283/2023),

⁽⁶⁾ OJ C 215, 19.6.2018, p. 228.

⁽⁷⁾ OJ C 298, 23.8.2018, p. 14.

⁽⁸⁾ OJ C 76, 9.3.2020, p. 62.

⁽⁹⁾ OJ C 184, 5.5.2022, p. 2.

⁽¹⁰⁾ OJ C 67, 8.2.2022, p. 25.

- A. whereas in 2020, a majority (57,6 %) of farm managers (all genders) were at least 55 years old and approximately only 12 % of farm managers were under 40 years old, with nearly half of those being between 35 and 39; whereas in many Member States, a relatively high proportion of farmers are 65 or over, with an average of three farm managers over 65 for every farmer under 40 (2016); whereas the challenge of generational renewal is particularly acute in those Member States that have both a lower than average share of young farmers and a higher than average share of farmers above retirement age;
- B. whereas almost all EU regions are experiencing a steady increase in average farm sizes and a concentration of production on fewer and larger farms, affecting different types of production in different ways; whereas the number of farms in the EU-27 declined by about 37 % between 2005 and 2020, with a downward trend and with small farms experiencing the strongest decline ⁽¹¹⁾; whereas land concentration and a reduction in the number of farms and farmers generally lead to simplification, with less product diversity and greater biodiversity loss;
- C. whereas agricultural income remains below the average for the rest of the economy in almost all Member States, standing at 47 % of average gross wages and salaries in the EU economy; whereas farms run by managers aged 40 or younger have the lowest income on average at EU level, and farms run by women have lower incomes than those run by men ⁽¹²⁾;
- D. whereas in 2020 slightly more than two thirds (68,4 %) of farm managers in the EU's 9,1 million holdings were male;
- E. whereas 72,3 % of farm managers in the EU in 2020 had only practical experience, while barely 10,2 % had full agricultural training and the remaining 17,5 % only basic agricultural training; whereas young farmers had higher levels of educational attainment in terms of full agricultural training (21,4 % vs 3,6 % for farmers over 65) and had followed up-to-date professional training courses, including courses on new and innovative farming practices;
- F. whereas farming remains a predominantly family activity, as in 2020, almost 9 in 10 (86,1 %) people who worked regularly in agriculture in the EU were the sole holder (farmer) or members of the farmer's family; whereas the lack of generational renewal may lead to land abandonment;
- G. whereas agricultural land has some unique characteristics, in that its area and location are fixed, while its fertility can be improved or reduced by the practices of farmers;
- H. whereas generational renewal requires young people from agricultural backgrounds to remain on this professional path and newcomers to be encouraged to enter the sector;
- I. whereas generational renewal measures under the common agricultural policy (CAP) are not always well suited to farm transfers to non-family members;
- J. whereas the import of agricultural products of a lower standard than those produced in the EU is also an obstacle to the ability to obtain fair prices and returns on the market;
- K. whereas remoteness is an important element of difficulty in rural areas, affecting numerous aspects of life, meaning that mountainous areas are in dire need of a coherent process of generational renewal in the agricultural sector;

Setting the scene

1. Stresses that generational renewal is key for the future social, economic and environmental sustainability of rural areas, EU food security and rural landscape preservation, and in particular for the future of agriculture, including for the diversity of sustainable farming systems and traditional family farming models;
2. Points out that the low level of generational renewal in farming, while part of a larger trend of demographic decline, is a general EU concern for the sector and for society as a whole, affecting remote rural areas in particular;

⁽¹¹⁾ Study – 'The Future of the European Farming Model: Socio-economic and territorial implications of the decline in the number of farms and farmers in the EU', European Parliament, Directorate-General for Internal Policies, Directorate B – Structural and Cohesion Policies, April 2022.

⁽¹²⁾ European Commission, Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development, 'EU Farm Economic Overview – FADN 2018', June 2021.

3. Stresses not only the extent and importance of agriculture in the socio-economic development of the outermost regions, but also the constraints that the sector faces in those regions, due to their particular geographical, climate and soil conditions; notes, as a result, that those permanent difficulties reduce the attractiveness of the sector to new generations in those regions;
4. Highlights that young farmers and new entrants are more likely to introduce innovative business ideas, promote shorter food chains, apply new technologies and production methods and implement sustainable farming practices, including agroecological practices and organic farming;
5. Recalls that supporting generational renewal in agriculture is an objective of the 2023-2027 CAP and that Member States must devote at least 3 % of their direct payment envelope, before transfers, to this objective, which represents an upgrade from previous programming periods;
6. Stresses that a fair and dignified income, a sustainable and stable livelihood, equitably distributed EU direct support, a positive image of farming, a predictable legal framework, quality of life for farmers and their families and an adequate work-life balance are essential in attracting young farmers and new people to the sector;

Challenges and resources for generational renewal

7. Notes that the price and availability of land, the generally low profitability of agricultural activities, administrative requirements and the image of the sector were identified as the main barriers to becoming a farmer ⁽¹³⁾; draws attention to the fact that other factors, such as a lack of own capital, difficult access to credit, to technical services and to support measures, and the effects of climate change can also constitute important barriers to the involvement of young and new farmers in the agricultural sector;
8. Stresses that the limited availability of and the cost of renting or buying land are major obstacles for young farmers, especially those who do not come from a farming family; recalls that intra-family succession is still the dominant form of entry into farming;
9. Points out that fears for retirement, primarily resulting from inadequate safety nets for pensioners, namely low pensions, often lead older farmers to use direct payments as a form of support in retirement and delay the transfer of land;
10. Points out that the Court of Justice of the European Union has been recognising in its rulings the specific nature of agricultural land, as well as a set of public interests and objectives that can justify the establishment of land market regulation measures by Member States;
11. Stresses the inconsistency that may exist between the market value of a farm and its real profitability;
12. Points out that young farmers are two to three times more likely to have loan applications to start or expand their agricultural businesses rejected, namely due to being perceived as a risky investment, their lack of banking history and their lack of assets to put up as collateral, especially for small farms and family farms; points out that it is becoming increasingly challenging for young farmers to obtain loans to invest in farmland;
13. Highlights that farming is not just a job, but a way of life with close ties to nature and a strong sense of rural community belonging and of having a positive impact on society, which generates benefits for society as a whole, but is yet to be properly recognised; highlights that agriculture offers a diverse range of career opportunities;

⁽¹³⁾ European Commission, 'Public consultation results on the CAP reform', 2017.

14. Regrets that young people in many rural areas, in particular young women, experience significant and specific daily challenges, particularly as regards education and training, access to quality jobs and affordable housing, social isolation, infrastructure and public transport, healthcare and digital connectivity, especially in remote, mountainous and outermost regions and less developed rural regions;

15. Notes the importance to the agricultural sector in the outermost regions of the programme of options specifically relating to remoteness and insularity, as it helps to preserve production levels, food safety and, notably, the incomes of farmers in those regions, while promoting the attractiveness of the sector among young people; regrets, however, the underfunding of this programme ⁽¹⁴⁾, which must be duly corrected in the next multiannual financial framework;

16. Acknowledges the positive effect of CAP young farmers' measures on the number of young farmers, in particular those located in more peripheral rural areas ⁽¹⁵⁾; points out, however, that the administrative burden is excessive and that the current design of the CAP may have a role in maintaining barriers to young and new farmers' entry into the sector by contributing to increasing the price and reducing the availability of arable land, as well as in farm concentration;

17. Highlights the positive contribution of LEADER projects and initiatives to promoting social inclusion, tackling challenges faced by young people and fostering thriving local rural economies, particularly by prioritising youth in selection criteria and setting up youth local action groups;

Pathways to promote generational renewal in farming

18. Recognises the complex and multi-layered nature of the generational renewal process, which is influenced by factors related to the private sphere of the farmer, including education, the characteristics of the farm, the policy framework and support measures and the wider socio-economic context and outlook, all of which should be acknowledged when designing both EU and national policies;

19. Calls on the Member States to develop coherent and long-term strategies to promote generational change and increase the attractiveness of working in agriculture, combining different measures in a complementary way, such as financial support, including installation aid, broader tax breaks and incentives, particularly for land transfer, and adequate pensions and social protection; calls, furthermore, for the Member States to improve links between EU policies and national and regional policies and strategies, including their national strategic plans;

20. Calls on the Commission to promote the sharing of best practices and innovative ideas between Member States regarding the design of measures for young farmers, with a focus on increasing efficiency, simplification and accessibility and reducing bureaucracy; calls on the Member States to set up a one-stop-shop system to facilitate administrative procedures in the most appropriate territorial area;

21. Highlights the opportunities created by the new EU Talent Booster Mechanism in terms of supporting the regions and rural areas affected by an accelerated decline in their working-age population in training, retaining and attracting the people, skills and competences they need to address the impact of demographic change and boost their resilience and competitiveness;

22. Stresses that generational renewal needs both younger and older generations and that intergenerational cooperation and dialogue must therefore be fostered;

⁽¹⁴⁾ Commission report of 7 December 2021 on the implementation of the scheme of specific measures for agriculture in favour of the outermost regions of the Union (POSEI) (COM(2021)0765).

⁽¹⁵⁾ Commission staff working document of 8 April 2021 entitled 'Evaluation of the impact of the CAP on generational renewal, local development and jobs in rural areas (SWD(2021)0078).

23. Calls on the Member States to provide access, in their farm advisory services schemes, to a farm succession facilitator that can provide guidance during farm transfers, namely on intergenerational dialogue, legal, taxation and cadastral service frameworks and financial support possibilities, establishing an installation pathway with a farm diagnosis and ensuring follow-up; notes that this is crucial for the transfer of knowledge, skills and ownership of the farm business from one generation to the next;

24. Calls on the Member States to assess and promote innovative models of intergenerational collaboration, such as partnerships, share farming or land-matching services in order to encourage young farmers into farming and ease the transfer of land, equipment and agricultural know-how, including for projects outside a family context;

25. Recalls the potential of the cooperation measures under the CAP strategic plans in this regard and regrets that only five Member States have made use of this possibility; calls on the Commission and the Member States to ensure an enabling administrative framework that facilitates the adoption of innovative approaches, drawing on the experience gained with schemes that are already in place; invites the Member States to exchange good practices on a right to a trial period for farmers who want to become partners in a jointly run farm, which offers more flexibility in the organisation of private and professional life;

26. Encourages the Member States to design mechanisms to facilitate the transition to retirement, namely pre-retirement schemes, and to support the mutually beneficial transfer of farms to young farmers;

27. Stresses the importance of preserving farmland and the objectives of sustainable food production; calls on the Commission to launch a study on the effects of competing uses for farmland, such as urbanisation and energy, among others, on the quantity and quality of farmland available, the certainty of long-term usage, prices and land concentration, as well as on the drivers of farmland abandonment, while also evaluating the impacts of all relevant EU policy areas, including the CAP, in this regard;

28. Calls for the problem of land take to be properly addressed by the Commission and the Member States, in particular as part of the soil health law, while respecting the principle of subsidiarity, in order to limit the loss of farmland;

29. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to promote a model based on the bioeconomy as a virtuous system that can bolster farmers' incomes; calls, furthermore, for the ecosystem services role of livestock farming to be fostered, as it can contribute to a virtuous carbon cycle;

30. Stresses that legislation on low-carbon agriculture can provide a positive incentive to ensure better remuneration for farmers, particularly the youngest, through measures to sequester and reduce emissions on farms;

31. Calls on the Commission to evaluate, in conjunction with the Member States and their regions, the possibility of action at EU level, including through legislative instruments and the promotion of sharing good practices, to improve the functioning of national farmland markets, enhance young farmers' access to land and contribute to addressing land concentration and land grabbing issues;

32. Calls on the Commission to assess the efficiency of agricultural land market regulations in the Member States in facilitating young farmers' entry into the sector, the potential of these regulations, and their impact on farms' competitiveness⁽¹⁶⁾;

⁽¹⁶⁾ Vranken, L. et al., 'Agricultural land market regulations in the EU Member States', Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, 2021.

33. Calls on the Member States to regulate agricultural land markets and agricultural land use in order to promote land access for young farmers via purchase, leasing or other forms of access, using all the means available and locally appropriate, such as pre-emptive rights in favour of young farmers, price controls for sale and rental, long-term usage guarantees, acquisition caps or obligations to maintain agricultural activity, while prioritising sustainable food production and combating excessive land concentration and land grabbing; calls on the Commission and the Member States to ensure that corporate entities, such as investment funds, do not compete unfairly with young farmers as regards access to land;

34. Highlights that land lease is a viable alternative to gain access to land, requiring fewer resources for installation; calls on the Member States to adopt policies to promote conditions for long-term land leasing, such as tax exemptions, thus providing security of tenure and time to invest, which will also potentially improve soil health in the long term;

35. Calls on the Member States to ensure the transparency of the rural land market, while maintaining up-to-date public information on land markets and land planning and ownership, communicating about land sales and rental prices and monitoring land transfer and land concentration;

36. Calls on the Commission to establish an EU observatory on farmland, as part of the Rural Observatory, and, while making best use of all existing data collection tools, in particular from Member States, to monitor and share data on, in particular, trends and prices for land sale and rental, tenancy regimes, land concentration, as well as changes in farmland use and land abandonment; stresses the importance of this observatory in increasing the transparency of agricultural land transactions in the EU;

37. Encourages the Member States to develop and support land banks and establish national plans aimed at facilitating land mobility schemes to promote intergenerational land transfer and enhance active young farmers' access to land, and encourages the Commission to support them in this regard; calls on the Member States to promote associations or cooperatives that work with farmers and buy land and rent it out to farmers, prioritising young ones, and to draw up an inventory of available public agricultural land; invites the Member States to create a support system to help young farmers with land acquisition, namely through lower interest rates and assistance with the first loan instalment;

38. Underlines that the recognition of farmers' value within the agri-food value chain is an essential condition for the creation of sufficient income for the agricultural world; calls on the Commission to further analyse the Member States' implementation of Directive (EU) 2019/633 on unfair commercial practices in business-to-business relationships in the agricultural and food supply chain⁽¹⁷⁾; encourages the Member States to ensure greater protection of farmers by implementing effective and dissuasive sanctions against unfair practices within the agri-food value chain;

39. Notes that an effective, sustainable public transport system is one of the necessary conditions for regional economic development, territorial cohesion and the development of regional potential, and underlines the need to provide the necessary funding for the development and maintenance of transport links, as this could encourage the older generation to stay in agriculture longer and attract young people from regional centres to work in rural areas;

40. Invites the Member States to build effective insurance systems that are tailored to the specific nature of the agricultural sector in order to support farmers in the face of natural disasters; believes that such mechanisms will provide greater financial and legal certainty for farmers, making it easier for young farmers to set up;

41. Stresses that public support is fundamental in addressing the financing problems affecting young farmers, in particular for women and small farms; underlines the need to support young farmers in accessing information on financing opportunities and the development of business plans and in gaining access to guarantees and loans, and to provide them with free specialised advice in this regard;

⁽¹⁷⁾ Directive (EU) 2019/633 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 April 2019 on unfair trading practices in business-to-business relationships in the agricultural and food supply chain (OJ L 111, 25.4.2019, p. 59).

42. Calls on the Member States to make start-up and investment aid for young farmers available throughout the entire budgetary period of the CAP and to make full use of all the options available to support young farmers; stresses the need to provide access to training opportunities, namely on soft and digital skills, business diversification possibilities, management and sustainable farming methods, taking into account the specific needs of new entrants;
43. Takes note of the fact that the Member States allocated, in general, more than the minimum required amount to support for young farmers ⁽¹⁸⁾ in their national strategic plans;
44. Calls on the Member States to make adequate use of the complementary redistributive income support for sustainability pursuant to Article 16 of Regulation (EU) 2021/2115 with a view to supporting young farmers;
45. Calls on the Commission, when preparing for the new programming period, to incentivise financing measures in the LEADER programme that would encourage the renewal of generations on farms;
46. Highlights the need for constant investment in the infrastructure supporting the agriculture sector, such as water and transport infrastructure, and the need to increase farms' energy efficiency to reduce production costs;
47. Stresses the importance of providing tailored advisory and training services, in particular to support young farmers, new entrants and agricultural workers, as early as the definition of the business idea and in the following years, tailoring these services to their needs, opportunities and potential; highlights the potential of diversifying the models of advice to better address farmers' diversity (e.g. peer-to-peer learning, mentoring schemes), as this can play an important part in knowledge transfer;
48. Highlights the importance of integrating content on soft skills, communication, leadership, mental health and well-being, among others, in training schemes, in addition to the technical, business and digital content; considers that training in sustainable production methods, innovative practices and new technologies should be reinforced to encourage young people to adopt them and to enhance the capacity to respond positively to current and future challenges and opportunities;
49. Encourages young farmers to make the most of the opportunities offered by the available networking initiatives; calls on the Commission and the Member States, with the involvement of regional and local authorities, to ensure inclusive access and participation in rural areas and to encourage exchanges between European agricultural schools;
50. Reaffirms the importance of the EU fruit, vegetable and milk programme in schools in order to help children eat healthily and, at the same time, introduce them to agricultural activities, sparking the younger generation's interest in farming and thereby creating a positive image of agriculture; calls, in this regard, on the Commission and the Member States to reinforce educational measures;

Young farmers for the future

51. Insists that young farmers and rural youth must be involved and given the ability to participate actively in political life and decision-making processes, including by supporting young farmers' organisations at local, regional, national and EU level, in order to ensure that their specific needs are accounted for and that policies effectively support their development; calls on the Member States to involve local residents and their communities more in developing solutions that promote generational renewal;

⁽¹⁸⁾ European Commission, Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development, 'Approved 28 CAP Strategic Plans 2023-2027 – Summary overview for 27 Member States – Facts and figures', April 2023.

52. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to pay particular attention to the needs, challenges and potential of young women in agriculture and to combat gender inequality; points out the importance of creating an enabling environment for female entrepreneurs in rural areas, taking into account legal and policy aspects, for example for share farming, of ensuring better access to information, knowledge and training opportunities, and of facilitating access to financial resources;

53. Calls on the Commission to come forward with a communication on women in farming, analysing and advocating best practices in Member States and identifying gender-specific obstacles to farm renewal;

54. Highlights that the young farmers of today and tomorrow will be the most affected by the impacts of climate change and by the loss of biodiversity, but that they are also better equipped to seize the opportunities presented by and contribute to the green and digital transitions and to become key players in those transitions;

55. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to factor in the young farmers dimension horizontally when designing policies and funding instruments; highlights the role of the CAP in supporting young farmers, but considers that it is not sufficient for meeting the challenge of generational renewal in agriculture in the EU;

56. Calls on the Commission to identify young farmers' specific needs and ensure that they are reflected in the impact assessments for new policies, as well as monitoring the impact of their implementation on young farmers' prospects; considers that this should include criteria covering the impact on generational renewal, economic viability, access to land, administrative burden, financial pressure and preservation of natural resources for agricultural activity; calls on the Commission to report to the Council and Parliament about this assessment and its results;

57. Stresses that the Commission and the Member States must join efforts to ensure a sustainable livelihood for young farmers; stresses that decent and attractive income and living conditions for young farmers depend, inter alia, on a better share of value within agri-food chains, ethical marketing practices and long-term contracts;

58. Encourages politicians, schools, media, farmers and local associations to work together to promote a positive image of farming and rural areas and to increase their attractiveness to young people when choosing a future lifestyle; emphasises that more active EU-level initiatives are necessary for communicating about the farmer's role in food production and environmental services, while highlighting the wide variety of agricultural occupations and the broad range of skills required in the profession;

59. Stresses the need to promote the farming profession among new generations and to ensure a better understanding of the reality of the agricultural world; recalls that generational renewal cannot be achieved without attracting new people from outside agriculture, namely by incentivising visits to farms; urges the Member States to initiate and implement programmes that will help attract students to agricultural courses in higher, advanced and other educational institutions in order to increase the number of students choosing agricultural specialisations;

60. Highlights that continuous professional development needs to be implemented in agriculture, as well as a qualification status equivalent to other professions, in order to give young farmers a professional status and to improve their skills and qualifications;

61. Calls on the Commission to pay more attention to crisis-prone agricultural sectors, as it is the fear of possible frequent crises that deters young people from certain agricultural sectors, such as the dairy sector; urges the Commission to make crisis forecasting and prevention mechanisms more effective in order to avoid future crises within individual Member States or throughout the EU, highlighting the example of the 2014-2016 milk crisis, which drove many dairy farmers away from milk production and deterred young people from entering the sector;

62. Calls, in particular, for support for young farmers' innovative business ideas stemming not only from traditional primary production itself but also from processing and marketing activities and the upstream and downstream operations of primary production;
63. Recommends that the Member States encourage the procurement of agri-food goods from local young farmers, promoting the inclusion of young farmers in the development of short supply chains;
64. Insists that generational renewal must remain a high priority in the future programming period, particularly for the CAP, under which it must receive increased, mandatory support;
65. Calls on the Member States, when developing strategies to promote generational renewal, to take into account the specific needs and requirements of young farmers and new farmers in a holistic way, particularly the needs of those who do not come from farming families; calls, furthermore, on the Member States and regions to make their generational renewal policies a driver of their national or regional agricultural strategies;
66. Points out that the decision to enter the farming sector is taken earlier than the stage of farm transfer, the stage at which most current policy instruments are directed; considers, therefore, that public policies should address farmers' needs prior to installation;
67. Invites all stakeholders from the value chains to make generational renewal in agriculture a strategic priority by offering adequate incentives that complement public support;
68. Considers that diverse options for facilitating the farm transfer process should be fostered in public policies at European and national level, such as existing farms acting as incubators for start-up businesses, or new business models allowing the gradual transfer of land and assets from farmers to their successors;
69. Stresses that generational renewal in agriculture is a demographic challenge that also relies on the ability of the CAP to promote active farmers, to target support towards them and to monitor the expansion of farms;
70. Considers that young farmers should be able to develop their businesses progressively and therefore recommends that the current time limit placed on access support in the CAP be reviewed and the existing administrative and legal barriers be assessed; stresses the positive role of gradual installation and calls for the removal of existing legal obstacles in this respect;
71. Underlines the role of cooperatives and farmers' organisations in helping young farmers overcome barriers to installation, providing guidance services and enhancing their participation in the policy dialogue; insists on the need to ensure the representation of young farmers in these organisations and to ensure gender-balanced representation in their governance bodies, emphasising that such associations are a key way of involving women in agricultural activity; highlights the fundamental role of young farmers' organisations;
72. Stresses the importance of encouraging young farmers to join associations and encourages the Member States to promote collaboration between farms via cooperatives that share production and/or processing equipment, thus reducing the financial resources needed by young farmers and cutting production costs, and promote joint marketing initiatives and measures to improve the value of their products;
73. Underlines the impact and potential of digital technologies for young farmers' activities and business opportunities, and that a strong political commitment is required at all levels of policy implementation to ensure high-speed broadband infrastructure and connectivity with a particular focus on digital inclusion;
74. Draws attention to the digital skills gap between rural and urban areas and the higher risk of exclusion of small farms and outermost regions from the digital transformation; points to the need to take measures to ensure that the digital transformation benefits all farmers;

75. Stresses, in this regard, the need to support young farmers in adapting to digital technologies and developing digital skills, which can help them to better implement their installation projects, support sustainable agriculture and anticipate future production conditions and consumer and society expectations;

76. Highlights the importance of reliable internet access for young farmers' quality of life in rural areas, in particular to overcome social isolation and access education and training opportunities, as well as for service provision;

77. Insists on the need to ensure decent working and living conditions and social protection for young farm workers, with particular attention to women and seasonal and migrant workers;

78. Calls for greater focus on the creation of quality jobs in the agricultural sector, guaranteeing rights and stable and fair wages and working conditions, as well as effectively and intensively combating poverty and social exclusion in rural areas;

79. Calls on the Member States to promote and improve systems for the replacement of farmers or any farming employees in the event of illness or accident or in order to ensure a better work-life balance for farmers;

80. Insists that rural areas must be able to provide adequate living conditions for young and new farmers and their families, namely sustainable livelihoods, career opportunities, better mobility, access to better education, health, leisure and culture services, and broader digital connectivity;

81. Points out that the products of European farmers are competing against products from foreign countries, which do not comply with the European standards imposed on European producers, particularly those adopted to protect the environment and consumer health; stresses that a standard imposed exclusively on European producers gives an advantage to those producers who do not have to comply with that standard;

82. Calls on the Commission to end this unfair competition by banning foreign products that do not comply with the environmental standards imposed on European farmers;

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83. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and the Commission.
