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P8\_TA(2016)0427

## How the CAP can improve job creation in rural areas

European Parliament resolution of 27 October 2016 on how the CAP can improve job creation in rural areas (2015/2226(INI))

(2018/C 215/34)

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Commission communication on employment in rural areas: closing the jobs gap (COM(2006)0857),
  - having regard to Rule 52 of its Rules of Procedure,
  - having regard to the report of the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development and the opinions of the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs and the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality (A8-0285/2016),
- A. whereas rural areas represent more than 77 % of EU territory and whereas many jobs in those areas — a high proportion of them non-relocatable — depend on agriculture and the agrifood industry;
- B. whereas, taken together, agriculture and the agrifood industry account for 6 % of EU GDP, 15 million businesses and 46 million jobs;
- C. whereas, in many European countries over the past few decades, the number of farmers in rural areas has drastically decreased, as have the incomes of farmers and other agricultural workers, and agricultural employment in those areas has continued to decline; whereas between 2005 and 2014 there was a reduction of almost one quarter (- 23,6 %) in agricultural labour input in the EU-28 <sup>(1)</sup>;
- D. whereas, although agriculture remains the main form of land use in Europe, it nowadays employs only a fraction of the working population of rural areas; whereas the diversification of land use in rural areas, combining a productive economic function with the functions of accommodating residential and recreational use and of nature protection and conservation, is a considerable challenge in terms of development and employment in the various rural regions of the Union; whereas, although population decline has been reversed in some regions in recent years with an inflow of people who want to live in the countryside, generating, in most cases, a peri-urbanisation effect, there is also a tendency towards decline in much less prosperous regions, where remoteness is a problem and supporting development and employment is more difficult;
- E. whereas many rural areas face a series of challenges such as low income, negative population growth, a lack of jobs and a high rate of unemployment, slow development in the tertiary sector, a lack of processing capacity for food products, low skills and limited capital;
- F. whereas more than nine out of ten people in Europe consider agriculture and rural areas to be important to their future;
- G. whereas there is a relatively low income per labour unit for agricultural activities and this is a point of concern;
- H. whereas the economic crisis hit all parts of Europe but none more so than rural areas;

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<sup>(1)</sup> Eurostat, 2016.

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- I. whereas, in the face of the current economic crisis, the European Union has made jobs — in particular via the EFSI — one of its key priorities, and whereas, in that connection, the CAP must be made more effective and its legitimacy reaffirmed as one of the principal tools for EU action aimed at the retention and creation of employment and competitiveness in rural areas, mainly in the farming sector; whereas, in this context, it is necessary to evaluate the extent to which the CAP has an impact on the creation and maintenance of jobs in rural areas;
- J. whereas it is of crucial importance to maintain the two pillars of the CAP, since Pillar I prevents out-migration of small and family farms from the sector and maintains jobs in the agricultural sector, while Pillar II funds ensure job creation in other areas such as tourism, food processing and other related sectors;
- K. whereas European agriculture is facing a number of challenges relating to food production and security, the environment, biodiversity, sustainability, energy and climate change, and it is vital to reinforce the relationship between society and agriculture, develop innovative solutions to meet these challenges to ensure the resilience and competitiveness of the sector and rethink the objectives of a genuinely public policy that is in everybody's interests, this being one of the most important aspects of European integration;
- L. whereas, for too long, insufficient attention has been paid to shifting the focus of agriculture to make it territory-based once again — necessarily rooting production and employment in specific areas — and whereas we have a duty to sustain farming as a core activity performed by men and women in the areas where they live, in order to ensure that rural areas are dynamic and job-rich; whereas this refocusing will also make for a healthy balance between urban and rural development;
- M. whereas there is a growing role for, and interest in, urban and peri-urban agriculture and a changing consumption model that combines various factors, including a minimal environmental footprint, high-quality local production and recognition of the value of the work done by small and regional producers;
- N. whereas the foundations of the last CAP reform enabled aid to be redirected and distributed more fairly among the Member States and the various agricultural sectors, and reaffirmed the role of the CAP in economic terms and as a social stabilising factor for farms and rural regions;
- O. whereas, although studies have shown that direct payments through Pillar 1 do not directly create jobs, they play a vital role in maintaining jobs and keeping farmers on the land; whereas, should this policy support be withdrawn, 30 % of European farmers would be forced to cease activities and exit the agricultural sector; whereas these payments keep small farmers and rural areas alive;
- P. whereas direct payment supports for farmers in peripheral areas farming on disadvantaged or marginal land are vital not only to ensure that these farmers remain on the land and earn a decent livelihood, but also to ensure that this land is protected and plays a role in attracting tourism to these areas;
- Q. whereas the primary objective of Pillar I of the reformed CAP is the security of the food supply which helps to maintain existing employment in agriculture and there is a requirement to ensure a fairer distribution of Pillar 1 payments to maximise the positive impact of this support;
- R. whereas experience on the ground shows that other kinds of agricultural development are possible, providing better results in terms of food quality and agronomic, environmental and socio-economic performance, that it is important to support and promote diversity of agricultural systems, and that small and medium-sized farms which are generally more diversified, innovative and highly flexible, are often well organised in terms of forming producer groups and co-operatives and benefit the communities in which they are located, thereby supporting a rural economy, which is the key to the development of European agriculture;

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- S. whereas the current crisis shows that, within the framework of a market-oriented CAP, it is essential to retain a common agricultural market organisation and to come up with appropriate new regulatory tools to ensure price stability and sustain agricultural jobs and income;
- T. whereas European farmers operate in an increasingly global market and therefore experience greater exposure to price volatility than other sectors;
- U. whereas the payment system that currently exists in the food supply chain does not guarantee the sustainable distribution of added value, and often determines that the earnings of primary producers are not even sufficient to cover their costs;
- V. whereas, compared with urban areas, rural areas are usually characterised by statistically higher levels of unemployment and significantly lower residents' incomes, as well as less attractive infrastructure and less access to services, the costs of providing which are significant due to lower population density and accessibility;
- W. whereas job creation in rural areas must be part and parcel of a sustainable policy that is tailored to specific territories and involves the maintenance and development of agricultural activities and activities indirectly linked to agriculture and forestry sector-related, as well as rural activities, that forge links between the various stakeholders both socially and in terms of solidarity and environmental enhancement;
- X. whereas the future of rural areas does not depend exclusively on the development of the agricultural sector, but is also linked to the diversification and maintenance of other economic activities, such as forestry, crafts, and the development of small and medium-sized enterprises and integrated production capacities, rural tourism, recreational, educational and sports provision (e.g. horse-riding) and the sustainable use of farm and forest resources (including waste) to produce renewable energy or organic materials and products based on ecological processes; whereas there is a need for decentralised and integrated local policies linked to socioeconomic aspects and rural identity and culture and for a genuine territorial system, seeking synergies and jointly building on rural resources through collective and cross-sector approaches, including the use of other EU funds to stimulate rural development and employment, while ensuring that rural infrastructure is in place;
- Y. whereas, to that end, it is absolutely vital to focus on the fact that many jobs are dependent on place and activity-specific agriculture, which includes forestry, cannot be relocated and involve food and non-food services, such as landscape and water conservation and management;
- Z. whereas support should be provided in particular to small family farms, i.e. to individual farmers who, alone or with others, run their farms responsibly, independently and effectively and who are able to deal with any problems by adapting their production decisions and/or their production methods and by diversifying their activities in order to tackle the constant structural change in the agricultural sector;
- AA. whereas the potential of women working and/or running a business in agricultural and rural areas should be analysed, recorded and promoted in all EU policies, and they should not be disadvantaged by any of them, as this will lay the groundwork for women to become drivers of development and innovation, helping the entire sector to emerge from the crisis; whereas women should be involved in sector development plans at local and regional level so that the latter can benefit from their needs, experiences and visions, and women should therefore be equipped with the skills required to participate actively in the design thereof;
- AB. whereas in 2010 only 7,5 % of farmers were under 35 years old and more than 4,5 million of those now running farms are aged over 65, and Articles 50 and 51 of Regulation (EU) No 1307/2013 under the CAP include provisions to support new generational renewal in agriculture;

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- AC. whereas in many Member States women in rural regions have limited access to employment in farming or other sectors of the labour market and experience a wider pay gap than in other areas, yet they play an extremely important role in the development and social fabric of rural areas, particularly on farms engaged in diversification (offering farm tourism, high quality produce, recreational, educational and sports activities and other services); whereas female entrepreneurship can represent an important pillar in social, economic and environmental terms for sustainable development in rural areas; whereas unequal access to land is a factor in limiting the opportunities for women to develop a business in the agricultural sector; whereas on average 29 % of farms in Europe are run by women;
- AD. whereas the number of crop varieties grown industrially is small; whereas local breeds and varieties play a role in maintaining biodiversity and sustaining people's livelihoods in the regions and local production;
- AE. whereas the rural environment needs to be made more attractive to rising generations by promoting training geared to innovation and modernisation in the profession and in technologies;
- AF. whereas the universal framework provided by the Sustainability Assessment of Food and Agriculture systems (SAFA) was developed by the FAO;
- AG. whereas the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) can be used for vocational training and skills acquisition actions in the different sectors of activity in rural areas;

#### ***Under the current CAP***

1. Calls on all the Member States to give young farmers long-term prospects in order to address rural depopulation, to implement a comprehensive generational renewal strategy and, in order to do this, to make full use of all the possibilities provided under the new CAP to support young farmers and new entrants to farming, including from outside the family, particularly the Pillar I and Pillar II measures for aid to young farmers, and also to facilitate new entrants to farming aged over 40 in setting up and entrepreneurship; notes too that such measures must be complemented by, and compatible with, provisions under national policies (on land-use, taxation and social security, etc.), including support under Articles 50 and 51 of Regulation (EU) No 1307/2013;
2. Notes that the vast majority of CAP direct payments are going to the richest farms, with just 13 % of beneficiaries receiving 74 % of CAP direct payment expenditures in 2014; believes that this does not assist job creation in farming, as small farms are more labour-intensive and 53 % of farm labourers are working on a farm classified as being of small economic size; calls for a better distribution of CAP payments towards small farmers;
3. Encourages the Member States to step up their support for small and medium-sized farms, in particular by making more use of the redistributive payment; calls on them furthermore to institute arrangements which will favour businesses that are organised efficiently and those which use the legal instruments of clustering of undertakings;
4. Takes the view that the CAP should take greater account of territories with geographical handicaps (such as mountain areas, overseas territories, the most outlying areas and sensitive natural areas) since maintaining farming is an essential vector for economic, social and environmental development that focuses on employment; adds, however, that the CAP must also consider the new dynamics of urban sprawl and lend support to areas on the fringes of such sprawl in facing up to the constraints linked to their particular features;
5. Points out that the Member States have made extensive use of the option of granting coupled aid — which, by developing production and enabling it to remain in a given place, secures jobs in disadvantaged areas — and calls on the Member States to increase the proportion of such aid for active farmers, to make it more flexible and to earmark more of it towards producing more plant proteins in the EU, which currently depends on imports from third countries for supply of

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this commodity; suggests furthermore that the level of voluntary coupled payments could be adjusted in line with the level of employment dependent on a given crop, which would provide further support for produce requiring the largest workforce;

6. Points out that, in the current programming period and in accordance with the Rural Development Programme, there is provision for targeted aid for the cultivation of local varieties and the keeping of local breeds, thus promoting regional employment and sustaining biodiversity; invites Member States to introduce mechanisms whereby groups and organisations of producers and farmers who cultivate and keep local varieties and breeds can receive targeted aid;

7. Points out that there is a need to implement the environmental dimension of direct aid, and that this must be part and parcel of ensuring that farms are sustainable and viable, and help maintain and create new jobs inter alia in the conservation of biodiversity, agro-tourism and management of the countryside, for example by country estates and historic residences; urges the EU to ensure simplification and that environmental regulations can be implemented in a simple, comprehensible and problem-free way; points out that the environmental dimension must not lead to a reduction in or abandoning of agricultural production, which is particularly sensitive in mountainous and peripheral areas;

8. Considers that, given the high mortality rate among honey bees in several EU countries and the essential role they, as pollinators, play in food security and the economy of many plant sectors, the Union should provide greater support for this sector by adopting a genuine European strategy for bee repopulation; adds that this would not require heavy investment but would create many jobs, either by diversifying activities in existing farms or by setting up new specialised farms, which, according to expert opinion, would require 200 hives to be viable and whose primary purpose would be to breed selected queens and swarms and, subsequently, to produce honey, of which the EU has a serious shortage; points out that such an approach, which builds on various European strategies — on innovation, social inclusion and job creation — is fully in line with the will to reorient the common agricultural policy and the development of farming towards greater sustainability;

9. Notes that to maintain on-farm jobs the sector must turn to new risk-management tools and increase utilisation of tools such as Producer Organisations under the Single CMO and in Pillar II in order to better respond to volatility and the demands of the global market; takes the view that the market measures and exceptional crisis and risk-management measures provided for under the Single CMO and in Pillar II must be implemented much more rapidly and proactively, with EU budget support adapted as necessary to the specific situation of the outermost regions, mountain regions and other regions facing competitiveness challenges so as to limit the negative effects of falling prices on farming income; points out that the implementation of exceptional crisis measures has not fully achieved its objectives and should take greater account of Member States' existing infrastructure and capacities; urges the Commission, in the light of recent crises, to develop more rapid and effective intervention systems which can prevent the most negative effects;

10. Asks the Commission to make full use of the potential of the exceptional measures provided for in Articles 219 to 222 of Regulation (EU) No 1308/2013;

11. Takes the view that, in order to play their role of safety net, intervention prices must be adjusted regularly in line with trends in cost prices so as to have a direct impact on producers' income and the perpetuation of their activities, as well as on employment; calls for the EU to establish prevention tools along similar lines to the Milk Market Observatory in all major production sectors in order to monitor markets, which would help steer production and ensure a response to crises by means of flexible and responsive market management tools which would be activated when necessary;

12. Recognises that short supply chains linking farmers to local producers can stimulate rural job creation, and emphasises that quality schemes, geographical indications and organic farming represent an opportunity to develop the agri-food sector and potentially create rural-based jobs, and as such should not only be protected but also developed in order to create new jobs and to preserve regional culture and identity; underlines the need for better access to wider markets

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for these products, and for the introduction of quality, promotion and protection measures to improve their marketing and inclusion within the general tourism products of a given geographical area; recalls, in the light of legislative proposals under discussion, that these positive economic impacts are based on consumer confidence which should not be undermined by changes that could be perceived as reducing quality; highlights furthermore that the processes for attaining these quality standards can be burdensome and should be simplified;

13. Recommends that the Member States could make more extensive use of the Second Pillar Priority 6 areas concerning the preservation and creation of jobs and of the knowledge transfer and vocational and continuing training measures (including apprenticeships and in-service training and retraining of farm workers), so that they can be redeployed to perform other rural activities, as well as advisory and management assistance measures to improve the economic and environmental performance of farms; calls on the Commission and Member States to grant support for training to assist farmers, agricultural and rural workers to become more versatile and able to diversify their activities and initiatives, and to strengthen innovation;

14. Notes that the current rural development programmes are much less focused on social projects that defend jobs than those of the previous programming period (2007-2013), owing to the measures selected by the Member States in their rural development programmes and the smaller amount of funding earmarked for employment-related measures; therefore calls for greater flexibility in the implementation of rural development policy;

15. Considers that it is necessary to simplify the implementation of rural development policy, to adopt more coherent approaches, along the same lines as multi-funds, and to stop the Member States and the Commission imposing overly painstaking administrative and financial checks;

16. Calls on the Member States to better advertise the potential of the second pillar of the CAP for the diversification of activities in rural areas (e.g. agro-tourism, production of renewable energy);

17. Points out that the risk factor inherent in innovation is insufficiently taken into account in both national and EU policy, a fact that acts as an obstacle to innovation and job creation, particularly for the many stakeholders who do not have sufficient financial strength to complete innovative projects;

18. Emphasises that rural development and job creation go hand in hand and consequently calls on the Member States and regions to maximise the potential of local and regional authorities, which are the most familiar with the challenges and opportunities of their areas, to achieve Pillar 2 objectives and respect the priorities of the CAP, including the promotion of social inclusion, poverty reduction and economic development; recalls the possibility of focussing rural development and operational programmes on job creation and retention, and on improving rural services, and calls on the Commission to assist them in achieving that objective; highlights the adaptation of sharing-economy models in rural areas with a view to boosting employment, making agricultural activities more efficient and reducing costs;

19. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to support enterprises and cooperatives in the social economy, including social farming <sup>(1)</sup>, in order to foster social integration and jobs in rural areas; notes the actions pursued under the Social Business Initiative and calls on the Commission to enhance the contribution made by the social economy to rural development, for instance through an Action Plan for the Social Economy;

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<sup>(1)</sup> cf <http://www.eesc.europa.eu/?i=portal.en.nat-opinions.25458>

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20. Stresses that action to support the demographic development and family-friendly nature of rural areas should be given more prominence in order to support families and make it easier to combine family and professional life, also in connection with issues relating to the labour market and economic development in rural areas;
21. Stresses the need to promote active measures and policies highlighting the positive role of migration in boosting economic growth and fostering social cohesion in rural areas;
22. Calls on the Commission and Member States to pursue policies which will promote rural areas by developing tourism, which, if appropriately structured and supported with incentives, could be a driver of the cultural, social and economic growth of areas which possess substantial natural, landscape, cultural and agrifood resources; stresses that the touristic development of rural areas and the diversification of farming (to include educational, cultural and recreational activities) also constitute an incentive to rising generations to take control of campaigns, in a spirit of initiative and enterprise geared to innovation and to the promotion of traditional products;
23. Emphasises that, with the help of the EAFRD and other European funds, establishing synergies between different policy areas will be essential to meet the challenge of providing jobs in rural areas, and to ensuring that agriculture is once again recognised as a key factor in territorial development; notes that Pillar 2 funds could be utilised as a dynamic financial tool to create increased synergies with alternative funding sources and programmes, making them accessible to rural areas in order to increase connectivity, competitiveness and economic diversification and to support entrepreneurship, taking into account the preservation of rural culture and identity;
24. Stresses that small, owner-run holdings are increasingly coming under pressure from agricultural land purchases by investors; stresses that preserving the area under cultivation and access to land are essential for the setting up and extension of agricultural holdings and vital to preserving jobs in rural areas; points out that the Commission's 'Report on the Needs of Young Farmers' in November 2015 showed that the availability of land to buy and to rent are the biggest problems facing young farmers and new entrants into farming; calls, therefore, on Member States to share best practices and develop instruments to make access to land possible in rural areas with high unemployment through, for example, participatory use and management of farmland in accordance with national practices, or the establishment of systems for managing and providing information on unused land or land that could be used for agriculture, the services of which young farmers and women would have the preferential right to use;
25. Considers it important that rural development programmes do more to improve relations between rural and urban areas so as to encourage cooperation and offer opportunities for businesses operating in rural areas that are crucial for the development of these areas and job creation; takes the view that villages play an important role in urban-rural relations by providing access to basic services for residents of the surrounding rural areas, and that the Member States should therefore promote services in villages as part of their territorial policies;
26. Calls for the establishment of binding rules on fair payment in the food supply chain between food producers, wholesalers and processors to ensure that farmers receive an appropriate share of the value added which is sufficient to enable them to practice sustainable farming;
27. Stresses that the forestry sector, currently an underutilised asset in Europe, is a major source of jobs that should be better promoted in its various forms throughout the timber industry; adds that the EU is currently suffering from a serious timber supply shortage that requires investment in the infrastructure necessary for the growth of this sector;
28. Emphasises that access to land is an essential prerequisite for the setting up and extension of an agricultural holding; points out that access to land is the biggest problem facing young farmers seeking to set up an agricultural holding;

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***Under the future CAP after 2020***

29. Emphasises that the CAP procedures must be simplified and must have sufficient funding maintained, at least at the present level reflecting the significant European added value of the policy, in order to play an effective long-term role in fostering employment as part of a diversified European farming and forestry sector, promoting sustainable development and the appeal of rural areas; stresses that rural development policy — which enables more direct and more effective action to reduce social exclusion among rural inhabitants and boost employment and the dynamism of rural areas — should progressively be strengthened, without undermining first pillar support, which must also be reorganised to ensure, inter alia, that markets work better and demonstrate greater stability, which is crucial for safeguarding agricultural incomes, the European model of farming and food security and ensuring that rural areas retain their appeal (with a focus on quality of life) in comparison with urban areas;

30. Emphasises that within the CAP great importance should be attached to instruments geared towards modernisation and investment, which guarantee the competitiveness of economic sectors located in rural areas (including the agri-food, energy, processing and services industries and the social sector) in a sustainable way, in keeping with environmental rules, thus ensuring that jobs can be maintained; points out that those instruments will also make it possible to further bridge the gaps between Member States and between regions when it comes to agricultural and rural development;

31. Highlights the importance of the tourism sector as a source of income for farmers (e.g. farm holidays); urges the Member States and the Commission to institute programmes to support investment and entrepreneurship; considers it important to support the farms concerned by means of tourism campaigns;

32. Notes the CAP simplification measures implemented to date, but calls on the Commission to further develop and implement measures to introduce proportionality and flexibility in relation to reducing the CAP's administrative burden and increasing on-farm productivity;

33. Stresses that there are limitations to what can be achieved under the CAP as its primary aim is security of food supply, and that effectively addressing the many challenges affecting job creation and maintenance in rural areas will require a broader, cross-policy approach at both regional and Member State level;

34. Calls on the Commission to support a competitive and sustainable European agricultural model based on a family-run, diversified and multi-functional farming model that makes retaining territory-based and fairly paid jobs a priority, with particular emphasis on territories facing specific constraints as recognised in Article 349 TFEU and — in the production of food and non-food products — ensuring food security, as well as food safety so as to protect health;

35. Calls on the Member States to develop land monitoring and regulation tools in order to help them gain a better knowledge of land markets and put an end to the widespread phenomenon of the concentration or grabbing of land and production apparatus;

36. Stresses the need to encourage the development, marketing and sale of high-quality agricultural products; calls for initiatives to open new markets as well as to introduce operational product programmes and marketing campaigns, in order to ensure product diversification and competitiveness of the European food chain;

37. Takes the view that the CAP must take account of European farming in all of its forms and all rural areas, including the most disadvantaged and most fragile amongst them (such as mountain areas and outermost regions), so as to ensure that the best possible use is made of all resources; believes that this also entails bringing farmland that has been abandoned back into use;

38. Points out that diversification of agriculture and regional 'niche' markets increase and ensure employment in rural areas; calls for initiatives to support diversification of farms (e.g. direct marketing of agricultural products) and of the rural economy in general (e.g. facilitating the shift from agricultural work to other fields of employment);

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39. Takes the view that the funds under the future CAP ought to provide more support to slow the loss of small and medium-sized farms and businesses grouped into producers' organisations, which, because they are generally more diversified, economical and autonomous, as well as being more easily transferred, are more effective in terms of creating added value and territory-based jobs and as an important economic and social pillar of their regions, and also continue to apply specific support to territories affected by specific constraints as recognised in Article 349 TFEU;
40. Points out that CAP direct payments should only be allocated to persons whose main area of activity is agriculture;
41. Points out that, in the outermost regions, the search for employment solutions in the event that the economy contracts is compromised by the lack of interconnectivity, and, given the importance of agriculture in these regions, takes the view that the funds under the future CAP ought to apply positive discrimination to these territories facing specific constraints as recognised in the TFEU, given that this would have a multiplier effect in terms of promoting other related activities, such as agro-industry, tourism, nature conservation, energy production and the circular economy, in a way that would complement the multi-fund strategy; stresses that this strategy should take account of the positive differentiation factors identified for the outermost regions, which could act as a laboratory for original innovative solutions in agriculture that could be applied to other less extreme and more comprehensive contexts, relating to farm structure, soil and climate conditions and characteristic biodiversity;
42. Considers that group farming should be promoted and financially supported, as it reduces farm production costs, in particular mechanisation costs, and promotes solidarity between farmers and the transfer of innovation, know-how and best practice, creating a dynamism conducive to development and employment;
43. Calls on the Commission to stimulate diversification and competitiveness of small agricultural holdings, also with regard to social farming and a service-oriented agriculture;
44. Emphasises that it is important that the CAP should provide more support for the positive effects that agriculture brings in terms of jobs and the environment, and that it should provide more effective support for organic and biodynamic farming and all other sustainable production methods, including integrated farming and agroforestry in the context of agroecology, which will entail simplifying the current regulations and adopting regulations which can be implemented in a simple, comprehensible and problem-free way; believes that the values of these positive effects in terms of employment and the environment are of interest to society as a whole and are a component which should be included in farm incomes;
45. Recalls the positive example of 'organic districts', namely areas where, by means of a coordinated set of measures, products of local arable and livestock farming produced by organic methods and all the economic operators which depend on them (agrifood, gastronomic and touristic undertakings) are promoted, an instrument which has already shown that it can increase local income and assist the defence of the land by means of conservation of the countryside and of traditional products;
46. Highlights the potential of sustainable farming and food systems, especially organic farming, as well as of sustainable management of soil, water, biodiversity and rural infrastructure, with a view to preserving and creating decent employment in farming and thriving rural economies;
47. Takes the view that ensuring food security in the European Union must remain the primary principle action under the future CAP, without neglecting markets outside the EU; in this regard, considers that trade agreements can pose a real risk, as well as possible opportunities, for European agriculture, and believes that free trade agreements should not lead to unfair competition towards small and medium-sized farms and undermine local economies and jobs;
48. Takes the view that, in order to improve the currently inadequate organisation in the fruit and vegetable sector, EU support for projects among the newly-formed fruit and vegetable growers' associations should be reinstated;

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49. Emphasises that, against a backdrop of deep uncertainty as regards the future of low and volatile agricultural prices, the EU must achieve the Treaty aims of the CAP, by doing more to correct the erratic effects of the markets where they are failing, and to ensure the resilience and competitiveness of the agricultural sector by establishing effective safety nets and prevention and crisis management systems so as to strike a balance between supply and demand, as well as creating risk management tools founded on new, innovative systems and involving the farmers themselves in the financing; considers that the share of funding for measures to stabilise agricultural markets should be increased and, in particular, that the CAP must also strengthen insurance schemes for protecting farmers against the various climate, health and economic risks; believes that in the face of the risks associated with global warming, the EU must do all it can to enhance the positive role that agriculture can play, through measures including agronomy and improved soil management for better carbon capture, and that it is important to provide technical and financial support to farmers to enable them gradually to change their practices and to innovate;

50. Emphasises furthermore that direct payments should remain a CAP instrument beyond 2020, in order to support and stabilise farm incomes and compensate for the costs arising from complying with high EU standards (as regards production methods, and environmental requirements in particular), and to maintain agricultural production in the least-favoured regions; points out that direct payments should therefore be geared towards ensuring that farming is economically stable, as well as guaranteeing food and environmental security; points out, in that context, that it is essential to level out direct payment rates in order to ensure a level playing field for competition in the EU single market, as well as for the sustainable exploitation of agricultural resources at EU level;

51. Feels that, since there are significant differences in the levels of cooperation between farmers in individual Member States and since a lack of cooperation adversely affects farmers' ability to resist crisis situations and market pressures, the CAP should comprehensively promote the development of cooperation among farmers, particularly in the production and processing sectors;

52. Calls for the Member States to prioritise, under the second pillar of the CAP, the European Innovation Partnership (EIP); calls on the Commission to prioritise Horizon 2020 and to ensure better access for farmers to EIP funding options, support for innovative, sustainable agricultural and forestry models for the production of food and non-food goods and services (renewables, bioeconomics, rural tourism, and new prospects for farmers for the supply of raw materials in the post-petroleum industrial era), and developing each rural area's resources;

53. Expresses its firm belief that it will be necessary even in the future to promote continuing vocational training for farmers and agricultural workers and to make sure that scientific knowledge and innovations are disseminated, thus ensuring adaptability to the changing environment and making it easier to engage in economic activity;

54. Takes the view that bottom-up approaches to local development such as LEADER/CLLD have proven to be effective in terms of numbers of jobs created and of low levels of public expenditure per job created, and that they should therefore be further strengthened, promoted and implemented in all Member States by means of multi-fund approaches and by strengthening the role of local and regional authorities; stresses in particular the role of Local Action Group (LAG) leaders in providing technical and service support for initiatives aimed at getting projects which promote employment off the ground; calls for the LAGs to have the broadest possible autonomy in order to maximise their effectiveness; adds that mechanisms should be put in place to ensure the meaningful involvement of the social partners, and calls on the Commission to come forward with models of good practice with regard to transnational LEADER II projects;

55. Notes that difficulty in accessing information with regard to relevant national and EU programming and funding is a barrier to the development of the rural economy;

56. Calls for investment provided under the rural development policy, as a support for employment in rural areas, to be prioritised with a focus on jobs, changes in unemployment, the efficiency of the recipient businesses, and creating incentives to recruit employees, and recommends that rural development programmes include a strengthening of microfinancing, since this is particularly useful in helping agricultural and non-agricultural businesses get off the ground;

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57. Stresses that the importance of the second pillar for job creation can be enhanced by allowing much more flexibility according to region-specific needs;

58. Takes the view that, for the future, there is a need to continue to develop high-quality, territory-based food systems supplying raw or processed food products by promoting individual responsibility and the involvement of stakeholders — either grouped together as producers, processors, distributors and consumers or as producer-consumer communities, or else bringing together all the economic operators in the agrifood and food tourism sectors — in qualitative and contract-related activities designed to ensure food supplies and food safety, as well as fair incomes, so that farmers can earn a decent livelihood and sustain employment on their farms; notes that such food systems can, in particular but not solely, take the form of short supply chains and/or local markets; takes the view that more EU resources should in future be devoted to the development and operation of certain special food quality systems, and the further development of globally renowned European gastronomy; considers it essential to that end to better adapt the legislation on public tenders, so that local authorities can promote local production;

59. Draws attention to the need for additional support for agriculture and for the creation of agricultural jobs in less favoured areas and in areas on the EU's external borders;

60. Considers that multi-stakeholder partnerships involving farmers and other rural stakeholders should be promoted because they make it possible to develop many activities which create direct and indirect employment, such as the structuring of local food and non-food chains and the implementation of various services (rural tourism, maintenance of private and public space, etc.);

61. Believes that the Commission and the Member States should incentivise farmers, through the CAP and other policies, to diversify their sources of income, thus insulating themselves from downturns in the market; considers that such diversification could include ecotourism, the development of renewable energies such as wind and solar, adding value to agricultural produce through processing, and farm shops;

62. Calls on the Commission to establish more support for local cooperatives in order to help them regain control over their prices and products;

63. Notes that the tourism sector offers significant opportunities for generating revenue and direct and induced employment in agriculture and rural areas, allowing the historical, cultural, gastronomic, landscape and environmental heritage of each region to be enhanced; notes, also, that a region's attractiveness to tourists is based not only on its history, but increasingly also on the quality of its food products, its landscapes and its environment; believes that for all these reasons the tourism sector should receive more support from rural development policy;

64. Stresses that the challenges linked to climate change and the environment call for significant public and private job-creating investment, with support from the emergence of new professions, in order to ensure that rural resources are maintained and preserved and that the quality of degraded ecosystems is restored, to tackle floods and fires more effectively, and to improve the protection of water, soil and air quality and biodiversity; notes that while this certainly involves cooperation between agriculture and other rural stakeholders, it offers new opportunities for income diversification in agriculture;

65. Calls on the Commission to assess the social impact of the present agricultural crisis, particularly in terms of job losses, especially in rural areas; calls on the Member States to consider how the competitiveness of farming can be improved so that the sector can create jobs and generate added value which is shared equitably throughout agriculture and the agrifood industry, ensuring fair competition and minimising the damage done by social dumping and by precarious and non-standard employment conditions which disproportionately affect certain groups; notes that many farm family members do not have social status or legal recognition or are not covered by a social protection scheme; stresses that agricultural businesses must comply with national employment and social legislation; considers that any introduction of additional conditionalities into CAP first pillar payments would considerably increase the administrative burden on farmers and limit their job-creating potential; calls for a stronger role for social partners alongside management authorities, and calls on the Member States to recognise and guarantee the social rights of farmers, ensuring that all workers in agriculture, part-time or

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full-time, are covered by social protection systems; calls on the Member States to transpose Directive 2014/36/EU on seasonal workers into national legislation; calls on the national health and safety authorities to be allocated resources to spreading information about farm safety;

66. Calls on the Commission to introduce the indicators proposed by the FAO in its Sustainability Assessment of Food and Agriculture systems (SAFA), in particular those geared to employment and social wellbeing;

67. Recalls that the average European farmer holds a mere 12 hectares of land and that 70 % of agricultural holdings have a surface area of less than five hectares; notes that owing to their size and structure agricultural holdings cannot always afford to take on full-time employees or highly qualified workers; encourages the Commission and the Member States, therefore, to put in place measures to encourage employer groups;

68. Takes the view that it is vital to ensure that public and private services are in place to ensure the attractiveness of rural areas and make it possible to maintain and develop employment there; considers that people in rural areas have a right to equal access to quality public services such as education and social and healthcare; considers it essential that all — local government, regional government (where it exists) and the local private sector — should work together to promote investment and ensure that rural and remote areas have essential infrastructure such as public and private transport links, a secure supply of energy and reliable and fast broadband technology, as well as finance and credit schemes for rural entrepreneurs, micro-enterprises and SMEs, without which rural enterprises and households will be at a permanent disadvantage and migration to urban areas will continue;

69. Takes the view, with regard to the recent animal epidemics and the recent food safety scandals, such as the 2011 *E. coli* outbreak, the 2013 horsemeat scandal, and the current counterfeit honey scandal — that a significant increase in the amount spent on food and feed security — as set out in the third heading of the Multiannual Financial Framework — is needed, since the EUR 1,93 billion allocated for the current seven-year period is completely inadequate;

70. Stresses that farmers have to deal on a large scale with CAP-related administrative costs and that these costs vary substantially among Member States; calls on the Commission and Member States to decrease administrative burden by cutting red tape and simplifying the CAP, as well as ensuring its cost-effective transposition;

71. Stresses that access to basic services such as education, healthcare and housing, as well as the continuity of those services, are prerequisites for an environment conducive to job creation and for meeting the vital needs of people living in rural areas;

72. Considers it vital to ask public authorities to create extension services and services to assist farm management in rural areas, with a view to modernising European farming;

73. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to encourage and facilitate women's equality in the labour market and the compatibility of work and private life in rural areas, particularly regarding wages and social and pension rights, promotion of new qualifications and offering prospects and opportunities for women in agricultural and non-agricultural employment, in line with the principle of equality and non-discrimination in EU policies and programmes; also calls on them to better exploit the opportunities for targeted online information platforms, action and aid to new entrant and established women farmers and women in rural areas, particularly in the framework of the EAFRD and other EU funds encouraging project development, and to help retain essential infrastructure and services that are important in everyday rural life, thereby helping to limit the exodus of women from rural areas; likewise draws attention to the need, especially in rural areas, for sustainable strategies to maintain, encourage and support women's networks and organisations and their role in decision-making in agriculture and in rural areas; calls, furthermore, for easier access to education, finance and information to facilitate women's entrepreneurial initiatives (e.g. through e-business), rural business ownership and development;

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74. Urges the Member States to strengthen the role of the social partners and social welfare organisations working alongside the authorities in monitoring compliance with employment legislation, combating undeclared work and monitoring adherence to social welfare and safety standards that promote the social and economic integration of migrant workers, including female seasonal workers, migrants and refugees; calls for arrangements to be put in place to ensure that women can take part in all levels of the process;

75. Points out that the amount of farmland in the EU is becoming smaller by the year; emphasises that it is vital to preserve arable land in order to guarantee jobs in rural areas; calls on the Member States to promote improved access to land in areas with high levels of rural unemployment, calls, in this connection, for action to be taken to ensure that young women farmers have access to credit and are able to participate in land management;

76. Draws attention to the fact that women account for 45 % of the farm labour force; calls on the Commission to revise the definition of 'family farm', in order to facilitate women's access to training and professional advice, as well as to capital and benefits;

77. Calls on the relevant national, regional and local authorities to encourage the participation of women in local action groups and the development of local partnerships under the LEADER programme, as well as to ensure gender-balanced participation on their management boards;

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

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