



CONSEIL EUROPEEN DES JEUNES AGRICULTEURS

**European Council of Young Farmers - Europäischer Rat der
Junglandwirte**

DUBLIN DECLARATION

Introduction

On 13 March 2013, at a CEJA working group in Dublin following the Macra na Feirme conference: “RDP – Delivering for Young Agri Entrepreneurs 2014-2020”, measures and practices under the Rural Development Programme (RDP) particularly relevant to young farmers were discussed by representatives from across Europe. Recommendations for Rural Development policy in relation to young farmers have now been compiled into this document, entitled the Dublin Declaration. It is crucial that Rural Development Programmes in all EU Member States target young farmers and generational change in the next Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), in order to temper the age crisis in the sector and secure the future of European food production. This can only be achieved with a variety of strong measures for young farmers under Rural Development in combination with a mandatory top-up for young farmers under direct payments, therefore assisting young people in entering the sector but also providing additional buffer from market volatility in the most fragile years of a farmer’s career.

Analysis of the current RDP 2007-2013

Much of the current programme focused upon distributing aid to farmers through schemes of a general nature, e.g. environmental schemes. While young farmers were prioritised, the funding available did not match that priority. The amount of funding available for young farmers’ measures was typically low across the Union and with wide disparity between Member States. For this reason, CEJA calls for a mandatory minimum 5% of all 27 Member States’ Rural Development Programmes to be spent on measures directly targeting young farmers in future.

RDP 2014 – 2020

The new RDP 2014-2020 presents a great opportunity to create new supports for young farmers. The funding priorities and policy measures under the RDP 2014-2020 have a significant impact for the future establishment of tomorrow’s young farmers along with facilitating today’s young farmers to develop sustainable farm business for the long term.

RDP objectives and priority areas

The three objectives put forward for Rural Development policy: competitiveness of agriculture; sustainable management of natural resources and climate action; and balanced territorial development of rural areas are underpinned by six priority areas. These six



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priorities are broad ranging including: fostering knowledge transfer and innovation; enhancing competitiveness of all types of agriculture and enhancing farm viability; promoting food and non chain organisation and risk management; restoring, preserving and enhancing ecosystems; promoting resource efficiency and supporting the shift towards a low carbon and climate resilient economy; and promoting social inclusion, poverty reduction and economic development in rural areas.

Articles from the proposed regulation and CEJA recommendations

Article 15 Knowledge transfer and information actions

1. Support under this measure shall cover vocational training and skills acquisition actions, demonstration activities and information actions. Vocational training and skills acquisition actions may include training courses, workshops and coaching. Support may also cover short-term farm management exchange and farm visit.

RECOMMENDATIONS

There must be a better link from theory to practice knowledge directly applicable at farm level.

- **Discussion groups**
- **Systems that promote exchange of experience & knowledge between farmers are required for effective and efficient knowledge transfer innovation vouchers.**
These would provide a resource (e.g. €5,000) to young farmers to select appropriate expertise for their own enterprises that demonstrate tangible innovation.

Article 16 Advisory services, farm management and farm relief services

1. Support under this measure shall be granted in order to:

- (a) help farmers, forest holders and SMEs in rural areas benefit from the use of advisory services for the improvement of the economic and environmental performance as well as the climate friendliness and resilience of their holding, enterprise and/or investment;**
- (b) promote the setting up of farm management, farm relief and farm advisory services, as well as forestry advisory services, including the Farm Advisory System referred to in Articles 12 to 14 of Regulation (EU) No HR/2012;**
- (c) promote the training of advisors.**



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RECOMMENDATIONS

Optimisation of working processes / lean production.

- **More financial support to ensure that every young farmer has guaranteed access to advisory services.**
- **More practical advice that can be applied at farm level.**
- **Greater availability of information over the Internet.**

Article 18 Investments in physical assets

Support under this measure shall cover tangible and/or intangible investments which:

- (a) improve the overall performance of the agricultural holding;
- (b) concern the processing, marketing and/or development of agricultural products covered by Annex I to the Treaty or cotton. The output of the production process may be a product not covered by that Annex;
- (c) concern infrastructure related to the development and adaptation of agriculture, including access to farm and forest land, land consolidation and improvement, energy supply and, water management; or
- (d) are non productive investments linked to the achievement of agri- and forest environment commitments, biodiversity conservation status of species and habitat as well as enhancing the public amenity value of a Natura 2000 area or other high nature value area to be defined in the programme

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Increased level of support and specific interest rates for young farmers on investment programmes must be available in all Member States.**
- **Grants for promoting innovation at farm level should be prioritised.**

Article 20 Farm and business development

1. Support under this measure shall cover:

- (a) business start-up aid for:
 - (i) young farmers;
 - (ii) non-agricultural activities in rural areas;
 - (iii) the development of small farms;
- (b) investments in non-agricultural activities;



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(c) annual payments for farmers participating in the small farmers scheme established by Title V of Regulation (EU) No DP/2012 (hereafter "the small farmers scheme") who permanently transfer their holding to another farmer

RECOMMENDATIONS

Mandatory installation aid is required across all Member States to foster generational renewal.

- **Co-financing rate of 80/20 or higher to prioritise this measure and ensure optimum uptake.**
- **Provisions to encourage retirement of older farmers with clearly defined exit paths for them, to facilitate greater land mobility and earlier installation, and also to encourage greater co-operation between generations.**
- **Investment should be for agricultural activities only.**
- **Support for the diversification on farms.**
- **Investment support for energy efficiency on the farm.**
- **Support for programmes that encourage land mobility and mobility of production factors between generations**

Article 36 Co-operation

1. Support under this measure shall promote forms of co-operation involving at least two entities and in particular:

- (a) co-operation approaches among different actors in the Union agriculture and food chain, forestry sector and among other actors that contribute to achieving the objectives and priorities of rural development policy, including inter-branch organisations;
- (b) the creation of clusters and networks;
- (c) the establishment and operation of operational groups of the EIP for agricultural productivity and sustainability

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Farmers who act collectively through various co-operative means should have access to all measures under the rural development programme.**
- **For example: machinery rings, marketing products, etc.**