



***LOOKING TO THE FUTURE :
NEW CHALLENGES AND
OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE
DEVELOPMENT OF
SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE***

**Petya Stavreva
Chairperson of United Agrarians
Bulgaria**



The European agricultural policy has a strategic role to play in the future of European agriculture, in rural areas, but also in the development of all of the European Union.

The new challenges being faced by the EU require a new vision with sensible solutions for the sustainable development of the European model.

More than 500 million European citizens expect the future Common Agricultural Policy to be fairer, simpler and more effective.

When we talk about the Common Agricultural Policy, we must realize that it is not just for farmers and rural people, but for society as a whole.

How we ensure food security and how we support the balanced territorial development is also a responsibility to the future generations.





Any significant change in the Common Agricultural Policy affects not only the farmers and the residents of rural areas, but also society as a whole. The effects are sometimes felt sooner, at other times it takes years for them to manifest themselves. However, there are always long-term consequences.

Today, we are facing the challenge of the "green wave" that is flooding the EU agricultural policy.

Agriculture and nature conservation must go hand in hand. The big question is about whether producers are prepared for the changes that are looming on the horizon in 2023.

The Green Deal has many dimensions. However, it is important not to lose the balance between the needs of and the opportunities for farmers and consumers' expectations for good quality and affordable food.

Farmers, agri-food businesses, foresters, and rural communities have an essential role to play in several of the Green Deal's key policy areas, including:

- Building a sustainable food system through the **Farm to Fork** strategy;
- Adding to the new **BIODIVERSITY STRATEGY** by protecting and enhancing the variety of plants and animals in the rural ecosystem;
- Contributing to the **Climate action** of the Green Deal to achieve the goal of net-zero emissions in the EU by 2050;
- Supporting the updated **Forestry strategy**, by maintaining health forests;
- Contributing to a **Zero pollution action plan**, by safeguarding natural resources such as water, air and soil.





The effects of the Covid-19 pandemic on agricultural production have shown that **the risk management** and prevention measures are an important **investment** in the **development of sustainable agriculture** and viable rural areas.



In order to achieve the goals set in the strategic documents of the European institutions, we need **more effective interaction** and **cooperation** among the representatives of the institutions, farmers and their organizations.

We must not forget that farmers and rural residents are the ones who must implement and enforce the CAP. They require **long-term policies** that have **short-term manifestations**.



We need to press ahead with the process of the **simplification of the CAP** in order to make it more accessible, to guarantee and secure the **income of farmers** and to continue the **modernisation process** of the agricultural sector through further **innovation and digitalisation**.

The successful implementation of the CAP requires **teamwork** and a **vision for the future** which combines measures and efforts at the:

- **Policy-makers level**
- **Farmers level**
- **Society level**



What are the challenges for the CAP in the near future?:

- **Dealing with market instability and the development of tools for crisis and risk management**
- **Imbalances in the food chain**
- **Long-term sustainability of farmers' incomes**
- **Fairer and more effective CAP support between Member States and for individual farmers, and targeted at active farmers**
- **More balanced territorial development and the promotion of rural employment - Europe at several speeds...**
- **Sustainable management of biodiversity and natural resources such as water, air and soils**
- **To respond both to the growing pressure on agricultural production conditions caused by climate change and to the need for farmers to reduce their impact on climate change.**



The implementation of an efficient direct payment scheme for young farmers is an important step in motivating and attracting more young people to farming.

Providing targeted support to small and medium-sized farms will increase their potential.

One of the challenges facing the CAP after 2020 is to increase the resilience of the agricultural sector in order to deal with future crises.

Special attention is needed for risk management in agriculture and safety culture in response to the new challenges facing agricultural production.

It is time to establish an European Network for Agricultural Safety and Health with regional and state affiliated organizations focusing on the safety, health, well-being and sustainability of people involved in agriculture.





Supporting rural development must continue, as a proven and targeted policy to improve life in rural areas. This may be achieved by providing new opportunities and services for the population.

In rural areas the future comes with the modernisation of technology, the introduction of innovation and the exchange of experience and knowledge. This should reflect the importance of the competitiveness of the farms and the efficient use of natural resources.

Rural areas need more flexibility in implementing measures that are in line with national specificities. This will improve the targeting of financial support and reduce the imbalance in development between rural and urban areas.





Small and medium-size farms are the backbone of European agriculture.

In practice, about 80% of direct payments are concentrated to only 20% of European farmers.

The introduction of a farm payment limit is a step in the right direction to change this trend and to support more efficient distribution of the financial support.





We often see that there is a mismatch between farmers' expectations and the solutions that institutions offer. There has been a lot of talk in recent years about simplification, and in practice we are facing the introduction of more requirements and more bureaucracy.

Every year some farmers are leaving the agricultural sector. One of the reasons is that they cannot effectively benefit from the financial support of the CAP.

CAP instruments are a key to the future of agricultural production, rural communities and the continuation of the process of territorial cohesion, but they need to be use more effectively.



LOOKING TO THE FUTURE :



Stay

Active

Connected

Urban

Rural

International

Managing

All together



A photograph of a hand holding a small amount of wheat grain, set against a background of a vast wheat field under a bright blue sky with scattered white clouds. The image is framed by a light green border.

THANK YOU!

Petya STAVREVA
stavreva.p@gmail.com