THE STRENGTHENING OF THE RURAL DEVELOPMENT AS A 2nd PILLAR OF THE COMMON AGRICULTURAL POLICY

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1.1 Introduction

The Second European Conference on Rural Development was held in Salzburg (Austria), from the 12 to 14 November 2003\(^1\), to evaluate the implementation of the rural development policy of the European Union (EU) from Agenda 2000 and to foresee the future needs\(^2\). Aforementioned aim is clearly expressed in the statement of the conclusions of this conference "To plant the first seed for the rural future: a policy for our ambitions".

1.2 The establishments

The Salzburg Conference identified the following specific characteristics, problems and challenges own to sustainable development of the European rural space:
- the importance of the expanse of the rural areas that in the EU enlarged to 27 Member States will be most of its territory;
- the diversity of the rural areas with respect to its landscapes and their agricultural production systems;
- its to retain capacity and attract a population;
- the essential role of agriculture and the forestry in the conformation of the rural landscape and the contribution of these sectors to the diversification of the local economy and the maintenance of viable rural Communities;
- deficient access to public services, the alternative employment lack and the aging of the population in certain rural areas, factors that affect negatively their development potential and reduce the opportunities for women and the installation of young people;
- the increasing importance for the citizens of the safety and food quality, the welfare of animals and of the protection and improvement in the rural environment;
- the impossibility of founding the development of the rural areas only in agriculture, which makes essential the diversification inside and outside the agricultural sector to promote viable and sustainable rural Communities;
- the need to help the farmers to assume its multifunctional role as guards of the field and directed producers to the market, in accordance with the process under way of reform of the CAP and the change in the guidelines of the WTO.

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\(^1\) Second European Conference on rural development held in Salzburg (Austria), from the 12 to 14 November 2003. http://europa.eu.int/comm/agriculture/events/salzburg/index_en.htm


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1.3 The summary of Agenda 2000

The Salzburg Conference took the following stock the rural development policy of the European Union:

— Satisfaction for the consolidation of this policy in accordance with the aims of Agenda 2000;
— Satisfaction for the diversification of its area of implementation and strengthening of its financing agreed because of the reform of the CAP adopted in June 2003;
— Recognition of the importance of contribution of the rural development policy to economic and social cohesion and of the need to consolidate this contribution in the enlarged EU;
— Recognition of the reasons that justify the public endorsement to the rural development policy, such as, to facilitate the process of agricultural restructuring under way, the sustainable development of the rural areas and a balanced relation among the field and the urban areas;
— Preoccupation for the complexity of the current implementation system of the rural development policy of the EU, with different sources and financing procedures as it considers of interventions inside or outside the regions of Objective 1.

1.4 The principles of the future rural development policy

The Salzburg Conference identified the following “principles” that must guide the future rural development policy of the EU:

a) A live field

Conscious of the social benefits that a live field produces, this principle tries to show as the development of new investments in the rural areas is going to favour sustainable growth. A live field offers and new employment opportunity quality of life, that is to say, a good place to live and work, bringing about greater benefits for society generally.

With rural development competitiveness of the rural areas is increased, which benefits society on permitting a reduction in unemployment through new employment opportunities, especially for young people and women, at the same time as it curbs the migration to the cities. In this way, the sustainable growth is stimulated that, without forgetting to agriculture as traditional activity, new activities are received that favour rural development as the micro-businesses, the small and medium-sized businesses, crafts, tourism, services, new activities relating certain to the environment, including duties of accommodation and leisure that the rural areas offer. However, on recognising that “the vitality of the field is essential for agriculture because the agricultural activity for a live field”, this principle becomes is essential the “beginning of gold” of the future rural development policy of the EU.

b) The preservation of the diversity of the field

The importance that has the preservation of the diversity of the fields, as well as the promotion of services directed to a multifunctional agriculture, are crucial to safeguard and improve the natural environment and cultural heritage, with special importance in the most remote rural areas that are given a high natural value. This principle recognises deliberately the importance of an efficient management of the rural environment and the forests to preserve and improve the natural landscape and the varied cultural heritage of Europe.
c) A competitive agricultural sector

It means a fundamental principle that it is necessary to remember when considering the diversification, innovation and the promotion of competitive prices of products of high added value that the consumers demand.

The Conference recognises in fact the strength that has in certain sectors European agriculture, essentially by the favourable climatic conditions, for the agricultural ability, the historical tradition and the long experience acquired by the European farmers that are capable of offering products high-quality to the markets. On the other hand, as a result of the changes happened in European agriculture on level so much I commit (respect for the multifunctionality, the environment and animal welfare), as external (different regulations and levels of prices on the world markets), it is necessary to reconsider new actions that permit strengthening even more the manufacturing activity within rural development, without losing of view the wide diversity of the different rural areas of the EU.

d) The implementation of the rural development policy in all the areas of the enlarged EU

A principle of non-discrimination of no area, including the ones of the new Member States means, so that all the farmers and the other actors of the rural area may face the challenges of restructuring of the agricultural sector as a result of the recent reform of the CAP and the new Round of multilateral commercial negotiations within the World Organisation of Trade (WTO).

e) The rural development policy must respond to the needs of rural society generally and contribute to its cohesion

It is wanted to specify the important role that the rural development policy is playing in order to obtain cohesion and that is going to bring about a general profit from whole European society. Rural development contributes significantly to socio-economic development and improvement in territorial, social and economic cohesion (according to the measures of the Treaties). This means that territorial cohesion not only leads to include the productive duties of agriculture, but receives favourably a group of other duties also derived from the agricultural activity.

All the carried out measures through this policy should respond to the needs demanded by rural society. However, it is hour that these needs include a greater sector of the society, that certainly is urban society. The cities for itself, yet cannot give suitable solutions to the required needs, the one that it makes necessary to find remedies and are, therefore, the rural Communities the ones that, with their diversity and cultural and environmental wealth and its large possibilities, services demanded by the cities can offer.

f) The rural development policy must be carried out through the collaboration of the public organisations and deprived of private company, in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity

Within the conception of the rural development policy based on a territorial focus, integrated and participating, and remembering the principle of subsidiarity, as well as the positive experiences of the Community initiative “LEADER”, it is necessary to promote a deep dialogue between the protagonists of the rural environment in the later formulation of the programmes and its implementation, control and evaluation. In this way, the future rural development policy will channel the Community support for the rural areas based on local associations of type “of down above”, so giving margin to the search for
innovating approaches on a local scale. With this principle the privilege of the focus “of down above” in the conception and the performance of the rural development is asked for programmes, in order that the local agents may affect more directly the aid measures for their rural areas.

Through ways of partnership between the public and private organisations and private company, the local actors are mobilised through the local focus, meaning that he means implying directly to the local agents, the Groups of Local Action (the GAL), promoting the participation of the population and emphasising the specific circumstances of each territory.

h) Greater responsibility to the associations of collaboration in the programmes

In agreement with the previous beginning, if the Groups of Local Action have supported the rural development strategies territorial, integrated and pilot, based on the ascending focus, it is understood that they are the representatives of management of the programmes and in them must relapse the responsibility of the latter. With duties like management, the concession and the payment of aid for the beneficiaries, the control of the implementation of the projects and other so many assignments, it is logical that, furthermore, it falls on them this responsibility. In this way, the need to increase the responsibility for the associations of collaboration to the programmes is reaffirmed through the follow-up and the evaluation of the programmes, so that, in you plough to the formulation and implementation of general strategies, are directed to aims and really defined results.

We cannot remove the significant increase in the exchange of knowledge and experiences and in cooperation. However, to the associations greater possibilities of apprenticeship must be offered through the creation of new networks that improve the practices and permit a suitable exchange of information.

i) A significant simplification

The existence of a joint agreement on the problems that the existence of a multiplicity of measures and programmes derived from the rural development means policy, puts forward the need to go on towards simplification of the whole regulatory framework, in order to obtain a coherence and correct vision than it is this policy. Its implementation will have to base itself on a single system of programming, financing and control adapted to the needs of rural societies.

II. Third Commission Report on Economic and Social Cohesion

II.1 The Commission report

The document presented by the Commission the 18/02/2004 referring to the Third Report of Cohesion\(^3\) shows a general vision and the guidelines than is to be the future of the regional policy and cohesion. The responsible Commissioner, Mr Michel BARNIER, declared that «aid for the poorest regions will be the principal priority of the next generation of the European aid programmes...». However, and even though with the incorporation of the new States the poorest regions than the EU are going to concentrate on them, it considers necessary to continue to help the regions of the EU of the Fifteen, in which the economic and social development process has still not been finished, like those that they suffer of persistent natural disadvantages.

In that report the Commission proposes simplifying and clarifying the role of the different support instruments for rural development, grouping them in a single instrument within the CAP designed for:

— strengthen competitiveness of agriculture through the support for restructuring (investment aid for the young farmers, information measures and promotion, etc.);

— improve the environment and the rural environment through the support for the management of the lands, including the co-financing of the rural development actions related to the protected spaces from the network Natura 2000 (agricultural environment, forestry, measures for the less favoured areas, etc.);

— improve the quality of life in the rural areas and promote the diversification of the economic activity through focused measures the farmers and other agents that operate in the rural space (reorient agricultural production, to promote food quality, to promote the revitalisation of the towns, etc.).

— integrate the Initiative LEADER+ in the principal current of programming.

With respect to the financial resources, for period 2007-2013, the Commission proposes intending for the regional and cohesion policy the amount equivalent to 0.41% of the GNP of the Union (or 0.46% before the transfers to the fishing different instruments rural and) in support for the three priorities of the reformed cohesion policy. So, the amount to that it rises to the aims of cohesion during period 2007-13 is of EUR 336.300 million, which are translated into:

— a convergence strengthened among the Member States and the regions in its efforts to reduce the economic and social imbalances, through a greater concentration of the resources in the Member States and less prosperous regions, with special emphasis in the new Member States;

— a greater responsibility for the local and regional authorities in the definition and implementation of cohesion projects;

— more simplified procedures concerning programming, association, co-financing and evaluation;

— decentralisation of the responsibilities in relation to the associations.

Concerning the focus LEADER in particular, the report mentions as this initiative has made possible local development strategies adapted to flexibility according to the different circumstances. The program LEADER+ introduced for the period of programming 2000-2006 has followed the line marked by the previous programs LEADER I and II. Without changing the basic principles, the emphasis has been placed in the experimental nature of the projects and the local strategies of development have been formulated, above all around a limited number of subjects of the interest for the Community. The partnership methods have been defined and the conditions for cooperation have improved their simplification, while the Community financing comes only of the EAGGF. The positive vision that the Commission has offered in its report regarding the initiative LEADER, displays the interest to continue acting in accordance with this tendency (see above).

To the end, the report contains an updated analysis of the last data available on the development of cohesion in widened Europe offering a new vision that responds to the needs and the legitimate expectations of the European citizens. Even though, being a document fundamental insofar as it presents also a vision of the Commission on the future of a solidarity policy that implies a greater economic cohesion, social and territorial after 2006, the Commission has still not left what is the course to continue in the rural development policy, without detailing the demanded intentions clearly of being a new Rural Development Fund.
II.2 The opinion of the European Parliament

In view of the report presented by the Commission, the European Parliament authorised to the Commission of Regional Policy, Transport and Tourism to make a report\(^4\) in this respect (rapporteur: Mr Konstantinos Hatzidakis, PPE-GR), approved on 22 April 2004\(^5\). In it it was confirmed that, after the reform of the CAP, the rural world confronts innumerable challenges and its role of social and territorial cohesion can is committed. Furthermore, with the enlargement of the EU, the surface of the rural areas is going to increase, which increases its importance in economic and social cohesion.

If the aim of economic and social cohesion is already fully recognised in the Treaties, the new Constitution must consider this aim also including territorial cohesion, in order to strengthen the principle of fair treatment of all the anyone citizens that is the place where they live in the European Union.

Before that, and remembering the approaches marked by the Commission, the European Parliament considers necessary to maintain the efforts to improve the quality of life in the rural areas and to promote the diversification of the economic activities through the inclusion of measures intended to alleviate the negative effects social and economic of the reduction in the agricultural sector and to stimulate a production having as an aim quality and sustainable development from the point of view of protection and conservation of the environment, in view of the conclusions of the Salzburg Conference.

The European Parliament supports the idea of a European model to obtain economic cohesion and social through structural political actions agreed on a Community level y — by receiving favourably the idea of a cohesion strategy common adapted to the reality of an extended European Union — confirms that the gap ("phasing out") until the 2013 of the support measures strengthened for the areas of the UE-15 that will cease to qualify for funding within Objective 1 after enlargement due to the statistical effect, must be a form of sustainable promotion similar to Objective 1, and so they would have be adopted cohesion measures that lessen the negative effects on the less-favoured areas. Furthermore, it considers that the maintenance of agricultural production must continue to be one of the principal aims of the policies of the European Union in the less-favoured regions or submitted to natural limitations, in the peripheral regions and the mountain areas.

Given the critical constants of the complexity of the system, is favourably received the Commission proposal to simplify the support instruments for rural development and to group them under a whole in the second pillar of the CAP. However, it is not necessary to forget the constant efforts to heighten the quality of life of the rural areas and to promote the diversity of the economic activities, having to include special measures that hint to alleviate the adverse social and economic effects of reduction in the employment opportunities on the agricultural sector. In this way, the idea of creation of a single Fund for the rural development measures is accepted satisfactorily, but the Parliament appeals why the rural development


\(^5\) In the meetings of 17 February, 17 March, 6 and 7 April 2004, the Commission of Regional Policy, Transport and Tourism examined the draft report. In the last of these meetings, on 7 April 2004, the Commission approved the proposal of resolution by 42 votes in favour, 0 against and 4 abstentions. The report was deposited for its vote in the plenary session on 7 April of 2004 and was approved the 22/04/2004, during the plenary session of April 2004, in Strasbourg.
programmes continue to have the same horizontal nature and an ascending focus and, that they include all the rural regions. Likewise, it requires that these measures have their relation with the CAP and that the corresponding credits are anticipated so much in the connected areas, as independent. The consecration of the compulsory modulation as principal instrument of quickening of the first pillar (agricultural markets) in order to strengthen the second pillar of the CAP (rural development), may only be understandable if integral Rural Development in full in the Common Agricultural Policy, leaving it outside the Cohesion Policy.

In view of the attempts frustrated to support a sharp Rural Development policy, above all in view of the arrival of the new countries, the Parliament regrets limited structural aid for the less developed rural areas, and so it considers suitable the reframing of the question. The Parliament considers that it is necessary to advance in the line marked by the focus LEADER+, together with the simplification of management and decentralisation, in the right use of the funds.

Given the interaction among the new priorities and the rural development measures, the Parliament recognises the need a multi-sector focus of rural development, putting greater insistence in measures that pay special attention to the young farmers and to women, above all in the new regions of the enlarged EU and promote a multifunctional agriculture, fundamental for the vitality of the field. The implementation of a sharp rural development policy will above all encourage competitiveness of the agricultural sector and new investments, in the new Member States.

All this will have to be prepared to an increase in the financial grant, that means a true strengthening of the rural regions. The Parliament regrets that, in the financial framework offered by the Commission, the second pillar has not been strengthened, as at the beginning it had been announced with the reform of the Common Agricultural Policy, but is attacked to freeze the expenditure stipulated for rural development in the 2006, which means a continual decrease in the credits to rural development in a Europe to 25 or even to 27 Member States. Before that, the Parliament demands a revision of the financial prospects presented by the Commission and its correction in order to avoid the desfavorecimiento of the rural areas, in view of economic decline and the sharp depopulation that the less-favoured regions undergo.

III. The Financial Prospects after 2006 and Rural Development

III.1 The Commission proposal

In February 2004, the Commission presented communication COM (2004) 101 end on the budgetary political and average challenges of the extended Union (2007-2013)\(^6\), indicating that being enlargement a reality, it is necessary to offer a new Europe that answers the dynamism and the new expectations. The financial framework future must endorse the political aims of the Union. Their aims concentrate on sustainable development, the interests of the citizens and the strengthening of the image of the Union in the world forum. However, economic growth and the strengthening of competitiveness have to be favoured, in order to obtain a greater prosperity in all the areas of the European Union. The farmers are important part of culture and European tradition and they are those responsible for the maintenance and survival of

the field, as a place to live and work. As the responsible Commissioner showed, Mr Franz FISCHLER, current society looks for to provide a rank of public services beyond the maintenance of products on the table. The citizens require also quality and food security and the maintenance of the rural areas and the field.

The next financial prospects offered by the Commission are articulated about three crucial aims: a) sustainable development, mobilising the economic and social policies (competitiveness and cohesion), as well as environmental (sustainable management and protection of the natural resources); b) the populations, (vertebrate about the space of freedom, safety and justice); and, c) the European Union on a world scale.

The Commission, following the same line marked in the Agenda of Lisbon started in 2000, confirms that to increase the prosperity of the European citizens sustainable, must be strengthened the competitive role of European agriculture and consolidate rural development, preserving the quality of the environment. These aims have been separated in five headings within the financial framework for the period of programming 2007-2013:

1. Sustainable Growth:
   — Competitiveness for growth and employment.
   — Cohesion for growth and employment.
2. Preservation and management of the natural resources.
3. Populations, freedom, safety and justice.
4. The EU as general partner.
5. Administration.

So, within the financial table, the rural development policy is included in the second heading, that integral the agricultural markets, rural development, the fishing and the protection of the environment. The surprise is found in the disappearance of the Structural Funds as a specific heading.

In accordance with the sustainable development aim, and in view of the enlargement of the EU, we encounter a vast market and a strong competition, with very diverse priorities directed to the quality of production, the environment, the welfare of animals and the maintenance of the rural space (that will increase considerably with the entry in the EU of the new countries of central and eastern Europe). There are to continue the support for the farmers, since are they the ones that they have produced and preserved public goods in a most effective possible way.

In this proposal, the Commission endorses the decisions adopted in 2003 on the reform of the CAP, in accordance with the development strategy of Lisbon and Gotemburgo, supported in three fundamental elements:

   — The fixing of the agricultural expenditure in support measures for the markets and the payments of direct aid for the farmers until the 2013, dissociating (disconnect) the direct payments of production, through a substantial simplification.
   — The reinforcing of rural development with the introduction of the compulsory modulation of aid,

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7 The future of CAP Rural and Development, Franz Fischler, Speech/04/177, Veghel (Brabant - The Netherlands), 13 April 2004
8 In order to promote the prosperity of the Community citizens the transformation of the EU in a strong economy based on the knowledge is required, with a sustainable economic growth and a greater social cohesion.
entails the transfer of the aid funds for the market policy, using reductions in direct aid for large developments, towards rural development. The start-up of this system has been foreseen year before (2005) so that it coincides with the implementation of the dissociation system (disconnection) of aid, with a tax exemption of EUR 5,000 and a single and linear percentage (without either sections for levels of aid or distinction of the areas). This system involves a grant of additional funds (about EUR 1.200 million per year) set aside for the rural development programmes for the financing of activities such as the promotion of food quality, the promotion of animal welfare, the compensation to the areas of the network Natura 2000, the support for developments to permit its best adjustment of the conditionality criteria, the reinforcing of the agro-environmental measures, the installation of young farmers, forest interventions...\footnote{Of and ste system the ultra-peripheral regions are free (RUP) and the islands of the Aegean Sea.}

— The financial discipline mechanism in agreement with the decision of the European Council of October 2002 to establish maximum limits on the expenditure in support measures for the market and direct aid between 2007 and 2013.

This budgetary discipline system delays however the immediate implementation of the backward nature of aid, and as soon as it preserves a margin of safety of EUR 300 million per year for the correct management of the markets. The Commission, as vigilance mechanism — to exist a risk of overtaking of the guideline fixed for a certain exercise — might present before March proposed to increase the percentages of modulation that the Council should approve before June of the exercise in question. The length of the new financial framework, fixed for period 2007-2013, must be sufficiently long to be able to offer a coherent cover, although the Commission has offered a period of transition before moving on to the normal cycle of five years, justified due to the change in the expenditure linked to the markets and the already determined direct payments in agriculture until the 2013.

As it has been mentioned before, the expenditure linked to the CAP is integrated in the heading dedicated to sustainable management and protection of the natural resources (second heading)\footnote{The percentage of modulation will come up to 3% in 2005, 4% in 2006 and 5% in 2007.}. The grant of the latter (credits of commitment, in million of Euros, at 2004 prices) is the following one:

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<td>56,015</td>
<td>57.18</td>
<td>57.9</td>
<td>58.115</td>
<td>57.98</td>
<td>57.85</td>
<td>57.825</td>
<td>57.805</td>
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Source: European Commission (see Annex V.2)

A slight progression of this heading until 2009, followed by a regression from 2010 and until 2013 is seen, development that contrasts with the continual increase in the other headings, in particular of the first. So, expressed in % of the total budget of the Union (credits of commitment, in MEUROS, at 2004 prices),

\footnote{Transitory measures for the step of the faultativa modulation to the compulsary modulation will be applied.}
\footnote{The EAGGF Guidance Section is transferred to this heading but the corresponding transferred sums will continue to enter the calculation of the maximum limit of 4% for the Funds Structural and Cohesion for the new Member States.}
heading 2 would represent in 2007: 42.8%; in 2008: 41.7%; in 2009: 40.6%; in 2010: 39.5%; in 2011: 38.5%; in 2012: 37.5%; and in 2013: 36.5% of the latter, which means that its weight would fall of almost 10 points between 2006 (46.4%) and 2013 (36.5%).

The credits dedicated to the CAP - expenditure linked to the markets and direct payments - (credits of commitment, in million of Euros, at 2004 prices), are the following:

**TABLE 2: Change in the line CAP (expenditure of markets and direct payments) of heading 2 of financial prospects 2007-2013, credits of commitment, in MEUROS, at constant prices (2004)**

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<td>43.735</td>
<td>43.500</td>
<td>43.673</td>
<td>43.354</td>
<td>43.034</td>
<td>42.714</td>
<td>42.506</td>
<td>42.293</td>
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</table>

Source: European Commission (see Annex V.2)

A continual regression is seen from 2008 of the credits assigned to the first pillar of the CAP, at constant prices (2004), that it apparently resists with the positive change in the credits at current prices.\(^\text{13}\)

— Expressed in % of the total budget of the Union (credits of commitment, in MEUROS, at 2004 prices), the expenditure of the CAP (expenditure of markets and direct payments) would represent in 2007: 32.6%; in 2008: 31.5%; in 2009: 30.3%; in 2010: 29.3%; in 2011: 28.1%; in 2012: 27.5%; and in 2013: 26.1% of that budget, that is to say the weight of the CAP in the overall budget of the EU would fall of almost 10 points (26.7% in 2013, against 36.2% in 2006). In specific terms, in 2013 the expenditure of the CAP would be of 42.293 MEUROS, before an overall budget of 158,450 MEUROS (corresponding figures in 2006: 43.500 against 120.688 MEUROS).

— Expressed in % of the credits assigned to heading 2, the expenditure of the CAP (expenditure of market and direct payments) would represent in 2007: 76.1%; in 2008: 75.4%; in 2009: 74, 6%; in 2010: 74.2%. In 2011: 73.8%; in 2012: 73.5%; and in 2013: 73.2%, that is to say the weight of the CAP line in the budget of heading 2 would fall of 5 points between 2006 (78.1%) and 2013 (73.2%).

As it has been mentioned before, in the communication of the Commission there is not any indication with respect to the resources to assign to the second pillar of the CAP. This mystery is an important risk for the defenders of rural development in its claims to obtain sufficient credits, in view of the pressure of the other policies of heading 2 that will dispute with force the rest of the credits available (+/−) starts from the total of heading 2, having removed the expenditure of the CAP.

In view of flexibility to do with reassignment of the credits offered for the annual budgetary procedure, the Commission wants the preallocation of the credits to be kept at the beginning of each period between the Member States in the multiannual rural development programmes.

Notwithstanding that, the change in the expenditure for period 2007-2013 is already projected on the basis of the adopted commitments. Hardly the maximum payment appropriation limit hardly above 1% of the Gross National Product (GNP) of the Union would be sufficient to comply with the commitments adopted

\(^{13}\) The budget of expenditure of the agro-alimentary market policy for the a Union 25 members there is, after the agreements of the European Council of October 2002 and June 2003, in the following way: In 2006: 44.862; in 2007: 46.191; in 2008: 46.395; in 2009: 46.985; in 2010: 47.561; in 2011: 48.197; in 2012: 48.813; in 2013: 49.429. (Payment appropriations in million of Euros, at current prices.)
by the European Council relating to the payments linked to the agro-alimentary markets. In view of such a assumption, the Commission puts forward two alternatives: a) one it would be to reduce the support for rural development, or well, to move on to general clippings and the renegotiation of the existing agreements — including the determined sums in the European Council of October 2002 — with the consequent re-orientation of the CAP towards rural development. In any case, on 1.24% of the GNP of the Union the maximum limit for the own resources is based, although the maximum limit of the financial transfers in 4% for the cohesion will be kept policy, including in the calculation the sums transferred to the new rural development instruments. The payment appropriations, expressed in % of the credits of commitment, will evolve between a minimum of 1.08% (2010) and a maximum of 1.23% (2008), being the average of 1.14% for the period 2007-2013.

The Commission considers necessary the effectiveness of the instruments of implementation and an appropriate economic governanza system for the achievement of the different policies. However, it understands that the concentration of the Community resources in few initiatives (the one that greater financial transparency entails), coherence between aims, goals and instruments and the association of all the interested parties, must be the governing principles for the completion of the marked aims. So, for the completion of them, the Commission has required the simplification of the instruments of regulation, co-ordination and financing. In the implementation of the expenditure programmes of the EU, the choice of the budgetary instruments will have to respect incentive and coherence, avoiding the duplicity of instruments and offering the beneficiaries and the associated authorities of management an a “single information office”.

In this way, the Commission offers the convenience of a single instrument by strategic environment and a single fund for programme. To to each strategic area responsible for the operative expenditure, a single instrument of financing will correspond that includes the entirety of interventions. This principle applied to the rural development policy it implies reconstructing it towards an integrated policy and independent and funding it of a single instrument capable of increasing agricultural competitiveness and of promoting the natural spaces in the rural environment. With this new focus all the measures, all the Member States and all the regions of the Union (including the new countries and the less developed regions) will be fused in a single system of financing, programming, financial management and control, with the same degree of concentration as the one that is registered currently for the regions covered by the convergence programmes14.

To the end, the Commission recalls that the future rural development policy after 2006, guided by the aims already determined in the Third Report of Economic and Social Cohesion15, will contribute to the completion of the aims to do with sustainable development.

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14 The Commission has not made concrete specifically any economic amount intended for the future Rural Fund, by eluding the question of specific allocation of budgetary initial intended to finance sufficiently the future rural development policy.

15 See chapter II, the Third Report of Economic and Social Cohesion.
III.2 The opinion of the European Parliament

Presented the communication of the Commission to the European Parliament on 10 February 2004, the President of the Parliament authorised the Budgetary Commission (COBU) to make a report of own initiative on this matter. The report (rapporteur: Mr Terry WYNN, PSE-UK) was approved on 22 April 2004. In it the opinion in this regard indicated by the commission of Agriculture and Rural Development is also incorporated (COMAGRI).

The COBU recalls that the current offered financial prospects will be in force at the end of 2006 and that, without a joint agreement of the Parliament and the Council on the new package of financial measures, there will not be financial prospects, since the Treaty does not consider in force the obligation to have financial prospects, the only ones of annual budgets. However, under the wish of institutional continuity, it is specified that it is necessary to consider the guidelines contained in the reports presented as a basis of future financial prospects. On the other hand, the report WYNN agrees with the Commission proposal that the timetable of the financial framework has to be reduced to five years, with a period of transition of seven years (2007-2013).

With respect to the rural development policy, the COMAGRI it is regretted that the European Council has approved the expenditure as direct aid and other aid related to the markets until 2013, without the participation of the Parliament. On the other hand, the fact of not to have reoriented the CAP towards a greater promotion of rural development, incites to a new problem above all because if important financial amounts are intended for the heading "competitiveness as a factor of growth and employment", necessary financial grants for the rural development are limited compulsorily policy. It is also seen that the Commission in its analysis has not confirmed a substantial increase in the funds set aside for rural development — despite the fact that this he was one of the objectives essential in the process of the reform — and that the modulation applied by the Member States has been really below what is stipulated by the Commission (what means a lesser transfer of credits of firstly to the second pillar).

The Parliament is regretted not only before the lack of establishment, in the financial framework offered by the Commission, of the strengthening of the second pillar, but also because the Commission aims to freeze the expenditure stipulated for rural development on level 2006, the one that it entails to a continual reduction in the credits intended for rural development in the enlarged EU (to 25 or even to 27 Member States). The Parliament makes a call on the considerable problem which the rural regions confront, in particular the less-favoured areas with added problems of economic decline and depopulation. For this reason, it requests the change of the financial prospects and the consideration of this approach through the implementation of a flexible transfer mechanism of the credits in projects intended for the promotion of rural development, through the taken decisions on the reform of the CAP.

16 In accordance with Article 47, section 2 and Article 163 of the Regulation of the European Parliament.
18 In the meetings of 5 and 6 April 2004, the Budgetary Commission examined the draft report and 6 April 2004 the proposal of resolution was unanimously approved, being deposited the report for its vote in the plenary session 13 April 2004. The 22/04/2004 were approved, in the plenary session of April in Strasbourg.
The commission of Environment indicates its disappointment on knowing that the percentage of the expenditure intended for rural development is not going to be increased between 2007-2013. In view of the drastic reduction in the expenditure of the first pillar of the CAP in 2013 with respect to 2007, it requests a rapid transfer of credits to the other lines of heading 2, from the funds set aside for support measures for the markets to which it considers harmful for the environment.

In the opinion of the Parliament, this financial framework is insufficient to face the needs of cohesion in an extended Union, that it will require an increase in the limit of the own resources. Furthermore, the offered political and financial framework offers too emphasis to the question of competitiveness and the establishment of new priorities, this to the damage of the cohesion policy and the policy of development cooperation.

Afterwards, 16 and 17 March 2004, in the meeting of the Budgetary Commission\textsuperscript{19}, the Commissioner Mr Franz FISCHLER\textsuperscript{20}, it commented with respect to the rural development policy that, in view of demanded simplification, the Commission will offer a single Rural Development Fund that would combine the section Guarantee of the EAGGF with the measures that finance rural development and the Guidance Section of the EAGGF. In this way not only the change towards a single instrument of programming and financing is shown, but also the reduction in the number of programmes to manage and program coherently. Under this perspective, the section Guarantee of the EAGGF would continue to freeze its funds on the level of 2006 in real terms for the UE-25, on the entirety of the period; would only be added an amount Bulgaria and Romania to grant the same part to them that these countries had under the program SAPARD. On the contrary, the resources of the Guidance Section of the EAGGF would be transferred to the (new) only Rural Development Fund would be calculated on the basis of their historical part in the total budget of Objective 1 for each Member State in the enlarged EU 25 members, also replaced by an amount advantage rat for Bulgaria and Romania.

Furthermore, with the inclusion of half of the assigned amount wing Initiative LEADER\textsuperscript{+} in the (new) only Rural Development Fund, the total budget for rural development between 2006 and 2013 at prices of the 2004 would rise substantially to 25%. This postulate has been calculated without the consideration than is to mean the modulation. That is to say, the second pillar of the CAP was going to be strengthened with additional funds as a result of the introduction of the compulsory modulation of aid of the first pillar of the CAP.

In view of the pretensions presented by the Commission, it will be necessary to expect the future interinstitutional negotiations and the decisions of both budgetary branches (Parliament and Council) regarding the final multiannual financial framework. Is as well to recall that the Parliament demands a more ambitious plan for the most vulnerable rural areas than the Union at the time of the revision of the cohesion policy in the financial framework offered for the next period of programming of the financial prospects 2007-2013.

Finally, in the framework of the budgetary procedure for financial year 2005, the Budgetary Com-

\textsuperscript{19} Hearing Building our common future. Policy challenges and Budgetary means of the Enlarged Union 2007-2013, Mr. Terry Wynn, Chairman and rapporteur. Summary. 16-17 March 2004.

mission entrusted to make a report21 (rapporteur: Mr Salvador Garriga Polledo) on the annual political strategy of the Commission. In it22, the Parliament regrets that in the document on the annual political strategy as soon as the greater category of expenditure of the Union is mentioned; and, being conscious that in a widened Europe it is needed greater financial effort for the rural areas, it considers necessary to strengthen the second pillar of the CAP and to promote the rural environment, already not only from an economic point of view but also content. It confirms that the area of rural development was explicitly excluded from the maximum limit of the expenditure of the CAP decided in the Brussels Summit in October 2002. In that report is urged the Commission to fund a greater financial heading with respect to aid for the young farmers of the EU, as I mediate to favour the generational relief and to avoid the aging of the European agricultural population.

IV. Summary

The existing delay of the rural areas in terms of services, infrastructures and employment opportunities is a reality, still more worrying in the enlarged EU, in spite of the effort of the EU to correct the territorial imbalances through Community actions and in particular of the rural development policy. The multidimensional importance of the rural space and the deep changes to which the traditional agricultural sector is submitted, that is still the principal activity in many rural areas, they are in origin of the preoccupation of the European Institutions to strengthen this policy with a view to facing the future challenges.

The Salzburg Conference, from 12 to 14 November 2003, displayed the principal aims of the future rural development policy, through a political commitment that guarantees the economic, environmental and social sustainability of the development of all the rural areas of the enlarged EU. However, as well the Commissioner declared responsible, Mr Franz Fischler, on concluding the second rural development Conference, «Salzburg is not the line of goal, but the pistol shot of exit for an intense debate on a regional, national and Community level to begin again»23.

If the aim is to reach a multifunctional agricultural model — what corresponds so much to the specificities of European agriculture, as to the demands of European society — it is necessary to look for other alternatives for the field that the agriculture based on the artificial increase (credits, pesticides, genetic handlings, etc.) of the productivity that generates mass products and without any own personality, above all in view of the new conditions which the European farmers in the framework of the opening of the markets and the globalisation of agro-alimentary trade on a world scale confront currently, that oblige them to compete with products of third countries obtained by methods of intensive production and an under price.

If the new support model introduced with the recent reform of the CAP — meaning that the aid system for the markets and direct payments is dissociated (disconnect) of the production process — aim to be a


22 The Budgetary Commission approved unanimously the proposal of resolution on 5 April 2004, depositing the report for its vote in the plenary session on 13 April 2004. The report was approved the 22/04/2004 during the plenary session of April 2004 in Strasbourg.

brake on the massive abandonment of most vulnerable developments, located in the most marginal regions, it is now more than never necessary to accompany it: a) of new opportunities trying to replace in these areas the traditional agricultural manufacturing activity with new non agricultural duties, that favour the employment creation, the vitality of the rural territory and the conservation of the environment, or b) to consider production to the regional specificity / the premises and the supply of high-quality products whose prices the consumers would be established to pay.

However, in the Commission proposal we have mentioned no regarding what takes into account to be the new conception of rural areas, having the entry of the new Member States, neither the specific content that the new rural development measures must fuse, nor their relation with aid and measures of the first pillar excluding the modulation. If we consider that furthermore the dissociation system (disconnection) means aid for producers calculated on the basis of the amounts perceived according to historical references, it is being become to nationalise in a certain way these aid, cutting new potential ways for rural development.

On the other hand, the new aid system for the markets is determined to the fulfilment of the environmental legiations, of food security and animal welfare (so-called conditionality). A fundamental question is how the less developed rural regions will correspond to these demands, overcoat the ones of the new devoid States largely of the fulfilment of these demands.

Certainly, the clear connection between the market policy and the rural development policy, require true co-ordination of the actions and measures, in order directing to both pillars towards the aims of territorial cohesion, (materialised in Article 16 of the TCE). The prospect of establishment of a "Rural Fund", meaning that under common rules whole programming, management, financing and control of the Rural Development are grouped activities, is very important for the achievement of these approaches. Even though, for the completion of such purposes constructive and constructed will have to be kept dialogue among all the levels (European, national and regional/the premises), with basis at the beginning of partnership, in order to involve all the actors interested in rural development in programming and implementation of the measures. Despite the absence of a clear reference to the communication of the Commission than of a single Rural Fund, the proposal may be the creation to unite at the moment the current Funds (Section Guarantee and Guidance Section of the EAGGF) in a single system it is an option of interesting simplification, given the clear complexity that includes development aid rural, above all concerning the financial aspect. Actually, rural development in the Objective areas 1 depends currently on two management systems and pays what means unnecessary administrative obstacles in the programming and implementation tasks. Other preoccupation is how simplification will be able to affect the positively local agents. This will imply eliminating the existing deficiencies in administrative management and the useless bureaucracy in the procedure of selection and implementation of the projects.

The analysis made has permitted extracting a general vision of the diversity and diversity of the problems of the rural areas. However, despite these differences, all the rural areas are found in view of the same demands and are put forward to the same risks, and so it would be necessary to concentrate on the principles of decentralisation, simplification and flexibility to favour the adjustment of the suitable measures to the problems of the each one of the rural areas throughout the the European Union. But it would be very difficult to obtain this requirement without a true instrument that fuses programming and budgetary grant. In equal way, without a sufficient economic amount, the Rural Development policy will not be able to
include either all the problems, or neither all the rural areas of the European Union, as one of the basic aims claimed in the Salzburg Declaration.

In accordance with the approaches of the new model supported by the Commission, the Rural Development policy would be integrated as a new focus within the Common Agricultural Policy, detaching it of the cohesion policy. It is true that such a demanded simplification has progressed something with the recognition of the need a single instrument of programming and financing for the next period of programming 2007-2013. However, the conciliation put forward by the Commission in the delay of its realisation, that is to say to unite the section Guarantee of the EAGGF than it finances rural development with the Guidance Section of the EAGGF, has not facilitated the understanding on what is going to be now the relation of this hybrid Fund with the Structural Funds. Important subjects are also incognito how the financial system for this hypothetical fund, their financial grant, their interaction with the other funds, etc.

Talvez most important innovation for the CAP (both pillars) in the framework of the next financial prospects would be its incorporation in heading 2 “Preservation and management of the natural resources”. It is tried certainly of a consequence of the political wish to present public opinion European with agriculture as an activity compatible with the protection of the environment (“greening”) and also to obtain the acceptance of the CAP in the new Round of multilateral negotiations of the WTO.

In view of these fundamental conceptual changes, the question of financial grant he is worrying taking into account the very significant reduction that the expenditure of the CAP will suffer in relation to the markets (they will represent hardly 25% of the total budget in 2013) and the absence of any allocation of resources with respect for rural development in the framework of financial prospects 2007-2013, which is equivalent to to a stagnation of the corresponding credits for rural development to the level of 2006 (period 2000-2006 for the UE-15)), in best of the cases.

To the end, it is necessary to ask also what is going to be the legal basis of the Rural Development actions without a suitable and prompt reform of the Treatise. Will we have to expect the new Constitution where the legal basis necessary to give via of exit is sheltered in the Common Rural Development Policy?
V. Annexes

Attached V.1 I: Conclusions of the second European conference on rural development held in Salzburg, from the 12 to 14 November 2003

“Plant the first seed for the rural future: by a policy around our ambitions”

« The European Conference on rural development,

Meeting in Salzburg from the 12 to 14 November 2003 to evaluate the implementation of the rural development policy of the European Union from Agenda 2000 and to foresee the future needs;

Representing a full range of interested parts directly insisted in guaranteeing the sustainability of economic development, environmental and social of the rural Europe areas;

Considering that, in a compound extended Union for 27 Member States, the future of the rural areas, that will represent most of their territory and will lodge to a large part their population, is of fundamental importance for all the European citizens;

Recognising the diversity of the rural Europe areas with respect to its natural landscapes, its agricultural production systems, its to retain capacity and attract a population, and the role of agriculture and the diversification in the local economy;

Worried because in some rural areas deficient access to public services, the alternative employment lack and the structure of age of the population reduce considerably its development potential, especially concerning the opportunities of women and young people;

Perceiving the increasing importance that the European citizens give to the safety and quality of their foodstuffs, the welfare of animals of development and to the protection and improvement in the rural environment;

Convinced that agriculture and the forestry continue to play an essential role in the conformation of the rural landscape and in the maintenance of viable rural Communities;

Conscious of the reform process of the Common Agricultural Policy currently under way, of the change in the guidelines of world trade and the need to help the European farmers to assume its multifunctional role as guards of the field and directed producers to the market throughout the the European Union, including the less-favoured areas and the peripheral regions;

Recognising that the development of the rural areas yet cannot be founded only in agriculture and that the diversification inside and outside of the agricultural sector is essential to promote viable and sustainable rural Communities;

Satisfied of the consolidation of the rural development policy of the European Union in accordance with Agenda 2000 and the diversification of its area of implementation and the strengthening of its financing agreed recently because of the reform of the CAP of 2003;

Recalling that the rural development policy of the European Union represents already an important contribution to economic and social cohesion and that this contribution must be consolidated in an extended European Union;

Convinced that, to facilitate the process of agricultural restructuring under way, the sustainable development of the rural areas and a balanced relation among the field and the urban areas, there are powerful reasons that justify the public endorsement to the rural development policy of the European Union;

Worried about the complexity of the current implementation system of the rural development policy of
the European Union, with different sources and financing procedures, as it considers of an intervention inside or outside the regions of objective 1;

It considers that the future of the rural development policy must be guided by the following principles:

A live field not only is to the advantage of rural society but also that of society as a whole. The investment in the rural economy and the rural Communities broadly speaking is crucial new to increase the attraction of the rural areas, to promote sustainable growth and to generate employment opportunities, especially among women and young people. All this must base itself on the specific needs of the different areas and use the whole potential of those areas and the local rural Communities. The vitality of the field is essential for agriculture because the agricultural activity is essential for a live field.

The preservation of the diversity of the European field and the stimulus of services that multifunctional agriculture can provide have increasing importance. To manage the agricultural environment and the forests it will serve to preserve and improve the natural landscape and the variedcultural heritage of Europe, especially in the most remote rural areas, given places of high natural value.

Competitiveness of the agricultural sector must be a fundamental aim for which will have to be remembered the diversity of the agricultural potential of the different rural areas. This aspect has special importance in the new Member States given the significant agricultural restructuring that can be foreseen in them. In all the Member States the sustainable economic growth in the agricultural sector will have to depend more and more on the diversification, value-added innovation and products that the consumers demand.

The rural development policy must be implemented in all the rural areas of the extended European Union so that the farmers and other actors of the rural area may face the challenges of the restructuring of the agricultural sector under way, of the effects of the reform of the CAP and the change in the guidelines of trade on the sector.

The rural development policy must respond to the needs of rural society generally and contribute to its cohesion. The strengthening of the rural Communities broadly speaking will bring about benefit the sustainable development of the rural areas claimed by all the interested parties.

The rural development policy must be carried out through the collaboration of the public and private organisations and private company, in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity. To satisfy the local and regional needs effectively a deep dialogue is necessary between the protagonists of the rural environment in the formulation of the programmes and its implementation, later control and evaluation. The future policy must channel the Community support for the rural areas on the basis of local associations “of down above” profiting by the lessons of the focus applied with LEADER. Margin must be left to the search for innovating approaches on a local scale.

Greater responsibility must give the associations of collaboration of the programmes for the formulation and implementation of general strategies based on aims and clearly defined results. For that it is necessary to increase transparency and the responsibility through the follow-up and the evaluation of the programmes. In this sense, the promotion of the capacities is essential. Also, to the associations greater possibilities of learning of the experience of the others must be offered thanks to the creation of networks and the exchange of better practices.

It is necessary and urgent to carry out a significant simplification of the rural development policy of the European Union. Its implementation will have to base itself on a single system of programming, financing and control adapted to the needs of rural development.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Créditos de compromiso</th>
<th>Total créditos de compromiso</th>
<th>Total créditos de pago</th>
<th>Créditos de pago en porcentaje del PIB</th>
<th>Margen disponible</th>
<th>Límite máximo para los recursos propios en porcentaje del PNB</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>2006 (a)</td>
<td>120.688</td>
<td>133.560</td>
<td>138.700</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>123.140</td>
<td>136.500</td>
<td>141.740</td>
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<td>2008</td>
<td>126.000</td>
<td>139.400</td>
<td>142.640</td>
<td>1.15%</td>
<td>1.14%</td>
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<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>129.200</td>
<td>143.000</td>
<td>144.200</td>
<td>1.23%</td>
<td>1.24%</td>
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<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>132.000</td>
<td>146.670</td>
<td>145.800</td>
<td>1.09%</td>
<td>1.24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>134.315</td>
<td>150.200</td>
<td>148.000</td>
<td>1.11%</td>
<td>1.24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>136.450</td>
<td>153.450</td>
<td>151.200</td>
<td>1.14%</td>
<td>1.24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>138.450</td>
<td>156.450</td>
<td>154.315</td>
<td>1.24%</td>
<td>1.24%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| V.2. Annex II. General vision of the new financial framework for period 2007-2013 offered by the Commission |

- **Créditos de compromiso**: Millones de Euros, a precios de 2004.
- **Total créditos de compromiso**: Millones de Euros, a precios de 2004.
- **Total créditos de pago**: Millones de Euros, a precios de 2004.
- **Créditos de pago en porcentaje del PIB**: %.
- **Margen disponible**: %.
- **Límite máximo para los recursos propios en porcentaje del PNB**: %.

(a) El gasto correspondiente a 2006 con arreglo a la perspectiva financiera actual se ha descatalogado según la nueva nomenclatura de referencia propuesta y para facilitar la comparación.
(b) Incluye el gasto para el Fondo de Solidaridad (1.000 millones de euros en 2004 a precios actuales) a partir de 2006. Sin embargo, los pagos correspondientes a 2006, 2007 y 2008, se incluyen sólo a efectos de comparación. Los pagos para instituciones que no sean la Comisión, las pensiones y las escuelas europeas. El gasto administrativo de la Comisión se integra en las primeras cuatro rubricas de gasto.
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