

**The Rural Affairs Committee of the Riigikogu of the Republic of Estonia;
the Economic, Agricultural, Environmental and Regional Policy Committee of
the Saeima of the Republic of Latvia
the Committee on Rural Affairs of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania**

JOINT DECLARATION

On the implementation of the Common Agricultural Policy of the European Union after 2013

On 12 April 2012 at Toompea in Tallinn, at their joint meeting dedicated to the 50th anniversary of Common Agricultural Policy, the representatives of the Rural Affairs Committee of the Riigikogu; the Economic, Agricultural, Environmental and Regional Policy Committee of the Saeima and the Committee on Rural Affairs of the Seimas adopted the following Joint Declaration.

We value the importance and the role of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) of the European Union both in guaranteeing food security and in preserving the sustainability of the environment and rural regions. In order to fulfil its role and to cope with new challenges, it is necessary to have harmonised policy based on solidarity, fair treatment and honest competition.

We support the reforming of the CAP to better achieve the targets faced by the agriculture and regional development of the EU: production of foodstuffs, food supply and food safety, sustainable management of natural resources, climate measures, and balanced territorial development.

We support the course taken by the European Commission to adjust the distribution of direct payments between Member States, but at the same time **we are concerned** about the schedule of this process. **We cannot agree** with the speed of the unification which would leave the farmers of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, also after 2013, for several years in unequal situation in comparison to the agricultural producers of other Member States.

Considering that:

- the price of agricultural production and the prices of production inputs in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania are close to the EU average;
- since our accession in 2004, the levels of direct payments based on historical references in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania have been the lowest in the EU, which hinders the competitiveness of the farmers of the Baltic States on the EU market;

- since our accession, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania have implemented the principles of single area payments and decoupling from production,

we call for:

- the CAP reform that guarantees equal competition conditions, fair treatment and observing of the solidarity principle to the agricultural producers of all Member States;
- levelling of direct payments to take place quicker than the schedule proposed by the European Commission. During the next financial period adjustment of the distribution of the direct payments between Member States must be ensured in such a way that substantial differences between the highest and lowest level of direct payments in the EU are avoided;
- complete implementation of new principles for the method of calculation of direct payments in the Baltic States since 1 January 2014, without any transition period;
- continuing the financing of the two-pillar CAP in order to guarantee food security, balanced development of regions and sustainable management of resources. It should also be taken into account that the infrastructure of the agriculture of the Baltic States has been in a very bad situation after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the need for investments is great;
- keeping in mind the aims of the CAP and real needs and challenges in the financing of rural development policy, and not reducing the financing, especially for those Member States whose level of direct payments is significantly lower than the EU average;
- the Member States and European Commission to acknowledge the necessity of finding solutions both for adequate financing of the cohesion policy and solving the disparities in the levels of the direct payments among the Member States.



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of the Riigikogu



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