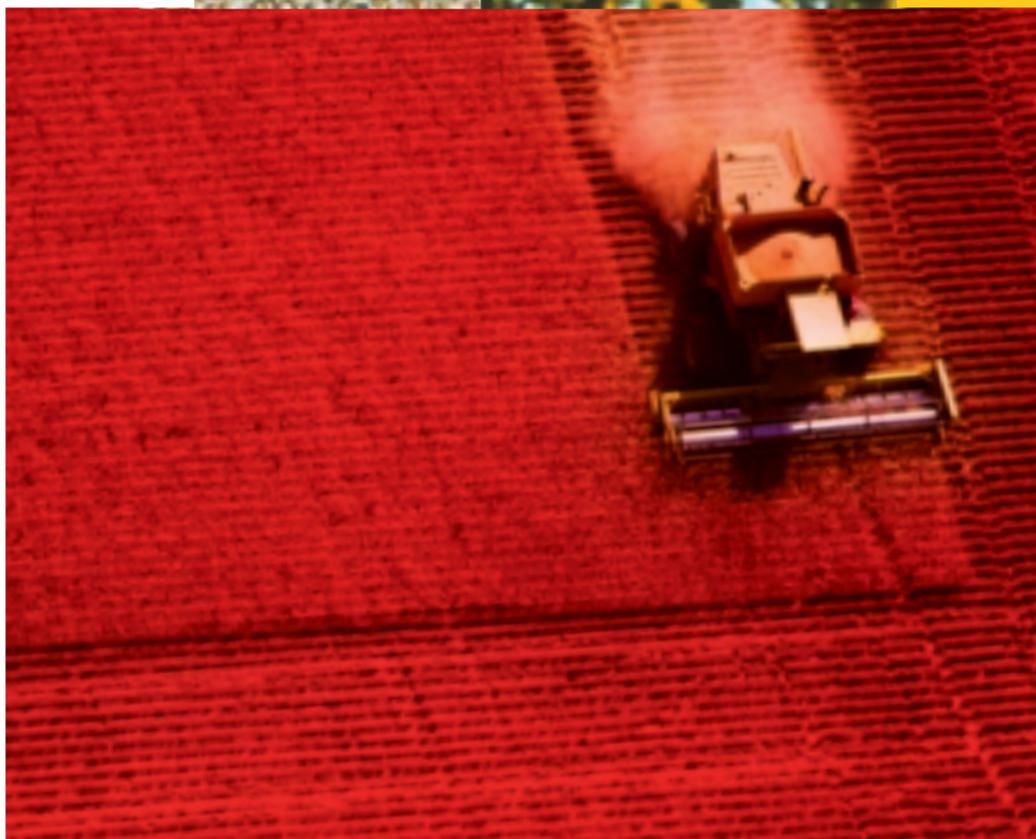


Common Agricultural Policy (CAP)



PARLIAMENTARY GROUP
OF THE PARTY
OF EUROPEAN SOCIALISTS



The quality of food produced in Europe affects everyone, and so does the management of Europe's countryside. Agricultural policy has been a cornerstone of European Policy since the 1950s.





European Union



Agriculture Affects Everyone

The goals of Europe's Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) in the post World War II era were to improve the productivity of European agriculture and combat food shortages. These goals have been reached but the CAP has, since then, led to overproduction of agricultural products.

Several reforms of the CAP have reduced export aid and increased direct payment to farmers, but further CAP reform still need to focus on new priorities such as rural development, food safety and the preservation of landscapes.



European Socialists



Pressing for the Development of Rural Regions

Priority should be given to rural development. The idea is to provide farmers with direct payments, especially farmers with small plots as they play a key role in the protection of the environment, the quality and safety of food and the preservation of the landscape.

The CAP must also focus on the survival of small farms and on maintaining economic activities in rural areas. The part of the EU budget dedicated to rural development should therefore be further increased so as to maintain cultivated landscapes, prevent a mass exodus from the countryside, reduce the risk of regional desertification and take into account soil productivity.

European Socialists wish to make international trade of agricultural products more open and equitable. European Socialists, therefore, call for the creation of world-wide minimum standards for agricultural industries at international level that are compatible with the protection of the environment, including designations of origin for products and guarantees for traditional specialities.





Future Benefits



Promoting Rural Activities, Improving Quality of Life

In many future Member States agriculture plays an important role in the economy of the country. The EU currently helps future Member States with EU pre-accession programmes such as SAPARD, a programme which supports projects in rural regions to: improve rural infrastructure, promote environmentally friendly production methods, diversify economic activity and sources of income, protect and maintain rural heritage and develop the forestry sector.

The CAP will provide an opportunity for future Member States to improve the productivity of their agriculture sector and to develop large scale economic activities in rural regions.

The enlargement process has also been a driving force in making the CAP promote rural activities throughout Europe and by so doing improve food safety and protect the environment, two major concerns of EU citizens.





To find out more about what European Socialists are doing in the area of agriculture, please consult the websites below:



PES Group:

<http://www.socialistgroup.org>

PES:

<http://www.pes.org>

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