



THE PERI URBAN DIMENSION OF THE CAP

An event organised by the PURPLE network

Building of the Committee of the Regions
22 May 2008

EUROPEAN UNION



Committee of the Regions



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Conference delegates



Introduction

Held just two days after the Commission statement on the CAP Health Check, this event provided an opportunity to reflect on the next steps for peri-urban regions, and to hear a response on the PURPLE position on the CAP from the Agriculture and Rural Development Commissioner, Mariann Fischer Boel.

PURPLE regions*, which are adjacent to some of Europe's largest cities and urban areas are working together to raise the profile of peri-urban areas, and their contribution to the European Union's competitiveness, as well as its social, economic and environmental sustainability. Peri-urban agriculture and horticulture, together with accessible peri-urban countryside with its well-managed, high quality landscapes and open spaces, have an increasingly important role to play in the lives of Europe's citizens - providing jobs, food and other produce and many recreational and educational opportunities.

This event marked the culmination of 18 months of debate and collaboration by the 13 PURPLE regions, including their position paper 'PURPLE and CAP Reform' which was adopted at a conference in Maastricht in November 2007, and has since contributed to the debate on modernisation of the CAP, and informed the Opinion adopted by the Committee of the Regions.

*Catalunya, Dublin, Flanders, Frankfurt Rhein/Main, Ile de France, Mazovia, MHAL, Nord Pas de Calais, Regio Randstad, Rhone-Alpes, South East England, Stockholm, West Midlands



MR. GUSSETTI

PRESIDENT OF PURPLE MRS. DWARSHUIS

Welcome - Mr Lucio Gussetti, Director of the Directorate for Consultative Works, Committee of the Regions

Mr Gussetti expressed a warm welcome to PURPLE members and other delegates. He pointed out that the CoR opinion on the CAP Health Check was adopted by a very wide majority of members, with a consensus reached around ideas very close to those of PURPLE. Indeed PURPLE has an ally in the CoR with peri-urban issues being of relevance to CoR members right across Europe. Peri-urban areas are not just concerned with agriculture. They have a major role to play in achieving the goal of European territorial cohesion, and should contribute to the ongoing debate on a long term territorial development for our continent which goes beyond regional policy. The Directorate of the CoR intends to follow PURPLE's debates closely and disseminate their results.

The PURPLE regions' position on the CAP - Lenie Dwarshuis-Van de Beek, President of PURPLE

Mrs Dwarshuis explained how PURPLE regions developed their CAP reform position over a period of one and a half years. In that time the world of agriculture and food production has changed dramatically, with growing demand for food from developing countries, the need for adaptations to climate change and the increase in biofuel production all contributing to uncertainty about the future and to food price inflation. It seems agriculture is once more high on the political agenda.

PURPLE regions are the dynamic interface between urban and rural. They provide many services and resources which enhance the quality of life for Europe's cities and urban populations. They also have the capacity to deliver modern agriculture to serve world markets as well as their local and regional customers.



PURPLE's aims are clear:

- A vision for Europe's agriculture and countryside which acknowledges the vital role of peri-urban regions.
- True recognition for peri-urban areas - their challenges and opportunities - in the mid term review and new proposals for CAP reform post 2013.

PURPLE sees the need for a Common Agricultural Policy beyond 2013, but this must be a CAP which takes account of the effects of climate change on food security, the effects of rapid urbanisation and possible loss of regional identity. The future CAP must also have political and societal legitimacy which includes more than agriculture alone, encompassing issues such as animal welfare, environmental needs, and the management and preservation of attractive and accessible landscapes.

Mrs Dwarshuis stressed two points in particular from the PURPLE position paper:

- PURPLE advocates a greater emphasis on Pillar II. Given that the Rural Development budget has effectively been reduced in many areas contrary to original objectives, there is a need for greater funding in the future in particular for Axes 1 and 3. This will promote innovation and increase competitiveness of the agricultural sector, as well as support rural culture and communities.
- The need to realise the potential for peri-urban regions to address public health issues, such as obesity, by providing high quality, locally-sourced food for urban populations, together with opportunities for citizens to learn about food production and to lead healthier lifestyles through the use of peri-urban open space for exercise and recreation.

(Mrs Dwarshuis' speech can be read in full at www.purple-eu.org)



MRS. FISCHER BOEL



MR. VERMEULEN

Peri-urban areas and developments in the CAP - Mariann Fischer Boel, member of the European Commission responsible for Agriculture and Rural Development

The Commissioner welcomed the opportunity to address the conference acknowledging that peri-urban areas must not be allowed to fall off the 'policy map'.

"For the purpose of policy, where do 'urban' areas end and 'rural' areas begin?.... If peri-urban areas are in a sense both 'green' and 'grey', perhaps a good way of avoiding a false distinction is to call them 'purple'..."

She stressed that all areas of the European Union where farming is carried out face a number of challenges including:

- Producing what markets need (in the context of rising agricultural prices) with quality products which maximise returns;
- Providing the public goods and services to meet expectations from rural and peri-urban areas - including clean and attractive green areas;
- Responding to the needs of the modern economy by diversification and creating new jobs.

In addition, there are emerging challenges including climate change, improving water management, maximising potential for renewable energy and protecting biodiversity.

The Commissioner summarised the legal proposals she had announced earlier in the week, commenting in particular on the suggestion in the PURPLE position paper that support payments should not be based on historical entitlements. Here she emphasised the difficulty of getting national governments to sign up to the

redistribution of funding that this would entail, although a proposal to give Member States the opportunity to move away from a 'historical' to a more 'regional' version of the Single Payment Scheme has been included.

She agreed that more money was needed for rural development, and indeed her proposals include a system of 'progressive modulation' designed to redirect money from direct payments to farmers into rural development, to pay for measures linked specifically to climate change, water management, renewable energy and biodiversity. However for peri-urban regions to get the funding they need they must also get their message across to national governments "loudly and clearly" on this issue as each Member State is responsible for writing its own detailed rural development plan.

The Commissioner concluded that there remains a key challenge beyond 2013 to bring adequate funding into the rural development budget so that it can "match the scope of what we are trying to achieve with it."

"If we are really serious about having rural and per-urban areas with competitive farmers, natural beauty and vibrant economies - and if we are serious about making these areas our allies as we face up to new challenges - we must be serious about giving our policies the funding they need."

(Mrs Fischer Boel's speech can be read in full at www.purple-eu.org)

The City Perspective - Pim Vermeulen, Manager of the Amsterdam Food Strategy

This strategy, instigated one and a half years earlier by the Amsterdam Metropolitan Region mirrors other initiatives elsewhere in the world, most of which are based on the sustainable food chain concept, and the relationship between urban consumers and farmers and producers. Emphasis varies among such strategies. London for example focuses on health, Amsterdam on food production, Rome on school meals, Copenhagen on public sector consumption and Munich on reduction in the environmental impact of food supplies.

A filmed interview with Mrs Marijke Vos, Alderman of Amsterdam with responsibility for urban green space and sustainable health care, provided more detail on the Amsterdam experience. In the Netherlands, the urban population has exceeded the rural population since 2002, and this trend is now increasingly the case for other parts of Europe. One sixth of the Amsterdam metropolitan area is given over to agriculture - largely dairy farming and vegetable production, within a historic, cultural landscape which is under great pressure. Long term strategies are



PROFESSOR WISKERKE

DR. PAUL

needed which can stimulate people and organisations to 'buy local', reduce the environmental impacts of food production (for example on waste management and transport), encourage development of more sustainable food chains and manage natural areas so they focus better on urban needs. There is common ground between the Amsterdam food strategy and the aims of PURPLE and a strong incentive to improve collaboration between other major European regions and their dynamic cities.

The Academic perspective (I) Urban food dynamics: towards an integrative and territorial food policy - Professor Han Wiskerke, Rural Sociology Group, University of Wageningen

Professor Wiskerke reviewed the history of the CAP from its initial focus on secure food production characterised by the dominant role of state in food governance. He argued that despite reorientation in the 80's and recent reforms, the CAP is still not capable of dealing with the challenges of contemporary society, and needs further fundamental change to respond to readjustments in relations between 'the market', 'civil society', 'the state' and 'the public sector'. Such inevitable food policy reforms will be driven by a number of factors:

- The rapid increase in food-related problems, including: growing obesity levels and other health risks; malnutrition (increasing among the elderly in institutional care, also related to urban poverty and exacerbated by 'food deserts' in large urban areas); environmental problems deriving from food transportation, consumer travel to food outlets, food waste (particularly packaging); and issues around urban expansion and sprawl.
- A second driver of reform will be the growing number of grass root developments aiming to reconnect producers with consumers, such as

associations for nature and landscape protection, farmers' markets and care farms. Here the multi-functionality of peri-urban farming and its proximity to expanding metropolitan areas will be an advantage.

- Food consumption is increasingly happening 'out of house' away from family homes. There is also a growing 'public plate' representing consumption for example in schools, care homes and hospitals.
- New food policy actors are emerging. Where this was largely in the hands of EU-level and Member State institutions, it is now clear that city authorities and regional governments are formulating their own new policy measures (eg the London Food Strategy).
- The final driver is the growing importance of the 'public plate' and the challenge it poses to public institutions. To illustrate, Professor Wiskerke cited studies of public food procurement by the North Limburg Care Group and the 'school food revolution' in the city of Rome.

Food policy has to be seen as both integrative (affecting quality of life, public health, social inclusion and quality of neighbourhoods) as well as territorial (with a huge range of different food outlets making an important contribution to the local economy and the local job market). Cities and regional governments and local public bodies will therefore have a very important role in developing and implementing future sustainable food policies and should be heard in current debates about CAP reforms.

(View Professor Wiskerke's presentation at www.purple-eu.org)

The Academic perspective (II) - Dr Valeria Paul of the Institut d'Estudis Territorials, University of Pompeu Fabra, and Generalitat de Catalunya

Dr Paul highlighted lessons from the Catalan urban fringes which may have a wider application in the context of the future CAP and peri-urban agriculture. Current CAP and Rural development policies do not favour this highly dynamic and productive area where food quality and environmental considerations are well-managed. Only 16% of farmers in the Barcelona region receive Pillar 1 support, Pillar 2 is negligible in peri-urban areas and there is no use of the Leader approach. Yet the area has great potential - with a favourable climate, land quality and basic infrastructure, and intensive production systems serving well-developed local markets. Its agricultural exploitation helps protect valuable open spaces around the city, linking people to the landscape, maintaining landscape quality and diversity, respecting the water cycle and storage needs and favouring local biodiversity.

But there are developing problems in the Catalan peri-urban area which need to be addressed, including a lack of public commitment to a spatial policy which can manage an 'unstoppable' urban encroachment.

Regarding a future CAP, there are strong arguments for ensuring peri-urban areas are recognised and included and that suitable agricultural policies are developed and supported there. This is particularly so in the light of climate change (eg local food production helps in reducing greenhouse gas emissions) and a projected trend for cropland reduction in the EU.

Specific suggestions would include:

- developing more precise measures and tools which fit peri-urban agriculture and its constraints 'to balance urban pressures and take advantage of the metropolitan context';
- focusing in the urban 'niche' market - to understand and respond to emerging consumer patterns, link producers and consumers, label and market locally-distinctive high quality products;
- developing criteria to define peri-urban areas and map these.

A strong peri-urban agriculture ensures a living countryside and this can only benefit Europe's metropolitan areas.

(View Dr Paul's presentation at www.purple-eu.org)

Round table debate - opening remarks of the speakers

Discussion panel





MR. MAGNUSSON



MR. FOLEY

Mr Johan Magnusson, Representative European Commission DG regional Policy

The border between urban and rural is becoming less pronounced and it is perhaps necessary to look at regions as a whole, considering them for example as city regions. In the new Lisbon Treaty, territorial cohesion now features as the third dimension of cohesion policy together with social and economic cohesion. DG Regio is currently working on a Green Paper on the meaning of territorial cohesion with extensive stakeholder consultation. There are opportunities to contribute to this ongoing debate - for example on ways of increasing integration between sectors (agricultural, environmental and social), or on introducing a territorial dimension into agricultural policy.

In parallel, DG Regio is also looking at **urban/rural links** and will be involving Member States in a series of upcoming seminars on this topic, leading to a conference in 2009. Urban/rural links - whether on agricultural or a broad range of other issues will continue to be a focus for discussion in relation to policies for the next funding period from 2013.

Mr Walter Foley speaking for Mr Seamus Murray, Rapporteur Health Check, Committee of the Regions

The Committee of the Regions Opinion on the CAP Health Check had wide support from regions of all 27 Member States. It stressed the importance of subsidiarity (as exemplified in Leader) and the importance of retaining regional self-sufficiency. Mr Murray particularly thanked PURPLE for its contribution to this Opinion. Key points included:

- cutting red tape for farmers;



MR. VAN DESSEL

- defining rural development more clearly and not seeing it as a catch-all for environmental and other issues;
- need to engage with the population and encourage young people into agriculture;
- level playing field regarding food imports and EU production;
- promotion of healthy eating;
- continued food production by the EU - safe food at a fair price;
- better coordination between urban and rural areas.

Mr Lucas van Dessel, member of CEJA (European Council of Young Farmers)

Mr van Dessel, Vice President of Flemish young farmers explained that the young farmers' organisation CEJA has created a vision for a future CAP which aims for a sustainable, competitive and attractive agriculture. Such a CAP will support the economy of rural areas, will aim to make farmers independent of subsidies and have a clear strategy to encourage young farmers to enter the sector and then support them. (For example the historical entitlement model will not be of help to young farmers.)

Particular instruments which would help farmers include:

- promotion for exports and the internal market;
- recognition of EU environmental and social standards and health and welfare;
- transparency through a mandatory origin labelling for all agricultural produce;
- products linked to the land where they were produced, to inform consumer confidence;
- food safety;
- crisis management tools to complement other market instruments.

CEJA recognised that not all regions were equally competitive and some would still need subsidies. Subsidies would also continue to be valuable in supporting cross compliance. There has to be a joint agenda with national administrations to simplify the CAP at all levels and introduce some stability, rather than changing policies every two or three years. Only a totally renewed ambitious and attractive CAP will be able to support the next generation of agri-entrepreneurs.

Comments and responses from the audience in discussion with the panel:

- Food labelling and food chains are topics of interest to DG Regio in relation to its urban/rural policy development.
- Although it is good to produce food for nearby urban populations, it is important that the farmer knows he is getting a better price - ie is rewarded for the added value of local production. It is often more difficult in the peri-urban area to demonstrate the same competitiveness as that achievable by large scale agri-businesses.
- Water management, though of Europe-wide concern, was raised as a particular issue for farmers in SE England where it will no longer be permissible to use bore holes for horticulture. There may be lessons to learn from Catalonia where farmers are trying different techniques including using recycled water.
- Protection and development of peri-urban areas, particularly in relation to uncontrolled urban sprawl, will require planning policies that focus on a whole metropolitan area, linking city and regional planning strategies.
- Landscape protection and green space issues, which are so important to peri-urban areas, will need to be addressed actively using all the existing mechanisms.



Conclusions for PURPLE, Lenie Dwarshuis on behalf of PURPLE regions

The presence of Mrs Fischer Boel at this event indicates that PURPLE has raised important issues in its position paper, and that these are being taken seriously. There will be a further opportunity to input to the new challenges at a meeting scheduled for June which Mrs Dwarshuis will attend in her role as CoR Rapporteur.

PURPLE is now working on project development and many of today's speakers have provided information and insights on issues such as food supplies, food labelling and the urban/rural interface which will inform this work.

Finally there is a clear message that EU-level lobbying is not enough. PURPLE regions must also reach their national governments and parliaments where much decision making is made.



Purple PRESS RELEASE

The peri-urban Regions are key to the success of the future European agricultural Policy

On the 22nd of May 2008, only two days after the European Commission's proposals in the context of "Health Check" of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) the **PURPLE** network, the voice of peri-urban Regions in Europe, will present its position on the future of EU agriculture.

In the **PURPLE** Regions, agriculture continues to play a major role, representing highly modern and efficient enterprises producing for world markets whilst others fulfil a crucial mission in maintaining landscapes and offering local products for nearby city populations. These peri-urban areas meet particular challenges for their agriculture and it is then crucial to recognise the specific peri-urban agenda in the European regulations on agriculture and rural development.

During this event, Mariann Fisher Boel, the European Commissioner in charge of Agriculture and Rural development, as well as politicians and experts from the European Commission, the European Parliament, the Committee of the Regions, NGOs, the academic sector and other stakeholders will not only discuss the challenges confronted by the peri-urban zones but also the opportunities they can offer to face the economic, social, agricultural and environmental challenges of today's society.

The time has come, at the European level, to think beyond the rural-urban divide and to recognise that the spectrum of change from rural to urban is fragmented, multidimensional and ever evolving. Peri-urban Regions, at the interface between urban and rural trends, are key to the equilibrium of the EU territory as a whole and to the well-being of its citizens.

With the organisation of this event in the Committee of the Regions in Brussels, the PURPLE network wants to contribute to the discussions on the European Agricultural Policy...and its vital peri-urban dimension.

PURPLE member Regions: Catalonia, Dublin, Flanders, Frankfurt, Rhein-Main, Ile-de-France, Mazovia, MHAL (Maastricht/Heerlen, Hasselt, Aachen, and Liège), Nord-Pas-de-Calais, Randstad, Rhône-Alpes, South-East England, Stockholm and West Midlands

Programme of the conference: <http://www.purple-eu.org/en/A-common-page/Calendar/General-Assembly-and-PURPLE-event>

PURPLE web site: <http://www.purple-eu.org>

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Purple PRESS RELEASE

Peri-urban Regions urge the EU to “think purple”



“The message is clear: there is a Europe-wide peri-urban interest in the Common Agricultural Policy” insisted Lenie Dwarshuis, President of PURPLE, the voice of peri-urban Regions in Europe, on the 22nd of May 2008.

Opening the conference “the peri-urban dimension of the CAP” organized by the PURPLE network and hosted by the Committee of the Regions, she underlined that agriculture continues to play a major role in the PURPLE Regions, representing highly modern and efficient enterprises producing for world

markets whilst others fulfil a crucial mission in maintaining landscapes and offering local products for nearby city populations. “PURPLE urges the European Commission to develop a coherent long term vision for the future, in which there will be specific attention for peri-urban regions, their challenges and their opportunities” she said.

“If peri-urban areas are in a sense both green and grey, a good way of avoiding a false distinction is to call them purple” suggested Mariann Fischer Boel, Member of the European Commission responsible for Agriculture and Rural Development. Only two days after the Commission’s legislative proposals about the “Health Check” of the CAP, she admitted that “on the edge of so many European towns and cities, or even inside them, there are valuable areas of land where wheat grows or where cows graze happily in full view of office blocks”. “These must not be allowed to fall off the policy map” she declared.

“If we’re really serious about having rural and peri-urban areas with competitive farmers, natural beauty and vibrant economies – and if we’re serious about making these areas our allies as we face up to new challenges – we must be serious about giving our policies the funding they need” concluded the Commissioner, urging the PURPLE Regions to get this message across “loudly and clearly” to national governments.

Interventions of politicians and experts from the European Commission, the Committee of the Regions, the academic sector, NGOs, and other stakeholders confirmed that time has come, at the European level, to think beyond the rural-urban divide and to recognise that peri-urban Regions, at the interface between urban and rural trends, are key to the equilibrium of the EU territory as a whole and to the well-being of its citizens.

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