



Conseil Européen des Jeunes Agriculteurs

World trade position paper

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What trade agreement is required to ensure the survival of the agricultural sector?

The World Trade Organisation, WTO, is founded on the principal that if two countries specialise in what they are best at and exchange these products at least one of the economies will gain while the second, at least will not lose out, as products can be sold cheaper. This principal is only partly applicable to trade with agricultural products due to the sector's essential role in feeding the people and in providing benefit to the local economy including reinforcing social and economic viability as well as safeguard the landscape, biodiversity, the environment.

The agricultural sector's primary role is to feed the population. The sector must ensure long term food security and safety, but also has an important role in protecting rural viability, cultural heritage and conserving the land. The agricultural sector plays a vital role in job creation, alleviating poverty, ensuring rural sustainability, as well as reinforcing social and economic viability, it also protects the environment and ensures the welfare and wellbeing of animals. As a result, farming cannot be seen as an industry providing 'raw materials for sale' but has to be viewed as the sector providing food and public goods.

The European Council of Young Farmers, CEJA, recognises that trade across country borders can open up opportunities for young farmers the world over, but requests that trade of agricultural products be given special attention. There is no doubt as to the importance of international trade, the world needs such trade to be organised, and the world trade organisation, WTO, is best placed to ensure this task.

Internal support: Countries in many parts of the world use policies to encourage the development of the agricultural sector. EU created, after the second world war, the Common Agricultural Policy with the aim of becoming self-sufficient in food supply, a desire created due to the food shortage experiences during the war. After this goal was fulfilled the policy changed again in the early 90s. Since then the goal has been to adjust the policy from farmers producing food for the market to become a policy meeting taxpayers demand for an agricultural sector with many functions producing safe food of high quality. WTO allows such policies to be used when their implementation contributes positively to society without disturbing the market.

CEJA welcomes that WTO recognises policies aiming to ensure food security and environmental protection, and we call on that the world's farmers must be allowed to cover their production costs linked to providing these objectives through the continuous use of agricultural policies, including the common agricultural policy with main objective according to the recent reform is to compensate farmers for extracosts linked to providing services linked to environmental concern, animal welfare, and public health.

Market access: The WTO recognises that the agricultural sector is essential in supplying food for the global community. However, agriculture also has a central role in employment creation in rural areas and in maintaining the landscape. The number of farmers is falling in industrialised parts of the world,

for instance, the agricultural sector in the European Union is threatened by ageing, as 52% of all European farm holders are over 55 years old, 29% are over 65 years old while only 8% are under the age of 35. Liberalisation of trade will concentrate the agricultural production in certain areas of the world. In Europe this leads to certain traditional products, such as the Mediterranean ones and the disappearance of many mountain farms, and as a result the cultural heritage, biodiversity, the local ecosystem and the local occupation that goes with it. Given the unique nature of each country and its agriculture, countries must be given the opportunity to protect their agricultural sector, among others against gigantic agri-food companies with extremely aggressive commercial strategies.

Export subsidies: Europe's young farmers agree with organisations and countries calling for a **fair rather than a free trade**. This means that the dumping of agricultural prices must be avoided in the market, import as well as export. At the same time, initiatives directed at the poorest countries on the commitment of developed countries to eliminate their export subsidies for strategic products should be encouraged, so that more serene discussions can take place on the regulations needed at international level to ensure the regular supply of agricultural products, and to ensure stable market prices for agricultural raw materials throughout the world.

Traceability and recognition of origin: It is time to develop a clear, simple and transparent set of trade rules for both farmers, consumers and tax payers introducing minimum food safety standards and controls on a global level, guarantee world-wide respect of the precautionary principle when new products are disseminated and marketed. Furthermore, to give the consumer a choice, it is necessary to develop a clear labelling, tracing and tracking system informing about the origins of the products and production methods and ensuring the international protection of agricultural products and foodstuffs with special characteristics and destinations of origin.

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CEJA is made up of 22 national organisations from the 15 European Union Member States and 6 associated members from the candidate countries representing around one million young farmers in Europe. CEJA represents the political interests of its members with the primary goal of ensuring installation of young farmers, and is considered one of the key advocates for the agricultural sector. CEJA's main objectives are to ease the installation in Europe, to inform and train young farmers, to act as a forum for communication and dialogue between young farmers and to sensitise European citizens to farming related issues.