

Growing Europe's strengths

Agriculture is a central pillar of Europe's cohesion and unity, economic resilience, and a fundamental driver of social and territorial development. In a shifting global landscape of security threats, climate stress, and economic uncertainty, **a stronger European agricultural sector is vital** for food security, rural resilience, and Europe's competitiveness.

For this, we call on the European Union to:

* **Preserve the Common Agricultural Policy**

The CAP remains a cornerstone of European integration, providing essential support to farmers and rural communities. It ensures access to safe, sustainable, and affordable food for European citizens, contributing to Europe's economic, environmental, and social growth. Yet across Europe, farms are disappearing, and the farming population is both aging and shrinking, threatening the continuity of agricultural production. Recent proposals to restructure and **reduce the CAP budget pose critical risks** to these achievements. A dedicated and adequately funded CAP is essential to maintain Europe's food security and rural vitality. Reducing CAP funding would further accelerate the loss of farms and undermine the sector's ability to address emerging challenges such as climate change, market volatility, and demographic shifts.

* **Simplify employment and agricultural policies**

Farmers, especially in their role as employers, currently face excessive bureaucracy, overlapping controls, and unfair double sanctions such as the social conditionality of the CAP. **Simplification is essential to make the sector more attractive** to young people and foster its much-needed generational renewal.



The European Union must urgently reduce existing burdens and prevent new ones, ensuring that policies are coherent and support growth. **Simplification should be a continuous process, with flexible measures introduced as needed**, to guarantee that policies remain effective and adaptable to rapidly changing circumstances.

* Invest in the digital and skills transition

Digitalisation, automation and new AI technologies will translate into **safer, greener, more attractive and competitive jobs**. Europe must invest in digital infrastructure, data-driven farming tools, and innovation ecosystems accessible to all producers, including small and medium-sized farms.

However, digital investment must be **supported by strong skills development and education-to-employment pathways**. Bridging the gap between education, innovation, and practical farm experience is crucial to prepare the next generation of professionals. By connecting schools, universities, and agricultural enterprises, Europe can make the sector appealing, modern, and rewarding for young people. Farming is not a legacy of the past, but a driver of innovation and green growth.

European and national programmes should support vocational training, apprenticeships, and lifelong learning to ensure that digital and green transitions translate into quality jobs and attractive careers in rural areas.

* Support social dialogue

Social dialogue at all levels is crucial for the development of fair and effective agricultural policies. Organisations such as Geopa, along with trade unions, must play a **vital role in designing and implementing policies that affect employment in the sector**. The European Union should continue to support and strengthen social dialogue to ensure that key sector experts are a fundamental



part of policy development. Mutual understanding and cooperation are essential to the formulation of policies that are equitable, practical and constructive.

* Invest in rural development

A strong Europe is built on communities, urban and rural, growing together. Investing in rural infrastructure, housing, and public services is crucial to making countryside life attractive for workers, young farmers, and rural families. **Agriculture must remain the engine of balanced development between regions**, ensuring that rural areas are not left behind in the pursuit of economic growth. The CAP's rural development measures play a vital role in this regard, supporting initiatives that enhance the quality of life in rural communities and promote sustainable economic activities.

* Uphold European standards

In an era of global trade, Europe must ensure that its agricultural and employment standards are upheld in all trade agreements. Imported products should meet the same high standards expected of European producers and employers. **Europe must defend and promote its social, productive and environmental model** and ensure that European farmers are not undercut by low-quality imports and unfair competing conditions.

About us

Geopa (European Employers' Group of Professional Agricultural Organisations) is the voice of European agricultural employers, officially recognised by the European Commission. Geopa is a founding member of the European Employers' Institute (EEI), and a permanent member of DG AGRI Civil Dialogue Groups and the European Board for Agriculture and Food (EBAF). Geopa coordinates the Agri-Food Pact for Skills and directly engages in numerous EU-funded projects promoting digitalisation, skills, safety, and social dialogue in the sector.

