

Outputs of XI. Forum of Rural Parliament in Slovakia

Working group no. 2

Family farming

During the XI. meeting of the Forum of Rural Parliament in Slovakia, which took place online on October 23, 2020, there was stated that our villages are losing their rural character, people are no longer growing vegetables, fruits and raising livestock and we have thousands of hectares of unused land, thousands of unemployed and young people are not interested work at home and prefer to go abroad. Rural areas in Slovakia without agricultural production are not rural areas. The strategic goal of every state to be as self-sufficient as possible is becoming more and more topical. That is why it is necessary to support family farms and ensure self-sufficiency through increased domestic diversification and production of quality food, similar to that in developed EU countries.

Following mutual discussion, the following conclusions and recommendations for the managing authorities emerged:

1. Promote rural development and domestic food production in long-term concepts as a strategic priority of the state and each government. Every government should be able to create the conditions for ensuring the food self-sufficiency of its inhabitants, especially by supporting domestic and local production, as nutrition is one of the overriding needs of mankind. The issue of self-sufficiency is even more relevant in the context of the ongoing global pandemic.
Responsible: Government of the Slovak Republic, National Council of the Slovak Republic, President of the Slovak Republic
2. To actively ensure the food self-sufficiency of Slovakia and to ensure the production of regional specialties by actively supporting the development of family and social farms at the level of EU states. We recommend giving priority to the 2nd pillar.
Responsible: Ministry of Agriculture and Regional Development of SR
3. To secure the production base of special crops, economically support investment-intensive actions for new plantings with a change in the structure of orchards and vineyards. These permanent crops have a long-term character of their economic use, which in family farms has a multi-generational character and creates long-term stability of jobs.
Responsible: Ministry of Agriculture and Regional Development of SR
4. Complete land reform and ensure the transparent use of EU funds to contribute to the development of agriculture and food, thus giving young farmers access to unused land and to the development of crop and livestock production. At the same time, special attention must be paid to reducing the load on the soil and consequently reducing its fertility. To do this, you need:



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- Issuance of ownership from the SPF (Slovak Land Fund) contract with 1 year notice upon proving ownership by an unknown owner.
- Allow young farmers to access SPF land, min. for 5 years without unrealistic conditions. According to the possibility of the farmer, for a period of 5 years to allow the transition to special plant or animal production, if he wants to maintain the SPF land for another period.
- Do not conclude SPF lease agreements for more than 10 years, re-evaluate existing agreements for more than 10 years (the amount of rent) and tighten the conditions for extending the lease to existing users.
- Prefer local farmers, those interested in SPF land, who have not yet rented SPF land and are interested, use the land for the past 5 years max. from 30 - 70 ha and have min. 5 years past as a natural person or a family farm. When they don't have enough machinery, at least small farmers will help each other.
- Prefer family farms with max. used acreage in the cadastre up to 100 ha, where he has his own or leased land.

Responsible: MPRV SR

5. Simplify current legislation so that even small farmers and farmers have the opportunity to sell their products of animal origin directly in their vicinity. We recommend supporting the creation of sales associations for producers to support the sale of products from family farms, which bring them several benefits, not only in sales and trade, but also in agricultural services, such as technology sharing and joint purchasing of production inputs and socially. creating a social background. They would also gain more influence on price formation in the food chain and thus strengthen their market bargaining power in the food vertical.

Responsible: Ministry of Agriculture and Regional Development of SR

6. To ensure the development of agriculture and family farms, it is necessary to significantly prioritize and financially support the education of young farmers from primary schools and then at secondary schools, where they should gain sufficient experience and relationship with nature.

Responsible: Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of SR

7. In order to restore our agriculture and food self-sufficiency and rural development, it is necessary to create support activities in all areas of management to promote agriculture, family farms and healthy food products. It is necessary to support regional festivals, fairs, folk traditions, local specialties and also ecological projects for nature protection, etc. Marketing should give priority to highlighting the aspect of health, quality and lower environmental impact.

Responsible: Self-governing regions of the SR and Ministry of Agriculture and Regional Development of SR

8. To enable family farmers and their representatives to be active, constructive and professional to enter into all ongoing conceptual and legislative processes and to be an integral and permanent part of them. To come up with one's own already internally consulted initiatives and factual ideas. It is recommended to create an internal consultation mechanism, within which one comprehensive position would be presented to the ministry, which would thus gain more weight, relevance and respect. Responsible: OZ VIPA SK, Slovak Agriculture and Food Chamber, Ministry of Agriculture and Regional Development of SR

XI. Forum of the Rural Parliament in Slovakia hereby sends a clear warning signal that if we want to ensure food self-sufficiency in Slovakia and restore the food system, we urgently need to increase the efforts and cooperation of all stakeholders and introduce new methods of work aimed at protecting, enhancing and developing the Slovak countryside. Slovakia needs a modern, clear and stable agricultural policy, including Family Farms with a long-term vision, responding to current global and European challenges in the context of national needs and potential and supporting sustainable rural development.

A necessary prerequisite for the success of the changes is a social understanding and recognition of the importance of agricultural management of the area as a landscape-creating, ecological and social-stabilizing factor. The implementation of agricultural policy has a broader impact and goes beyond the framework of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development itself.

Slovak agriculture and the countryside have all the prerequisites to be successful and to advance and, in particular, to develop all parts of the country together. After 16 years of EU membership, it is high time to learn to use the available resources really effectively through the EU CAP in order to increase the competitiveness of Slovak agriculture and the countryside and to restart the self-sufficiency of Slovak production with the active participation of all stakeholders.

After a discussion with members of the Rural Parliament Forum in Slovakia, this paper was prepared by:

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