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PRESS RELEASE

EUROPEAN COUNCIL OF YOUNG FARMERS CONSEIL EUROPÉEN DES JEUNES AGRICULTEURS EUROPÄISCHER RAT DER JUNGLANDWIRTE

New CEJA foresight paper outlines how social policies can make farming a more attractive profession by 2050

CEJA, the European Council of Young Farmers, has published its new foresight paper, “A Social Agenda for Generational Renewal in Agriculture”, setting out a long-term vision for how social policies can help make farming a more attractive, resilient and future-proof profession across Europe.

As emphasised by young farmers over the last decades, Europe’s ability to attract and retain the next generations of farmers will increasingly depend on the quality of life available in agriculture and rural areas. From access to healthcare and decent pensions, mental health support, farm relief services and safe working conditions, CEJA calls for a broader understanding of the conditions needed for generational renewal. Too often, discussions on generational renewal focus exclusively on economic support. While access to land, finance and markets remain fundamental, young farmers also need the social conditions that allow them to build fulfilling lives in rural areas. Agriculture must become not only economically viable, but socially sustainable.

Looking ahead, the foresight paper identifies four interconnected social challenges that will determine whether agriculture can offer an attractive future for the next generation. These include improving farmers’ quality of life through better work-life balance and accessible rural services; ensuring that social protection accompanies farmers through every stage of their lives and careers; building a fair, safe and future-proof agricultural workforce; and closing persistent opportunity gaps across the agri-food value chain.

To address these challenges, CEJA sets out eight practical policy pathways inspired by existing good practices from across Europe. These include stronger farm relief services, better access to rural healthcare and childcare, adequate pensions and agriculture-specific social protection, improved occupational health and safety, dedicated support for farmers’ mental wellbeing, and measures to promote gender equality, fair recruitment and decent working and living conditions throughout the sector.

Importantly, the paper does not seek to harmonise national social systems, but to steer necessary discussions, as pointed out by CEJA Vice President Matteo Pagliarani: *“If we want more young people to choose agriculture, we must ask ourselves a simple question: what kind of life are we asking them to choose? Generational renewal is not only about entering the profession, but also about staying in it. That requires decent living conditions, strong social protection and vibrant rural communities.”*

As the European Union prepares the next generation of agricultural policies, CEJA hopes this publication will contribute to a broader conversation on the social foundations of agriculture and inspire policymakers to integrate these dimensions into future initiatives, including the National and Regional Partnership Plans (NRPP) and their performance-tracking system, the Common Agricultural Policy and its Starter Pack for Young Farmers, and the broader European Semester framework. The paper also reinforces CEJA’s long-standing commitment to placing generational renewal at the centre of the European policy agenda by exploring how agricultural, rural and social policies can work together to support young farmers over the coming decades.

The full foresight paper is available [here](#).

The European Council of Young Farmers (CEJA) represents the political interests of around two million young farmers from across Europe. Its main objectives are to facilitate the installation of young farmers, to inform and train them as well as act as a forum for communication and dialogue between them.

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