

International Workshop:  
"Agriculture on the threshold  
of the XXIth century"



## **CONCLUSIONS**

The participants in the International Workshop "**Agriculture on the threshold of the XXI<sup>th</sup> century**", organized by FORO AGRARIO and held in Madrid, March 5, 1999,

Bearing in mind the content of the three Papers "World Agricultural Trends", "The CAP and the future of European Agriculture" and "The uncertainties faced by Spanish Agriculture" as well as the participations and debates in the respective panels,

Wanting to put on record, in a synthesis, the most significant ideas characterizing the present situation of crossroads which has been dealt with in the Workshop and with regard to which agriculture will develop in the next century,

### **STATE**

#### ***I. Production of raw materials and food.***

The essential task of agriculture is nowadays, and it should remain being, the production of raw materials and food of such quality and in such quantity that they can meet the needs of an increasing population, an important part of the latter being in a starvation situation.

#### ***II. Technological progress and responsibility for preserving natural resources.***

The task of agriculture production in the future will be exerted as a result of a balance between sustainable technological progress, the latter being impelled by economic efficiency, and the responsibility for preserving natural resources, being friendly to the environment and preserving biodiversity. Such a balance should not be faced from antagonistic positions but through study and debate, in an osmotic process of the ideas inspiring such different positions. However, it must be pointed out that such responsibilities must be shared by other sectors besides that of agriculture.

#### ***III. Globalisation of the economy and agriculture protection.***

Globalisation of the economy along with development of a more and more increasing and transparent world trade of agricultural products must be compatible with the right of nations to aspire to a certain level of food self-sufficiency, as well as to maintain the rural population in their territory for the former to preserve the latter, all this based on their own patterns of rural development of which productive agriculture must unavoidably be part. To this aim, a certain protection of agriculture may be needed.

#### ***IV. European model of agriculture.***

Steps must be taken for the "European model of agriculture" to become a reality. Such a model has been defined by the European Council as a multifunctional one based on the balanced conjunction of three basic functions: economic, that of territory management and that of preservation of both environment and rural landscape, such tasks being performed by agriculture in the European territory.

The European Union must place the Common Agricultural Policy at the service of the concrete materialization of this new model and the tools to develop such a policy must offer a stability in agreement with the entrepreneurial decisions to be promoted.

#### ***V. Cohesion principle in PAC.***

As provided for in the Treaty of the European Union, the cohesion principle, in parallel to what happens regarding environmental policy, should inspire and be applied to the Common Agricultural Policy in an efficient manner regarding both the relationships among Member States agricultures and those among different groups of farmers in the European Union as a whole; in particular to ensure both the stay and the settling of farmers who have to face natural or structural limitations. On the other hand, the possible limitations or modulations of the aids to most efficient or to optimum sized agricultural holdings, should not place the latter in a situation making them unable to face more and more open and competitive markets.

#### ***VI. Decentralization and subsidiarity of PAC.***

Decentralization and subsidiarity when it comes to applying the Common Agricultural Policy should not lead to a new veiled nationalization through different treatments to Community farmers in the same situation or due to the fact that the difference in national or

regional available resources to confinance or to complement the reformed Common Agricultural Policy gives rise to imbalances in terms of competition among different Community farmers and different Community agricultures.

### ***VII. Management of agricultural and rural space.***

The way to carry out both identification and concretion of the European model of agriculture must be put into practice in respect of both the Spanish territory and the different kinds of agricultures existing in Spain. First of all, it seems necessary to reflect on Spanish agriculture and to search for national consensus on the productive comparative advantage of the different Spanish agricultural regions, on the future of both irrigation and economy of water, on afforestation of uncultivated land or land set aside from cultivation, on the interlacing of all these matters in the new environmental sensitivities, on population settlings and, in short, on everything which is encompassed in the concept of management of agricultural and rural space.

### ***VIII. Compete more effectively.***

Foreseeing more open markets along with stabilized or decreasing aids demand from Spanish agriculture an effort to identify the productive sectors where both comparative advantages and adjustment to the new requests of specific qualities are available and this way agriculture becomes a dynamic and organizational element of the national agrofood system. Nowadays, as much as it was in the past, the implementation of technology, that of research as well as the transfer of their results will be factors of paramount importance to get the productive sectors ready to compete more effectively.

### ***IX. Structural Problemes of Spanish agriculture.***

Another clear goal of Spanish agriculture should be the improvement of the agricultural holding structure together with the increase in their economic dimension in particular for those activities more open to international markets. To this effect, besides both assigning priority to the incorporation of properly trained young farmers and trying to get family agricultural holdings work, the introduction of new, really flexible patterns favouring competitiveness, and based on a modern entrepreneurial management, should be encouraged. Agricultural tax system should contribute to the achievement of such structural objectives

## *X. National agricultural policy.*

When working out and implementing the Common Agricultural Policy each country has a relatively wide margin to develop a national agricultural policy of its own. To take up and use such a margin for national policy is necessary, preferably from a position of both continuity and consensus among the political forces and the economic and social partners.

Anyhow, and to carry out such a policy, to ensure a real cooperation and coordination between the State and the Autonomous Communities takes priority so as the performance of their corresponding duties and within the limits of their corresponding powers has an accumulative and solidary impact on Spanish agriculture as a whole.

The participants in the Workshop, as agreeing such statements, thank **FORO AGRARIO** for the opportunity of bringing them out and they urge **FORO AGRARIO** to tackle in its future works analysis and debate on the different matters resulting from them.

Likewise, the participants commend to **FORO AGRARIO** to let the different institutions and political, economic and social forces in the autonomous, national and Community frameworks having interests in, and being responsible for, agriculture and agricultural and rural policy to know about the above-mentioned statements.

**Madrid, March 5th, 1999**