



Romanian Farmers' Club
for performant agriculture

THE INTER-GENERATIONAL COMPACT FOR THE FUTURE OF AGRICULTURE





INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

The change of generations is one of the major challenges facing the European agriculture.

At the European level, the farming sector is facing the ageing of farmers and farm managers, the increasing absence of a natural succession, the difficult access of youth to land and financing, the deficit of qualified labour force, the increasing importance of new technologies for agriculture, the knowledge and digital abilities gap between generations and the difference in the life quality between the urban and the rural areas. According to a recent statistic of the European Commission, for each farm manager under 40 there are three over 65.

This topic is well known in Europe, in all Member States. For Romania, the challenge is far more serious, as the population occupied in agriculture accounts for 23 per cent, that is 5 times the European average of 4.2 per cent. In addition, the risk of land dispossession is much more significant in Romania due to a higher dependence on foreign capital.

Solving the problems of **generational renewal** is the concern of the common

agricultural policy, with an emphasis placed on the measures of financial support. While the financial support for farmers, in general, and for young farmers, in particular, is essential, it is not enough if we wish to restore the natural and lasting linkage between generations with respect to the continuity in managing efficiently the agricultural resources.

The present Compact addresses the formative, social and human dimensions of the relationship between generations.

The generational renewal must also be approached from a social perspective, as well as by enhancing the motivation of the human resources, whose impact is decisive.



VISION AND PRINCIPLES

Despite its increasing autonomy, atomization and territorial dispersal, **the family remains the fundamental cement in inter-human relations**, as it is based on common values and interests.

The Inter-generational Compact for the Future of Agriculture is conceived as a declaration by which all generations are assuming those common values and interests with respect to the cultivation of land, seen not just as an economic resource, but also as a factor of continuity and stability of the family, community, and society.

We do not ignore the importance of the free-market mechanisms and equitable trade practices. Yet, the management of agricultural resources has a fundamental extra dimension that transcends the mere functioning of the market.

Supporting a fair standard of living for farmer was acknowledge as a goal of the common agricultural policy even at the adoption of the Treaty of Rome in 1957. Since then, the importance of agriculture has increased not only due to the population growth, but also because of other major factors, such as the imperatives of food security, at national, regional, and global levels, as well as the environmental and sustainable development needs.

The result has been a significant rise of the strategical dimension of the agricultural and food resources, thus making a strictly territorial policy insufficient. Confronting old and new challenges to the agriculture requires common action, professional solidarity among food producers and, above all, an emphasis on the inter-generational continuity.

VISION AND PRINCIPLES

The vision of the Romanian Farmers' Club is one of a mutually beneficial mix of experience, knowledge, and aspirations of all generations active in agriculture, so that the work in that sector becomes attractive again for future generations. As a result, the potential of the infrastructure and human resources occupied in agriculture should be valorised at higher levels of efficiency, productivity, prestige, and influence in the society.

In this document we propose to stimulate and support the inter-generation continuity based on the following principles:

1 Principle of community

The participants to the Compact shall act around a community of common interests and values that goes beyond individual interests.

2 Principle of solidarity

All categories of participants, irrespective of the number of hectares of land they own, the specific of their crops, regions, soil etc. should benefit from the actions generated by this Compact.

3 Principle of transparency

The action initiated and carried in the spirit of this Compact shall be made known to all participants, in all stages, from the mere formulation of initiatives to legislative demarches.

4 Principle of subsidiarity

The initiatives of the Compact may come from all levels: farms, associations, regions, not from a central level only.

5 Principle of competence

Those who will adhere to the Compact shall act primarily in those areas where they have proven competencies, be they general, or specific (technology, climatology, ecology etc.) or in which they have a comparative advantage.

6 Principle of attribution

The participants may present individual initiatives, but if they need to be supported and promoted on behalf of the Compact, those initiatives shall be attributed to their initiators by the consent, implied or explicit, of a majority of participants.

7 Principle of proportionality

When there is a need to mobilize financial or human resources to undertake common actions, the volume of those resources should be proportional to the importance of the outcomes expected, taking also into consideration the risk factors.

8 Principle of equitable competition

Participation in the Compact does not rule out the competition as the engine of the free market, but the participants shall refrain from using disloyal practices, subversive actions, misinformation etc.

9 Principle of mutual respect

The participants shall treat each other with respect, no matter the size of their properties, turnover, profit, or political connections.

10 Principle of unity

To the extent possible, the participants in the Compact shall present common positions on issues of mutual interest in their relations with the national authorities or the European institutions.

11 The national principle

The topics of sectoral or regional interest shall be tackled in harmony with the national economic, social, and commercial interests.

12 The European principle

The actions initiated or carried out on behalf of the Compact shall be conceived according to the values and the principle of the common agricultural policy or they will aim at improving or making them more efficient in the interest of all members of the European Union.

PARTICIPANTS

The participants in the Compact, farmers of all generations, are committed to observe the above-mentioned principles in their individual or collective actions.

Among them, the young leaders trained in the programmes of the Romanian Farmers' Club will act as catalysts in the fulfilment of the objectives of the compact, by means of their own activity, the collaboration with other farmers, as well as in their relations with the state authorities.

The Romanian Farmers' Club will be the custodian of the Compact and shall provide the institutional framework for the promotion of the Compact and the increase in the number of participants, by its own programmes, and by informing the public opinion and performing its function of representation.



OBJECTIVES

The work accomplished under the auspices of the Compact, based on the principles adhered to, may lead in time to the achievement of the following objectives:

1 Assuring a **more efficient change of generations**, enabling the rational exploitation of the agricultural resources of Romania.

2 **Valorising as fully as possible the potential of resources and talents** of the generations that are active in the agricultural sector by the implementation of specific programmes, actions and policies.

3 **Expanding the opportunities to apply new technologies** in the Romanian agriculture by stimulating the creativity of the new generations of farmers, facilitating the quick access to the results of the applied agronomic research and stimulating the innovation.

4 **Enhancing the legitimacy and influence of the community of farmers** in relation with decision makers at national and European levels.

5 **Strengthening the negotiating power of farmers** in relation with the big supermarket chains that retail products of agricultural origins.

6 **Stimulating the development of rural communities** by supporting the small producers, directly and indirectly.

7 Broadening and deepening the **knowledge base** necessary to apply the criteria of ecological farming and sustainable development, stimulating **the exchange of experience** at the European level in those areas.

8 Contributing to the achievement of **food security** in Romania and the European Union.

9 Providing the prerequisite for the transformation of Romania in a **centre of excellence and a hub for the European cooperation** with a view to training the young entrepreneurs in agriculture, stimulating and strengthening their role.

COMMITMENTS

1 Granting **participation scholarships** for the annual training series „Young Leaders for Agriculture”.

2 Establishing **mentorships in farm management** for the benefit of young farmers or farmers in the making. Inițierea unor activități de **practică în fermă** în beneficiul aspiranților la ocupația de fermier.

3 Initiating activities of **apprenticeship practice** at field level for farmers-to-be.

4 Conferring a (symbolic) **annual award** for the most significant innovative practice in agriculture.

5 Active participation in the **working groups, thematic debates, exchange of information** and other activities carried out within the community of farmers.

SUPPORTING AND PROMOTING THE COMPACT

The Appeal of the participants in the Compact to third parties

The national and regional authorities with responsibilities in the areas of agriculture and rural development are invited to **take into consideration in their decisions and policies, the principles and objectives stipulated in this Compact**, as a legitimate expression of farmers' interests and of their reflection in the democratic mechanisms.

The Romanian Farmers' Club deems useful the study of specific measures adopted by other members of the European Union in support of generational renewal and commit itself to help the competent authorities to identify good practices and promote them in Romania.

The **banking institutions and professional associations** are invited to get involved by **offering special favourable conditions to the young farmers** who present business plans based on a model of sustainable agriculture and to stimulate the young farmers who participate in training programmes by granting them customized credit packages.

The higher education institutions specialized in agriculture-related disciplines are invited to contribute pro bono with expertise in the training programmes organized by the Romanian Farmers' Club for the young farmers.

The governmental agencies, educational institutions and private companies that are active in the agricultural sector are invited to institutionalize and make permanent the existing or potential forms of collaboration with the farmers by means of memoranda of understanding and alliances of multi-stakeholder resources, whenever possible.

The present Compact is a voluntary agreement, with no binding legal force, meant to promote and develop a community of farmers in Romania, based on principles, objectives, and common actions.

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