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*Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety*

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**2017/2116(INI)**

26.9.2017

## **DRAFT OPINION**

of the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety

for the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development

on a European strategy for the promotion of protein crops – Encouraging the production of protein and leguminous plants in the European agriculture sector (2017/2116(INI))

Rapporteur: György Hölvényi

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## SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety calls on the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions into its motion for a resolution:

1. Believes that the promotion of protein crop cultivation is a powerful tool in the transition towards more sustainable agri-food systems, supporting a shift from input-intensive crop monoculture towards diversified agro-ecological systems;
2. Highlights the fact that protein crops include not only soybeans, but also grain and forage legumes, which can be grown in a diverse range of agro-climatic and soil conditions across Europe;
3. Notes that protein crops have a wide range of environmental benefits, such as being able to fix nitrogen from the atmosphere, using less fossil fuel-based fertilisers, improving soil properties, reducing disease levels and protecting biodiversity;
4. Recalls that the EU relies on massive imports of protein-rich feed materials, for the most part genetically modified soya, which may give rise to serious environmental problems in source countries;
5. Supports the objectives of the European Soya Declaration and other initiatives to boost non-genetically modified soya production and other protein crop cultivation in Europe;
6. Recalls that the CAP has a decisive impact on farmers' decisions to grow protein crops and should therefore be used to its full potential;
7. Believes that once it has been in force for a few years, useful lessons should be learnt from the recent ban on the use of pesticides in ecological focus areas;
8. Recalls that the by-products of food and bio-fuel production and certain processed animal proteins represent important alternative sources of proteins for feed;
9. Highlights that legumes are an important source of plant-based protein and therefore that they also play an important role in ensuring sustainable and healthy human diets;
10. Stresses the need for heavy investment in research to solve the pressing agronomic issues that are limiting protein crop cultivation;
11. Supports the establishment of transparent product labelling systems based on certified production standards, such as the Danube Soya and Europe Soya standards;
12. Notes that knowledge dissemination, the exchange of good practices and market development are also sorely in need of investment.