NATIONAL CONVENTION ON THE EUROPEAN UNION IN THE REPUBLIC OF NORTH MACEDONIA (NCEU-MK)

13th SESSION OF WORKING GROUP 1: AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT (CHAPTER 11)

TOPIC: Rural development and opportunities for youth in entrepreneurship"
Date: September 25, 2025 (Thursday)

Suggested recommendations:

- **Financial support, grants, and crediting** – Increasing the funds and types of support specifically intended for young people in rural areas to start, continue, and develop agricultural and rural businesses. Additionally, start-up funds and micro-grants should be introduced for innovative ideas and sustainable practices, as well as support for investments in green and digital technologies that will enhance the competitiveness and resilience of young businesses. Special attention should be given to supporting identity promotion through branding of cultural heritage, food, and tourism in rural areas, in order to create a sense of belonging and new income opportunities.

- **Education and training programs** – Continuous training in modern agricultural practices, diversification of activities, digital solutions and tools, value addition to products, marketing, and entrepreneurship for young people in rural areas. The introduction of modern learning methods and formats, such as virtual farms, simulations, and digital enterprises, can significantly contribute to the practical education of young farmers as preparation for making informed decisions in real business, encouraging creativity, the use of new technologies, and the application of innovative solutions in agriculture and rural development.

- **Policy measures** – Establishing tax reliefs and incentives for young farmers, creating guarantee funds and credit lines with favorable and flexible conditions for youth (especially for pre-financing when using certain investment support, or for financing initial capital for new businesses). It is particularly important to simplify laws on inheritance and transfer of agricultural land and farms, along with institutional support for developing a long-term strategy for generational renewal in agriculture. It is also of great importance to facilitate young people’s access to state-owned land.

- **Exchange of experiences and promotion** – Encouraging mobility and networking among young farmers through organizing and participating in national and regional fairs, workshops, and conferences, visits to other young farmers in different countries, short-term internships combined with entrepreneurship mentoring, public campaigns, and events promoting agriculture as a modern and attractive profession.

- **Cooperation and collective forms of work** – Encouraging young farmers to form agricultural cooperatives and producer organizations for easier access to markets, joint procurement, and collective investments.

- **Advocacy and participation in policymaking** – Young farmers need to have their own voice in decision-making processes at both local and national levels. To that end, their joint engagement through associations and other advocacy platforms should be encouraged so that young people can actively influence the creation of agricultural and rural policies, express their interests, and ensure the implementation of measures that directly address their needs and challenges.