

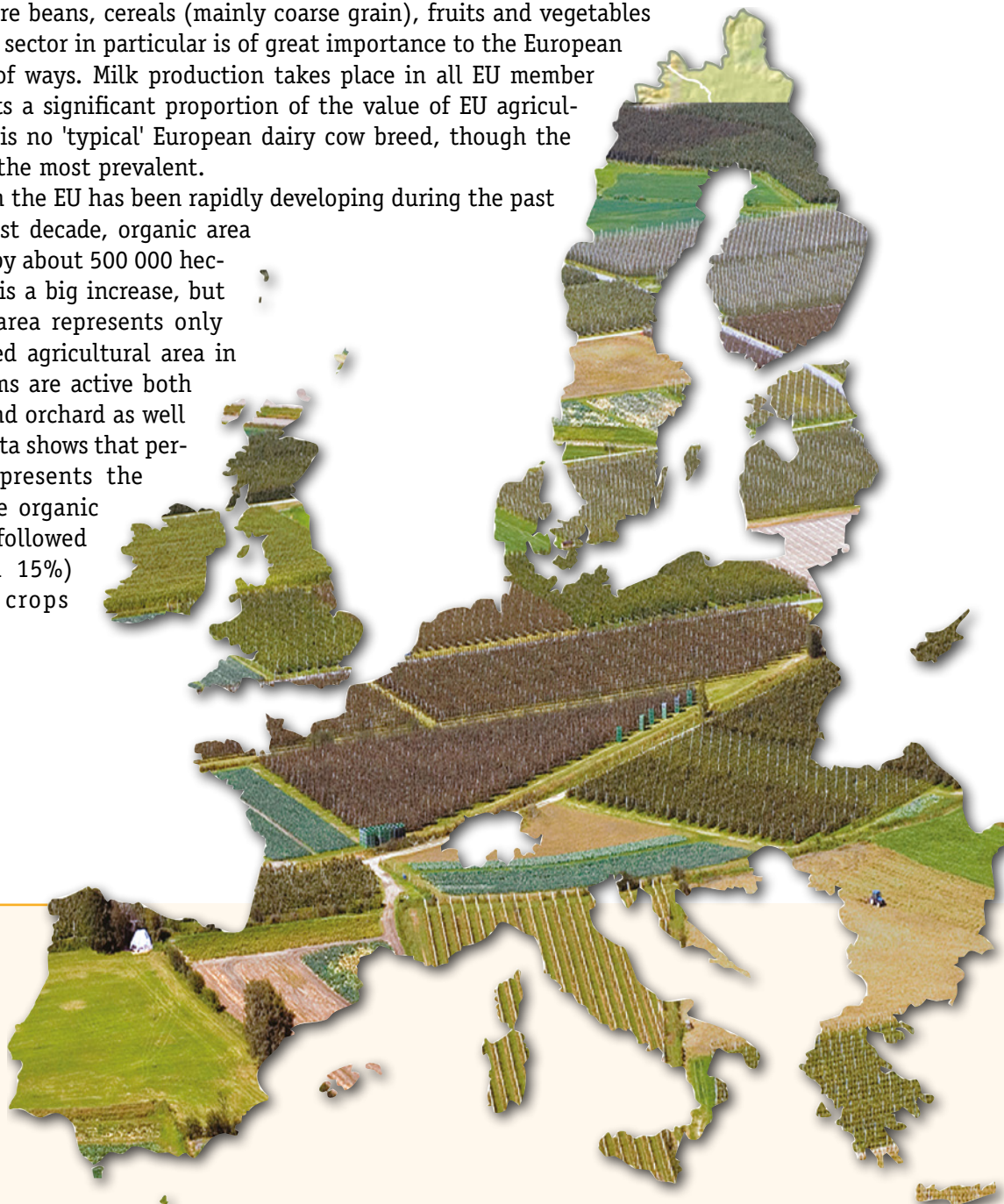
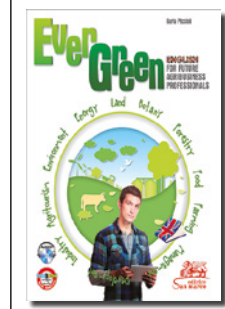


## Agriculture in the European Union

Agriculture and agri-food sector play a key role in the European Union (EU). There are about 12 million full-time farmers in the 28 EU countries.

The Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) is the agricultural policy of the European Union. It was introduced in 1962 with the aim of supporting farmers by providing a range of price guarantees, direct payments and other instruments, including quotas and tariffs on some imported products. The EU is a major producer of milk, pigs, cattle and cereals in the world. Major export items of the EU are cereals (mainly wheat), meat, fruits and milk products, while the main import items are beans, cereals (mainly coarse grain), fruits and vegetables and sugar. The dairy sector in particular is of great importance to the European Union in a variety of ways. Milk production takes place in all EU member states and represents a significant proportion of the value of EU agricultural output. There is no 'typical' European dairy cow breed, though the Friesian-Holstein is the most prevalent.

The organic sector in the EU has been rapidly developing during the past years. During the last decade, organic area in the EU improved by about 500 000 hectares per year. This is a big increase, but the whole organic area represents only 5.4% of total utilised agricultural area in Europe. Organic farms are active both in the arable crop and orchard as well as animal sectors. Data shows that permanent pasture represents the biggest share of the organic area (about 45%), followed by cereals (around 15%) and permanent crops (about 13%).



### ACTIVITIES

- 1 Talk about agriculture in the European Union.