

**A different vision of CAP: building food and farming systems that are fair, socially just, environmentally aware, healthy and caring across Europe and the world**

With 40% of the EU budget allocated to the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), decisions made as to which farming systems and practices to promote, directly shape the EU's food systems. The way we conduct agriculture has a major impact on both society and the environment within and outside the European Union. The CAP policy has been driven mainly by a production paradigm, corresponding to exigencies inherited from post-World War II, but totally obsolete today. This is why we urge that a different vision of CAP is adopted.

In our vision, the key challenges for future food policy include:

- Mitigating and adapting to climate change;
- Guaranteeing coherence with Sustainable Development Goals;
- Guaranteeing the sustainable use of natural resources;
- Avoiding negative impacts on water, soil and air;
- Cutting chemical inputs like pesticides and fertilisers as well as antibiotics;
- Tackling agriculture's contribution to biodiversity loss, acid rain and eutrophication;
- Ensuring animal welfare and reducing meat consumption and the associated resource use, health and climate effects;
- Ensuring land is available and affordable for small farmers;
- Establishing lively rural environments;
- Ensuring fair incomes for farmers and reducing inequalities between member states and regions;
- Supporting public health through adequate nutritious quality food for all;
- Avoiding food waste;
- Guaranteeing food sovereignty;
- Supporting a healthy European primary sector.

Agriculture must not become polarised by dividing land into perceived productive and unproductive areas. Instead, we must maintain a cohesive food system that redresses imbalances and distributes productivity outside the most-favoured areas.

Under the 2014-2020 Multiannual Financial Framework, €408.31 billion is earmarked for the CAP, the largest part of which is allocated to the first pillar, to directly support farmer incomes. Unfortunately, subsidies are granted to all farmers, whatever the nature of their activities. Less than 30% of EU agriculture spending goes to environmental and climate actions. Investments in organic farming systems account for a mere 1.5%. Because of the social destruction it leads to and the disaster it represents as far as biodiversity is concerned, it is worrying that agro-industrial farming should benefit so much from the CAP. Therefore, the budget should be reoriented so as to benefit more organic farming and short food chains.

The European agriculture model has a major impact on our environment: currently, European agriculture contributes 10.35% to the EU's total greenhouse gas emissions, while 44% of total EU

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water extraction is used for agriculture. Pollution from pesticides and fertilisers used in agriculture are a major cause of poor water quality and substantial decrease of insects, such as bees, that are responsible of pollination of our crops. Over the last 100 years, some 75% of plant genetic diversity has been lost by abandoning multiple local varieties in favour of genetically uniform ones. Today, 75% of the world's food production is generated from only 12 crops and five animal species. By clearing natural habitats for intensive monoculture, Europe loses 970 million tonnes of soil every year. The EU currently wastes around 88 million tonnes of food or 20% of total annual food production, costing an estimated €143 billion.

European agriculture also has a major impact on our society. Due to market deregulation, farmers are exposed to market volatility. In the EU, one in every four farms disappeared between 2003 and 2013. This trend has been exacerbated by the CAP promoting ever-larger and more specialised farms. Employment opportunities in the sector are declining. At the same time, 43 million EU citizens (8.5%) could not afford a quality meal every second day in 2015. Pesticide contamination, the large use of antibiotics in animal farming and unbalanced nutritional values result in public health issues, and therefore additional healthcare costs for European citizens.

If Europe does not make a determined step to create a sustainable food system, the cost to the European citizen will continue to increase. The new CAP must meet both current and future challenges.

We demand transparent and ambitious negotiations on CAP reform, ensuring strong political mandates and commitments for the co-legislators. The influence of agribusiness and multinational chemical companies must be limited. Negotiations must be done in the public interest resulting in a positive vision, which is profitable for farming communities rather than a handful of private interests. Finally, we urge the EU to sustain and raise its high quality food standards instead of participating in a race to the bottom that often results from free trade agreements implemented under the influence of the neoliberal economic agenda.

Moreover, while CAP reform is needed, we think that reforming the agricultural sector without reforming the whole food system would be ineffective. We will be unable to make a concrete shift towards sustainable agriculture unless we widen the scope from agriculture to food systems, which is why we support the idea of taking the debate beyond the CAP, towards creating a 'Common Food Policy'.

Our demands for reforming the CAP are to:

1. **Update CAP objectives:** we demand the general objective is updated. The new CAP must guarantee good-quality sustainable, healthy and local food for all Europeans. In the long run, the goal should be to achieve a complete agro-ecological transformation, that includes 100% organic production, and full European food sovereignty based on import resilience and fair trade.
2. **Change the nature of direct payments to embrace an organic and agro-ecological model:** agro-ecology is the way to convert our agriculture in an environmentally and socially



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responsible sector, able to face our current challenges. CAP payments must be based on results, linking them to criteria such as providing quality jobs, improving soil and water quality or animal welfare, boosting biodiversity. Payments must give a clear priority to farms applying organic and agro-ecological principles (see Annex I and II).

3. **Rebalance Pillars 1 and 2:** transfers from Pillar 2 to Pillar 1 should be prohibited, giving a clear strategic priority to Pillar 2. Pillar 2 payments must be based on impact rather than specific methods. Pillar 1's territoriality must be reinforced by transferring subsidies from a hectare-based system to one that prioritises ecosystem services.
4. **Make agriculture profitable:** farmers should be able to earn a decent income through fair and remunerative prices that exceed production costs. Farmer autonomy and input independence should be promoted. We need to mitigate volatility through a supply management system that matches supply with EU demand to avoid crisis when the market is unbalanced. The CAP must strive to maintain as many farms as possible and provide a fair income to farmers and farm workers. CAP must allow and support the combination of farming with other profitable services such as the production of sustainable energy and ecological tourism.
5. **Shorten food chains:** local food should be given a special facilitation. Production for local consumption should have a better direct payments margin. Legislation should help small farmers to produce, process and sell directly.
6. **Have a 'do no harm' policy:** external effects of the CAP on developing countries should be significantly cut and monitored. European production for domestic consumption must be favoured over exportation. Subsidies that favour exportation, even indirectly, must be cut. Keeping CAP as an EU level policy will help negotiating import/export rules that favour ecologically and socially responsible agriculture, actors, and societies.
7. **Reduce EU protein dependency:** EU protein autonomy should be reinforced by reducing the production of meat and dairy, especially in export-orientated intensive farms, and by increasing the production of EU vegetable proteins. We request implementation of a protein strategy that replaces imported soya, which drives land grabbing and destruction of tropical forests and savannah, with home-grown leguminous crops as part of a longer rotation on all arable land, stimulating local and regional feed markets. Pasture-based grazing should be prioritised.
8. **Apply the precautionary principle:** apply the precautionary principle (art. 191 Treaty on the Functioning of the EU) regarding chemical products used in agriculture more stringently to substances that risk endangering human health and ecosystems; ecological taxation by abolishing CAP aid for mineral fertilisers and pesticides; and no subsidies to GMOs and animals fed with GMOs.
9. **Set production standards:** set more coherent production standards in terms of sustainability, local traditions, health, safety, and animal welfare goals, aiming to close

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nutrient cycles, and promote standards that favour small agro-ecological farms over industrial farming. Member States should be allowed to compensate farmers for higher costs due to measures that go beyond EU regulation.

10. **Support small farms:** protect farmers from unfair competition imposed by international trade policy; mandatory higher payment rates for the first hectares/acres of land (according to the national average).
11. **Ensure youth access:** The CAP should offer possibilities to help young and new farmers to buy land and start a farm. A bureaucratic simplification must be applied to facilitate the generational change in farms.
12. **Ensure gender equality:** Acknowledging the women as driving force for development of innovative activities, the new CAP should support women in rural areas by, inter alia, providing social services and special incentives to encourage them taking part in the decision-making process especially within the LEADER framework.
13. **Exercise caution with precision farming, big data and big machinery lobbies:** whilst there is considerable scope for technologies, such as predictive models to forecast extreme weather/pest outbreaks, to plan farm work and interventions accordingly, we must beware of the not-so-hidden agenda of the 'innovation' and 'big data' lobbies. Development of new big data techniques or precision agriculture must be transparent, open source and with the participation of the farmers, to ensure farmer autonomy..
14. **Support research and training:** teaching agro-ecological practices must be mandatory in professional agricultural training and promoted through the Farming Advisory System (FAS). The EU should put in place a strategy to facilitate knowledge transfer via farmer-to-farmer and through publicly funded farmer advisory systems and participatory research. Using European Innovation Partnerships, which bring together researchers, farmers and other practitioners, test and spread agro-ecological practices via a participatory, community-based approach.
15. **Finance the transition:** farmers who decide to move towards an agro-ecological transition should be encouraged and supported to do so financially. Insurance-related tools are not a good solution and should not be financed by CAP.
16. **Ensure the CAP is coherent with other policies:** CAP policy objectives must be coordinated with rural development, regional development and other related programmes. The CAP should also be coherent with objectives for wildlife and nature conservation, sustainable water management, a circular economy, public health, international cooperation and development, and the prevention and mitigation of climate change. The respect of human and social rights of agricultural workers should be a condition to receive CAP subsidies. In order to ensure greater coherence between policy areas and governance levels the relevant European Parliament Committees, EU Councils and Commission Directorate Generals must be involved in the reform process.

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17. **Promote local seed use and exchange:** promoting local seeds and facilitating their exchange and circulation is essential. Incentives to local, established seeds, appropriate for the soil type, must be created through Pillar 2. Support the development of animal breed and seed varieties more adapted to environmentally friendly production methods. In addition, encourage the use of local traditional animal breed.
18. **Ensure animal welfare:** stricter standards for animal farms must be applied to be eligible for CAP subsidies. Animal transportation must be restricted and bodies violating this rule penalised by suspending CAP aid. The absolute maximum distance from farm to slaughterhouse must be fixed at 300 km (4 hours travelling). Grassland livestock must be prioritised through better targeting of direct payments. Live animal exports must be strictly regulated. Promote animal husbandry methods of raising animals that improve animal health and welfare that thus decrease the need for medication. The use of antibiotics must be strictly regulated and action against antimicrobial resistance (AMR) and compliance to these regulations must be a condition of CAP aid.
19. **Be cautious with the production of energy from biomass:** CAP subsidies and renewable energy incentives should not encourage the production of bioenergy when it has a negative impact on environment and land use.
20. **Implement subsidy ceiling:** a €50,000 ceiling on subsidies must be implemented. This can only be exceeded if the farm employs a large number of workers or has a significant social and environmental performance. Appropriate measures should be implemented to avoid contravening this measure (e.g. splitting the land to comply with the law).
21. **Simplify:** we are in favour of simplifying the CAP although not in the Commission's understanding of the word. We are against renationalising the CAP, which would only exacerbate a growing feeling of unfair competition among EU farmers. Instead, we demand a reduction in bureaucracy and greater clarity and transparency of CAP procedures.
22. **Raise more funds for monitoring:** to verify that the conditionality of CAP aids proposed in this resolution is applied, we demand the creation of a European monitoring system (at the EU level) for farms and producers receiving EU aid. A European research team should also be set up to monitor the effectiveness of environmental measures. Objectives, sub-goals and specific indicators need to be defined to allow evaluation.

## ANNEX I

The five principles that characterise an agro-ecological system (Altieri, 2002):

1. Recycling biomass and balancing nutrient flows and availability;
2. Securing favourable soil conditions for plant growth by enhancing organic matter;
3. Minimising losses of solar radiation, water and nutrients by managing microclimate and soil cover, and practising water harvesting;
4. Enhancing biological and genetic diversification on cropland;
5. Enhancing beneficial biological interactions and minimising the use of pesticides.

## ANNEX II

Organic agricultural land-management principles listed by IFOAM:

### Environmental aspects

- Good water and air quality – reducing stocking rates, managing manure and only using substances that have a limited impact on the agro-ecosystem;
- High on-farm biodiversity – conserving a high level of biological diversity to support a proper functioning agro-ecosystem and ecosystem services;
- Long-term stable soils – building and managing soil fertility and soil biological activity whilst maximising the recycling of nutrients and organic matter;
- Climate-change mitigation and adaptation – contributing to carbon sequestration, reducing energy use, optimised crop rotation and agroforestry.

### Socio-economic aspects

- Agricultural system diversity– preserving and developing farm genetic resources through the use of a diverse range of crop varieties and animal species;
- High animal welfare – providing farm animals with diets and living conditions which reflect their ecological role and allow them to express their natural behaviour;
- Aesthetic and resilient landscapes – ensuring the protection, enhancement and public accessibility to culturally and biologically diverse landscapes and features;
- Social capital – contributing to employment and the rural economy and interacting with the local community.