

PRESS RELEASE

March for agricultural reforms opens three days of protest at the informal agriculture council in Koblenz (Germany)

Koblenz/Brussels, 30/08/20 – Protestors rallied in the city of Koblenz at the start of three days of protest accompanying the informal EU agriculture summit. Farmers, beekeepers, food activists, environment, animal welfare and one-world protestors all demanded an end to EU farm subsidies that bankroll industrial farming and called for sweeping agriculture reforms.

The demonstrators represent the voices of hundreds of civil society and farming organisations and hundreds of thousands of citizens in Europe. In an [open letter](#) addressed to the ministers, they call for reforms that meet the objectives of halting biodiversity loss, climate neutrality and animal welfare, while offering support for measures that enable farmers to invest in the necessary agro-ecological transition.

Saskia Richartz from the German alliance “Wir haben es satt!” (We're fed up!), which organised the demonstration, said: “We are now literally fighting fires on all issues: the soil and harvests suffer from drought and intensification, insects are dying, animal welfare and working conditions are being abused to cut costs, and diverse, smaller-scale farms – which are essential for local food production – cannot survive the intense competition for land and cheap food. It is high time the EU discontinues blind payments to agro-businesses. All public investments should exclusively support farmers in delivering the agro-ecological transition to reduce emissions and environmental impacts and improve animal and social welfare”.

Eric Gall, policy manager at the association of organic food and farming in Europe (IFOAM Organics Europe), said: “The reform must align agriculture policies with the EU Green Deal and the recently published Farm to Fork Strategy. They require the EU to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in all sectors, to halve pesticide and antibiotic use in agriculture by 2030, and reduce fertiliser use by 20 per cent in the same timeframe. The ambition is to convert at least one quarter of the farmland in Europe to organic farming within the next 10 years. The EU’s farm and subsidy policies must underpin these goals and help farmers to transition to organic and agroecological farming.”

The German agriculture minister, Julia Klöckner, has invited her counterparts from across the EU to her home region of Rhineland-Palatinate, along the rivers Moselle and Rhine. As Germany presides over the Council agenda, Klöckner has the challenging task of leading the negotiations on the EU agriculture reform to a political conclusion in the Council. She expects to close a deal in October. Aside from wine, canapés and river cruises, ministers will tackle an agenda of farm subsidies, Corona aid and animal welfare.

Demonstration	#AgrarwendeAnpacken
When:	Sunday, 30 August, starting 1 p.m.
Where:	Koblenz station to Koblenz Castle & convention centre
Photo protest:	„Your farming policies are broken!“
When:	Tuesday, 1 September 2020, 9:45 a.m.
Where:	Rhein-Mosel-Hall (Julius-Wegeler-Straße 4, 56068 Koblenz)
Protestcamp	(hosted by BUNDjugend Rheinland-Pfalz, Friends of the Earth Youth)
When:	from Sunday 30/08 until Tuesday 1/09
Where:	Kaiserin-Augusta-Anlagen (below Koblenz Castle/Schlossstufen)

For pictures and more information: www.wir-haben-es-satt.de/presse/ (in German)

Press contacts:

Saskia Richartz, spokesperson at the protests (Wir haben es satt!) (English & German)

Wir haben es Satt! ("We are fed up!"/"We are sick of it!") is a German campaigning platform for sustainable agriculture of around 60 farming and civil society organisations active on issues of agriculture, environment, animal welfare, food activism, consumer protection, development cooperation and social justice. It has been campaigning for a political shift towards environmentally and socially just farming and food production (*Agrarwende*), since 2010, and is best known for its annual demonstration in January that mobilises tens of thousands of people to demonstrate for change in the streets of Berlin. www.wir-haben-es-satt.de

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IFOAM Organics Europe is the European umbrella organisation for organic food and farming. It advocates for a transformation of food and farming, based on the principles of organic agriculture – health, ecology, fairness and care. www.organicseurope.bio

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