

Open letter to
Commissioner Janusz Wojciechowski
DG Agri Director General Wolfgang Burtscher
DG Agri Head of Unit DDG1.C.2 Jean-Marc Trarieux
DG Agri Head of Unit DDG1.C.1 Gijs Schiltuis

Cc:

President Ursula Von der Leyen
First Vice-President Timmermans
Commissioner Stella Kyriakides
Commissioner Virginijus Sinkevičius
DG Agri Deputy Director General DDG1 Maria Angeles Benitez-Salas
DG Agri Deputy Director General DDG2 General Mihail Dimitru
DG Agri Director DDG1.C Tassos Haniotis
DG Agri Deputy Head of Unit DDG1.C.2 Vincent Cordonnier
DG Agri Deputy Head of Unit DDG1.C.1 Ricard Ramon y Sumoy

Brussels, November 17th, 2020

RE: Representation of peasant, agroecological and organic farmers at Agricultural Outlook conference

Dear Commissioner Wojciechowski,
Dear Mr. Burtscher,
Dear Mr. Trarieux,
Dear Mr. Schiltuis,

We, organisations representing, or working with and supporting peasant, organic and agroecological farmers are writing to ask that these farmers are well represented among the speakers at the forthcoming EU Agricultural Outlook Conference, as well as other high level events about agriculture that will take place in the future.

We deeply regret that no representative of small and medium sustainable farmers' organisations is among the speakers in the program available to date. Likewise, no representative of small and medium sustainable farmers' organisations was invited to contribute at the Outlook Conference preparatory workshop, organised on October 21st-22nd.

Thousands of farmers all over Europe have been testing innovative farming and socio-economic models to improve the impact of agriculture on nature and to better meet citizens' expectations on reducing

pesticides use or improving animal welfare and providing good food through shorter food chains. These farmers could be presented as positive models in such a Conference.

If Europe truly wants to transition to fair, healthy and environmentally-friendly food systems, in line with the Green Deal and the Farm to Fork strategy, it should build on lessons learnt and successes of farmers implementing agroecology and organic farming, which are relevant for all farmers who want to contribute to a transition of our food systems. To encourage fellow farmers to take up models that promote local and short supply chains, the health of ecosystems and the well-being of our societies, sustainable farming systems need to be identified and scaled up. The Agricultural Outlook Conference will be a crucial moment for this exchange to happen and be more widely promoted across Europe.

Too often farmers are depicted as one whole-encompassing category, without recognising that farmers across Europe are diverse and embrace different kinds of farming. Too often farmers are depicted as being against high environmental or societal ambitions, while large numbers of farmers across Europe work together with nature and in the utmost respect of all farm workers. As such, the farmers we represent have embraced the Farm to Fork strategy and support ambitious action to make our farming systems more sustainable.

Let the EU Agricultural Outlook Conference overcome these misunderstandings and be a space where constructive dialogue can encourage all to embrace higher ambition, starting from the experience of those who cultivate biodiversity and build resilient communities. For this reason we ask that at least one small -medium agroecological farmer has a seat among the speakers at the forthcoming EU Agricultural Outlook Conference, as well as other high-level conferences relevant to transforming the food and farming system.

We trust you will make the Conference an important stepping stone in the just and inclusive transition envisaged by the EU Green Deal.

Yours sincerely,

European Coordination Via Campesina
IFOAM Organics Europe
Slow Food Europe
Friends of the Earth Europe
Urgenci