

PRESS RELEASE

150 civil society groups call for reform of European agricultural policies

Brussels, 6 March 2017 – Over 150 European civil society organisations representing environmental and social justice networks, organic farmers, pastoralists, peasants, sustainable forestry groups, health groups, animal welfare organisations, consumer rights bodies, development, fair-trade, cultural heritage and rural development organisations, consumer co-operatives, sustainable tourism and crafts associations from 25 EU countries have today called on EU leaders to carry out a radical reform of the CAP and related policies.

The call comes as agricultural ministers meet in Brussels [1] to discuss future reform of the EU's Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and also in light of the public consultation [2] launched by the European Commission on the future of the policy.

In a common statement titled '[Good Food, Good Farming – Now](#)' [3] the signatories state that the current food and farming system is no longer functioning, since it props up the agro-industrial status quo, and call for a fundamental reform of Europe's broken agricultural policy. [4] Such a reform is urgently needed to enable a transition towards a food and farming system which supports fair and diverse food and farming economies, is underpinned by viable alternatives such as organic and agro-ecological farming, and which respects the environment and animal welfare, supports citizens' health, and is publicly accountable.

Stephen Meredith, Deputy Policy Manager, IFOAM EU said: "Civil society calls for a fundamental reform of the Common Agricultural Policy because we need a new deal between farmers and citizens. The current CAP supports a broken system - with the countryside losing farmers, good food not reaching all people and the planet being threatened".

"CAP is public money and should deliver tangible environmental and socio-economic outcomes such as jobs, rural vitality, biodiversity, soil and water quality".

**NOTES**

1. [Agriculture and Fisheries Council, Agenda, 6 March 2017](#)
2. The European Commission's [Public Consultation on 'Modernising and Simplifying the Common Agricultural Policy \(CAP\)'](#) began on 2 February and is open until the 2 May 2017.
3. Full statement: [Civil Society Statement on the Reform of European Agricultural Policies](#)
4. Some problems with the food and farming system in the EU:
  - [Farms are disappearing at an alarming rate](#): 1 out of every 4 EU farms have vanished between 2003 and 2013.

- Globally, more than 90% of crop varieties have disappeared from farmers' fields and 75% of the world's food is generated from only 12 plants and 5 animal species (FAO (2004): Building on Gender, Agrobiodiversity and Local Knowledge ).
- Europe's land footprint totals 269 million hectares - with 40% of this used outside of Europe - an area almost the size of France and Italy combined (Fischer G., S. Tramberend, M. Bruckner and M. Lieber, forthcoming. Quantifying the land footprint of Germany and the EU using a hybrid accounting model. Dessau: German Federal Environment Agency).
- [20% of the food produced in the EU \(88 million tonnes\) is wasted annually](#), while 43 million EU citizens (8.5%) are [not able to afford](#) a quality meal every second day.
- High levels of [antibiotic use in animal farming contributes to antimicrobial resistance \(AMR\)](#), which could evolve into a global crisis killing some 10 million people annually by 2050.
- In 2014, almost 400,000 tonnes of pesticides (active ingredients) were sold in the EU, showing an increase compared to the three previous years, according to [Eurostat](#).
- [Agriculture currently represents approximately 10% of total EU greenhouse gas emissions](#).
- Emissions from livestock, such as ammonia, significantly contribute to air pollution, which is responsible for over 400,000 deaths in the EU annually according to the [European Environment Agency](#).

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