

PRESS RELEASE

ECOLOGICAL FOCUS AREAS PESTICIDES-FREE, BUT HOW GREEN WILL THE NEXT CAP BE?

BRUSSELS, 14 JUNE 2017 – The organic food and farming movement (IFOAM EU) welcomes today's European Parliament backing of the European Commission's proposal to ban pesticides on Ecological Focus Areas (EFAs). However, we warn that MEPs and the CAP post-2020 must aim higher at protecting the environment from harmful agriculture practices. The MEPs' decision sends a political signal that agrochemicals are not compatible with agroecological farming practices and should not be allowed on EFAs. Still a lot needs to be done to implement the principle of public money for public goods under the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP).

IFOAM EU calls on MEPs to lead the way and go even further with commitments to work towards more fundamental change of the CAP post-2020. With the next reform, the European Commission has a huge opportunity to promote a full transition of the European agriculture towards sustainable farming. Today's decision of the Parliament gives the Commission a necessary push to build strong political will for a new approach to CAP payments that only support farmers delivering for the environment, public health and rural areas.

"Banning pesticides on the Ecological Focus Areas is a first step, but the CAP post-2020 must aim higher setting out a new deal between farmers and citizens on sustainable agriculture of the future. The current "greening" measures have so far had little positive impact on the ground. A modernised and simplified CAP with sustainability at its heart is best placed to recognize the value agriculture can deliver to rural and urban communities, such as jobs, biodiversity, soil and water quality. Only by directing public money at farmers delivering environment and socio-economic outcomes, can it be clear to EU citizens that taxpayers money is used to support healthy farms, people and planet," says Stephen Meredith, IFOAM EU Deputy Policy Manager.

Ecological Focus Areas are part of the so-called "greening" measures introduced in the last CAP reform. They foresee that 5% of the arable land of farms above 15 hectares must be primarily devoted to increasing biodiversity on farmland areas. The European Parliament Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development had adopted a resolution to veto a new Commission's proposal to ban pesticides in those areas, but MEPs sitting in plenary today failed to gather the required majority to veto the proposal by a few votes only.

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Notes for editors:

- 1) During a vote in the Plenary, the European Parliament resolution to veto the European Commission pesticides ban on Ecological Focus Areas failed to gather the necessary absolute majority: 363 MEPs voted in favour of rejecting the Commission's proposal, when 367 were needed. 267 MEPs voted against the rejection, and 43 abstained.
- 2) Further details of IFOAM EU's position on the next CAP reform are set out in a Vision Paper [A CAP for healthy farms, healthy people and healthy planet](#).

IFOAM EU represents more than 180 member organizations in the EU-28, the EU accession countries and EFTA. Member organizations span the entire organic food chain and beyond: from farmers and processors organisations, retailers, certifiers, consultants, traders and researchers to environmental and consumer advocacy bodies



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