

A coalition of European social movements, farmers organisations, and NGOs demand to put access to quality affordable food and fair market prices for farmers at core the of EU agriculture and food policy

Press Release

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Proposals from the European Commission to reform the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) after 2013 show signs of fairer distribution of subsidies, according to the coalition. [1]

Despite this positive development the communication came short on proposals for stopping the collapse of family farming in Europe and dumping in developing countries, according to the coalition. The plans outlined also fail to address correctly climate change and the protection of biodiversity.

The communication from the European Commission lays out a range of laudable goals for reforming agriculture in Europe but fails to make strong proposals by only “adapting” the current tools. Furthermore, it makes clear that the CAP 2013 proposal based on global competitiveness will let down its own farmers and consumers.

The communication suggests some elements for social improvements such as a ceiling for direct payments linked to employment, payments for small farms, and the maintenance of payments coupled to production to sustain farms in disadvantaged rural areas. However, proposals show that the European Commission continues to believe that agriculture and food markets are efficient and that “competitiveness” delivers a fair solution. The European and global crisis have shown the contrary: “free” market orientation and international trade rules have failed.

The coalition believes that a real reform is needed to promote environmental and socially responsible forms of farming, strengthening food production to feed people in their own regions, instead of export oriented and import dependent model, as well as promoting sustainable family farms instead of large industrialized units. This reform requires regulatory tools such as supply management, intervention and public storage in case of conjunctural sectorial crisis and border regulation to avoid low cost imports.

To face the big challenges for the environment, local production cycles can respond to the future scarcity and pollution of natural resources. The latter requires support of good agricultural practices, including animal welfare requirements on all farms, not just cross compliance linked with direct payments¹. An agricultural model focused first on domestic market, both here and in the developing countries, is better for farmers in Europe and worldwide. The CAP should reward environmental sustainability, stop supporting unsustainable practices and achieve a balanced development of territories by including support for rural employment, diversity of food systems and locally grown production.

At this stage, the communication does not measure up to the expectations of food sovereignty, income and employment in agriculture, sustainable management practices and protection of natural resources. Real tools for supply management and market regulations are essential and will require strong political will to challenge the framework and the policies of international agreements. The coalition of farmers’ groups, social movements and NGOs in Europe call for a Common Agricultural and Food Policy for consumers and farmers in Europe and worldwide, not for the export-oriented food industry.

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[1] List of organizations (part of the “European movement for food sovereignty and another CAP”):

Africa Europe Faith & Justice Network (AEFJN), ABC Platform (NL), ACORD Africa, Agrarbündnis Austria (Austrian Platform for Food Sovereignty), Aseed (NL), ATTAC Austria, ATTAC Europe, ATTAC Catalunya, ATTAC Spain, Eco Rurales Association (Ro), European Coordination Via Campesina (ECVC), Fondazione Diritti Genetici (It),

¹ Indeed, despite present cross compliance, factory farms continue to develop

Food & Water Europe, Friends of the Earth Europe (Be), Plataforma Rural/ Alianzas por un Mundo Rural Vivo de España, Practical Action (UK), Protect the Future/Védegylet (Hungary), Slow Food (De), Urgenci, the international network of CSA, Wervel, Working group for a just and justified agriculture (Be).



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