

Open letter: Civil Society alarmed by the prospect of regressive Common Agricultural Policy reform

Dear Member of the European Parliament,

We are writing to you to address the way the current reform of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) has been managed by the European Parliament's Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development (AGRI).

The future of European agricultural and food policies is a societal issue that concerns us all. The majority of AGRI MEPs have ignored citizens' calls and have failed to ensure that their concerns are fairly represented. This comes as a major disappointment to European citizens who had hoped that increased power to the European Parliament would close, rather than increase, the democratic gap the EU is facing.

The CAP is in crisis: the bulk of its considerable budget is distributed unfairly between farmers, with no clear policy objective in mind, while only small amounts support sustainable farming and rural areas. Instead, subsidies have driven, and continue to support, unhealthy and environmentally damaging approaches to farming and land management, poor animal welfare conditions and hindering the development of agriculture in developing countries. The public has repeatedly voiced these concerns but so far they have largely been ignored (a 2011 Eurobarometer shows that 77% of European citizens want more environmental conditionality attached to CAP subsidies).

Our organisations support the principle of public money for public goods in agriculture and rural development policy. This means public support must only be given to farmers in return for a healthy and vibrant countryside, and environmentally benign food production. Subsidies which negatively affect our environment, our health, jobs, developing countries and animal welfare should be abolished.

For the first time ever, MEPs have co-decision with Council to vote for change in agriculture policy. However, in January 2013, the Parliament's AGRI Committee voted for a position that would de facto take the policy backwards.

Under the AGRI Committee's vision for the CAP, money would continue to be unfairly distributed and support would be channelled to even the most polluting farming practices, with some farmers even paid twice for the same environmental practices (a principle going against the basic treaties of the EU). In essence, the AGRI Committee's position goes against the environment, our health, jobs, animal welfare and developing countries. This also goes against the expressed opinions of the other committees in the European Parliament.

But you can change this! Up until now the debate has been controlled by a small group of MEPs defending vested interests in the larger AGRI Committee. In March, the full European Parliament will decide upon its final negotiating position and the opportunity to prevent a backwards and biased reform must be grasped with both hands.

The European Parliament has proven that it can change destructive policies for the better, most recently with the plenary vote on the Common Fisheries Policy's Basic Regulation. Now is the time to do the same for the CAP.

We ask you, as public representatives, to act on behalf of real public interest when you vote on CAP reform in March, upholding the crucial role of the European Parliament.

Our organisations are at your disposal to help in reaching constructive solutions.



BirdLife Europe



APRODEV
Association of World Council of Churches related Development Organisations in Europe



European Environmental Bureau



Eurogroup for Animals



European Public Health and Agriculture Consortium



WWF



IFOAM EU Group



Friends of the Earth Europe

Friends of the Earth Europe



Arc 2020



Greenpeace



Climate Action Network Europe



Europarc Federation



European Community of Consumer Co-operatives



International alliance of Catholic development agencies



Pesticide Action Network Europe



Slow Food



Oxfam



Butterfly Conservation Europe



European Forum on Nature Conservation and Pastoralism



European Public Health Alliance



CEE Bankwatch Network



Compassion in world farming



Transport & Environment



Fundación Quebrantahuesos



Four Paws



Natuurpunt



Aves



Natagora



Oeuvre d'Assistance aux Bêtes d'Abattoirs



UGT FITAG Industria y Trabajadores Agrarios



Legambiente



BirdWatchIreland



Vogelbescherming Nederland



Nabu



Finnish Federation for Animal Welfare Associations



Asociación Nacional para la Defensa de los Animales



Sociedad Española de Ornitología –
SEO/BirdLife



Centre for sustainable alternatives



Raptor protection of Slovakia



Centre of environmental and ethical
education Živica



Czech Society for Ornithology



Polish Society for the Protection of
Birds



Friends of the Earth Cyprus



Deutscher Naturschutzring



Animal Action Greece



Butterfly Conservation UK



Latvian Ornithological Society



Hungarian Ornithological and Nature
Conservation Society



Ligue pour la Protection des Oiseaux



Centrum rozvoje Česká Skalice



Latvian Botanists Society



Meine Landwirtschaft



Voice Of Irish Concern for the Environment



Arche Noah



Slovak Ornithological Society/BirdLife Slovakia



BirdLife Finland



Natur & emwelt



Euronatur



Alka Wildlife



Fundación Ecología y Desarrollo



Ecoinstitut



Children of the Earth



Estonian Ornithological Society



FIAN Belgium



FIRAB



AIAB



UPBio - FederBio



Milieu Defensie



Amphibian and Reptile Conservation



Royal Society for the Protection of Birds



DOPPS
Birdlife Slovenia



Lega Italiana Protezione Uccelli



Bat Conservation Trust



Buglife



National Trust
National Trust



Naturfreunde Österreich



Nature friends International



Dierenbescherming



The Mammal Society



Plantlife



Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals



Naturfreunde Deutschlands



Hellenic Ornithological Society



Quercus - Associação Nacional de Conservação da Natureza



Salmon and Trout Association



Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust



Northern Ireland Environment Link



The Wildlife Trust



Campaign to Protect Rural England



Djurens Rätt



Dyrenes Beskyttelse



The Finnish NGDO Platform to the EU



Greeninitiative Association



DAPHNE CZ - Institute of Applied Ecology



Sociedade Portuguesa para o Estudo das Aves



Asociația Salvati Dunarea si Delta



Organizatia ecologista Mare Nostrum



Asociația Grupul de Inițiativă "Radu Anton Roman"



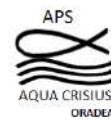
Centrul pentru Resurse Civice



Asociația Tura in Natura Sibiu



Clubul de Ciclism 'NAPOCA'



APS Aqua Crisius Oradea



Asociația Terra Ecologica



Asociația Centrul de Ecologie si Turism Maramures



Association of Ecotourism in Romania (AER)



Societatea Carpatina Ardeleana – Satu Mare



Asociația Altitudine



Societatea Ornitologica Română



Natuurmonumenten



Young Friends of the Earth Europe



Lithuanian Fund for Nature



The Swedish Consumers' Association



PRO-BIO Association of organic farmers



Terra-1530



Natur och Miljö r.f.



Ökobüro



Mouvement Écologique



Birdlife Cyprus



Terra Cypria



Společnost pro zvířata



Swedish Ornithological Society



Lithuanian Ornithological Society



Glopolis



Fundatia Adept



Za Zemiata



Suomen Luonnonsuojeluliitto



Danish Ornithological Society



Centre for Transport and Energy



Danish Ecological Council



European Federation of National Associations of Water Services



CEEweb for Biodiversity



Swedish Society for Nature Conservation



France Nature Environnement



Bulgarian Society for the Protection of Birds



BirdLife Malta



Friends of the Earth- CEPA



BirdLife Austria



Focus Eco Center



Estonian Fund for Nature



Bumblebee Conservation Trust



Friends of the Earth England



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Bond Beter Leefmilieu



Dierenartsen Zonder Grenzen



Ethisch Verantwoord Alternatief



Network Bewust Verbruiken



Oxfam Belgium



Vereniging voor Ecologisch Leven en Tuinieren



Vredeseilanden



Alliance of Associations Polish Green Network



Acção, Liberdade, Desenvolvimento, Educação, Investigação, Ambiente

IDEA

Irish Doctors Environmental Association



Eco Ruralis EcEC



Fondo Ambiente Italiano



Umwelt dachverband



Touring Club Italiano



Associazione per l'Agricoltura Biodinamica



Greenpeace Spain



SOCIETA' ITALIANA DI ECOLOGIA DEL PAESAGGIO



Italia Nostra



Calla - Association for Preservation of the Environment



Centre for Food Policy, City University London



Food Matters



The Permaculture Association



Deutscher Verband für Landschaftspflege e.V. (DVL)



Conservatoire d'Espaces Naturels Languedoc-Roussillon



Aliadas Por La Soberanía Alimentaria



Acció Ecologista Agro



Acciónnatura



Asociación Acima. Comunicación e Información Medioambiental



Amigos de la Tierra España



Asociación Concejo de la Mesta



Asociación Cultural Caldero Mágico



Asociación de Agricultura y Ganadería Ecológica "La Tanganilla"



Asociación de Consumidores Ecológicos La Tierrallana



FOTOGRAFÍA Y BIODIVERSIDAD
Asociación Fotografía Y Biodiversidad



Asociación de Forestales de España



Asociación Tudanca



Xarxa per Una Nova Cultura de L'Aigua



SOS Perdiz Roja



Asociación Pastores por el Monte Mediterráneo

Asociación De Pastores/as La Gaiata
Asociación de Pastores/as La Gaiata



HELLENIC RANGE AND PASTURE SOCIETY – HERPAS



FUNDACIÓN GLOBAL NATURE
Fundación Global Nature



Plataforma en Defensa de l'Ebre



Asociación Trashumancia y Naturaleza



Asociación La Raya



Fundación Félix Rodríguez De La Fuente



Federación Andaluza de Consumidores y Productores Ecológicos
Federación Andaluza de Consumidores y Productores Ecológicos



Xarxa de l'Observatori del Deute en la Globalització (ODG)



Fundación Oso Pardo



Xarxa de Custòdia del Territori



Plataforma de Toledo en Defensa del Tajo



Centro Ibérico De Restauración Fluvial



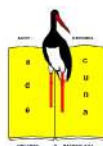
Sociedade Galega de Ornitología



Asociación Galega de Custodia del Territorio



Asociación Montaña De Babia y Luna



Asociación Defensa de la Cultura y la Naturaleza (ADECUNA)



Grupo de Rehabilitación de la Fauna Autóctona y de Su Hábitat, (GREFA)



Union Nacional de Asociaciones de CAZA



Asociación Geográfica Ambiental



Fédération Inter-Environnement Wallonie



Plataforma Contra la Especulación Urbanística y Ambiental de Candeleda



MEDITERRANEAN SOS Network



Asociación para el Estudio y Mejora de los Salmónidos (AEMS-Ríos Con Vida)



Slow Food®
Carpe Diem - Madrid
Slow Food Madrid



Red Montañas



Asociación Territorios Vivos



Asociación Valor Ecológico



Cooperativa Olivarera Los Pedroches



Slow Food Gredos Tiétar
Slow Food Gredos - Tiétar



Plataforma en Defensa de los Ríos Tajo y Alberche de Talavera de La Reina



Federación de Asociaciones de Vecinos El Ciudadano de Toledo



Red Ciudadana por Una Nueva Cultura del Agua en el Tajo/Tejo y sus Ríos



Fundación por una Nueva Cultura del Agua



Fundación Tormes-EB



Comisiones Obreras (CC.OO)
Federación Agroalimentaria



Fondo para la Protección de los Animales Salvajes (FAPAS)



Ecologistas en Acción



Confederación de Consumidores y Usuarios (CECU)



Red de Semillas: Resembrando e Intercambiando



Foro Asturias Sostenible



Fondo Amigos del Buitre

FORO DE REDES Y ENTIDADES DE CUSTODIA DEL TERRITORIO – FRECT



Sociedad Española de Agricultura Ecológica



Asociación para la Recuperación del Bosque Autóctono (ARABA)



Grupo de Acción para el Medio Ambiente (GRAMA)



Plataforma Jarama Vivo



Unión Internacional de Conservación de la Naturaleza – Comité Español UICN



Federación Estatal de Pastores



Associació Valenciana de Custòdia i Gestió Responsable del Territori



Grupo Ornitológico Balear (GOB)

Red NCA Júcar

Red por una Nueva Cultura del Agua del Júcar



Convivium Amalur Gipuzkoa Donostia



Red Andaluza de Custodia del Territorio (Ínsulas)



ZO CSOP JARO Jaromer



Instituto de Desarrollo Comunitario



Plataforma Salvemos el Henares



Health & environment Alliance



Forest Stewardship Council - Spain



Garden Organic



Susila Dharma International Association



UK Food Group



New Economics Foundation



Réseau Cohérence



Fédération Nationale d'Agriculture Biologique



Red Española de Desarrollo Rural



Association 4D



Générations Futures



CIVAM



Le mouvement associatif de Terre de Liens



Ecologie, Développement Durable, Démocratie



Fondation Nicolas Hulot pour la nature et l'homme



Agir pour l'Environnement



La Fédération Nationale des Parcs
Naturels Régionaux



Sustainable Water Network



An Taisce – the National Trust for
Ireland



Les Amis
de la Terre
Les Amis de la Terre



Risteco



EATING CITY

Media advisory:

More than 270 civil society organizations call for a CAP reform that supports sustainable farming and rural areas - not business as usual

Brussels, Wednesday 28 February 2013 Today an open letter signed by over 270 organisations from across Europe was sent to all Members of the European Parliament (MEPs)[1]. The letter voices Civil Society's concerns on the current reforms of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and how it has been poorly managed by the European Parliament's Agriculture and Rural Development Committee (AGRI Committee), in the lead up to the plenary vote planned on 13 March.

The vote on 13 March is crucial as it now gives all MEPs, for the first time, the power and opportunity to cast their ballot on the CAP, which makes up 40% of the EU budget [2]. The AGRI Committee failed to make forward-looking decisions that would improve the long-term viability of farming, address economic and social problems in our rural communities and safeguard food security. If this position were to be confirmed, money would continue to flow to subsidies which negatively affect our environment, jobs, good farming practices, our health, developing countries and animal welfare [3].

The signatories represent more than 270 organisations: from farming to animal welfare, environment, church, development and health organisations, and utilities [4]. These organisations all call for the public interest to be genuinely taken into account when voting on the CAP reform in March. The European Parliament has already proven that it can make the right choices for the environment, society and the green economy, most recently with the plenary vote on the Common Fisheries Policy's Basic Regulation.

For BirdLife Europe, the European Environmental Bureau (EEB), the IFOAM EU Group and WWF, turning this policy around would mean that MEPs vote for change in the following way:

"More than 270 civil society organisations in Europe, representing tens of millions of citizens, are not to be ignored. The AGRI Committee vote only reflected vested interests and not the public interest." **Faustine Defosse, EEB agriculture policy officer** said. *"Members of the European Parliament should not disregard the citizens' call but should instead vote in Plenary for a greening, which includes compulsory measures for all farmers who receive subsidies, and ensure that our money is used for the common good."* She added.

Sébastien Godinot, Economist at WWF European Policy Office states: *"The European Parliament Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development has voted through a proposal to pay farmers twice for exactly the same environmental measure. This is one of the measures the Plenary must oppose. Not only is it illegal under EU law, but it could result in billions of euros a year taken from environment programmes that are already suffering from budgets cuts. The loss will be directly felt as farming will carry on with a business as usual attitude while squandering chances to tackle problems like climate change and the loss of biodiversity."*

"It is astonishing to see that a majority of the members in the AGRI Committee do not share the view that you should respect European legislation when receiving subsidies," states **Trees Robijns, EU Agriculture and Bioenergy Policy Officer at BirdLife Europe**. *"NGOs from across Europe feel that this type of behaviour cannot continue. We need to see the European Parliament turn this around and make everybody equally respectful of the law."*

"The AGRI Committee has chosen to place a disproportionate emphasis on costly income stabilization insurance schemes that encourage risk taking and only benefit insurance companies. Instead comprehensive sustainable farming approaches need to be clearly embedded in Pillar 2, building on strong greening requirements in Pillar 1" said **Stephen Meredith, IFOAM EU Group Policy Coordinator**. *"MEPs must shift the CAP towards greater ecological, economic and social sustainability by prioritising environmental investments and social and economic improvements. To push for change, thematic sub-programmes for HNV and organic farming need to be established, as they both bring together support from all rural development measures."*

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Notes to the editor:

[1] Link to the open letter in [French](#), [German](#) and [English](#)

http://www.birdlife.org/community/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/EP-Open-letter-on-CAP-with-logos_EN.pdf

[2] For the first time, the Common Agricultural Policy is decided through co-decision process.

[3] If you would like to get more information, take a look at the following [Infosheet on the CAP](#)

<http://www.birdlife.org/community/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/Policy-brief-Final.pdf>

[4] The 276 signatories are:

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Acção, Liberdade, Desenvolvimento, Educação, Investigação, Ambiente

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Acció Ecologista Agro

Acciónatura

Agir pour l'Environnement

AIAB

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Asociación Silveira Serranía de Ronda

Asociación Territorios Vivos

Asociación Trashumancia y Naturaleza

Asociación Tudanca

Asociación Valor Ecológico

Asociatia Altitudine

Asociatia Centrul de Ecologie si Turism Maramures

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Asociația Terra Ecologica
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Associazione per L'Agricoltura Biodinamica
Aves
Bat Conservation Trust
BirdLife Austria
Birdlife Cyprus
BirdLife Europe
BirdLife Finland
BirdLife Malta
Birdlife Slovenia
BirdWatchIreland
Bond Beter Leefmilieu
Buglife
Bulgarian Society for the Protection of Birds
Bumblebee Conservation Trust
Butterfly Conservation Europe
Butterfly Conservation UK
Calla - Association for Preservation of the Environment
Campaign for Real Farming
Campaign to Protect Rural England
CEE Bankwatch Network
CEEweb for Biodiversity
Centre for Food Policy, City University London
Centre for sustainable alternatives
Centre for Transport and Energy
Centre of environmental and ethical education Živica
Centro Ibérico De Restauración Fluvial
Centrul pentru Resurse Civice
Centrum rozvoje Česká Skalice
Children of the Earth
Church of Sweden
CIVAM
Climate Action Network Europe
Clubul de Cicloturism 'NAPOCA'
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Compassion in world farming
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Conservatoire d'Espaces Naturels Languedoc-Roussillon
Convivium Amalur Gipuzkoa Donostia
Convivium Slow Food València
Cooperativa Olivarera Los Pedroches
Czech Society for Ornithology
Danish Ecological Council
Danish Ornithological Society
DAPHNE CZ - Institute of Applied Ecology
Deutscher Naturschutzring
Deutscher Verband für Landschaftspflege e.V. (DVL)
Dierenartsen Zonder Grenzen
Dierenbescherming
Djurens Rätt
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EcoNexus

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Ethisch Verantwoord Alternatief
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Federación de Asociaciones de Vecinos El Ciudadano de Toledo
Federación Estatal de Pastores
Fédération Inter-Environnement Wallonie
Fédération Nationale d'Agriculture Biologique
Federation of Environmental Organizations of Cyprus
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Finnish Federation for Animal Welfare Associations
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Fondo Ambiente Italiano
Fondo Amigos del Buitre
FORO DE REDES Y ENTIDADES DE CUSTODIA DEL TERRITORIO – FRECT
Fondo para la Protección de los Animales Salvajes (FAPAS)
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Friends of the Earth England
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Friends of the Earth- CEPA
Fundación Ecología y Desarrollo
Fundación Félix Rodríguez De La Fuente
Fundación Global Nature
Fundación Internacional para la Restauración de Ecosistemas
Fundación Migres
Fundación Oso Pardo
Fundación por una Nueva Cultura del Agua
Fundación Quebrantahuesos
Fundación Tormes-EB
Fundatia Adept
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IFOAM EU Group
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Irish Doctors Environmental Association
Italia Nostra

La Fédération Nationale des Parcs Naturels Régionaux
Latvian Botanists Society
Latvian Ornithological Society
Le mouvement associatif de Terre de Liens
Lega Italiana Protezione Uccelli
Legambiente
Les Amis de la Terre
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Lithuanian Ornithological Society
Manos Unidas
MEDITERRANEAN SOS Network
Meine Landwirtschaft
Milieu Defensie
Mouvement Ecologique
Nabu
Natagora
National Trust
Natur & Umwelt
Natur och Miljö r.f.
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Naturfreunde Österreich
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Natuurpunt
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Plataforma Contra la Especulación Urbanística y Ambiental de Candeleda
Plataforma de Toledo en Defensa del Tajo
Plataforma en Defensa de l'Ebre
Plataforma en Defensa de los Ríos Tajo y Alberche de Talavera de La Reina
Plataforma Jarama Vivo
Plataforma Salvemos el Henares
Polish Society for the Protection of Birds
PRO-BIO Association of organic farmers
Quercus - Associação Nacional de Conservação da Natureza
Raptor protection of Slovakia
Red Andaluza de Custodia del Territorio (Ínsulas)
Red Ciudadana por Una Nueva Cultura del Agua en el Tajo/Tejo y sus Ríos
Red de Semillas: Resembrando e Intercambiando
Red Española de Desarrollo Rural
Red Montañas
Red por una Nueva Cultura del Agua del Júcar
Reseau agriculture durable
Réseau Cohérence
Risteco
Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals
Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
Salmon and Trout Association
Slovak Ornithological Society/BirdLife Slovakia
Slow Food
Slow Food Araba – Álava
Slow Food Gredos - Tiétar
Slow Food Madrid
Sociedad Española de Agricultura Ecológica
Sociedad Española de Ornitología – SEO/BirdLife
Sociedade Galega de Ornitología

Sociedade Portuguesa para o Estudo das Aves
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Societatea Carpatina Ardeleana – Satu Mare
Societatea Ornitologica Romana
SOS Perdiz Roja
Společnost pro zvířata
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The Mammal Society
The Permaculture Association
The Swedish Consumers' Association
The Wildlife Trust
Touring Club Italiano
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TRENCA
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Union Nacional de Asociaciones de CAZA
UPBio - FederBio
Vereniging voor Ecologisch Leven en Tuinieren
Vogelbescherming Nederland
Voice Of Irish Concern for the Environment
Vredeseilanden
Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust
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Xarsa de Custòdi del Territori
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ZO CSOP JARO Jaromer