

International Federation
of Organic Agriculture Movements
EU Regional Group

Commissioner Phil Hogan
Directorate General for Agriculture and Rural Development
European Commission
Rue de la Loi 200
1049, Brussels

17 November 2017

Open Letter: CAP Communication - Explicit link between income support and public goods needed

CC: Commissioners Vella, Cañete, Andriukaitis, Katainen, Oettinger, Moscovici

Dear Commissioner Hogan,

The Commission's forthcoming Communication on Modernising and Simplifying the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) comes at a critical moment for the future of European food and farming. With relative consensus amongst both farmers and citizens that sustainability is a fundamental challenge facing the sector,¹ there is a huge opportunity for the Commission to raise the level of expectation for the next CAP. IFOAM EU strongly believes that fully aligning income support to the delivery of public goods – not remunerated by most of the EU's market channels - is key to meeting these expectations.²

However, as the current leaked draft of the Communication stands, income support centred on meeting basic sustainability conditionality and complemented by entry-level or more ambitious voluntary schemes will do little to deliver on EU objectives and Member State commitments for the environment and climate action. With greater pressure on agricultural spending in the debate on the future of EU finances, the organic movement recognises that spending CAP money largely on income support with a limited impact can no longer be justified. As a result, a more effective and efficient income support model is needed based on the understanding that the more public goods farmers deliver, the more they receive - 100% financed by the EU.

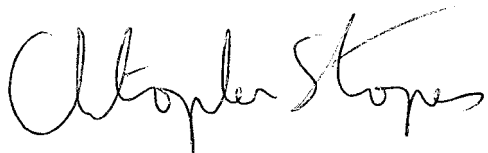
We consider that public goods delivery needs to be grounded on a more dynamic model of continuous development based on a whole farm system approach. To this end, the final Communication must ensure that all income support is explicitly linked to rewarding and incentivising environmental and socio-economic outcomes. High level ambition should not be confined to co-financed voluntary measures, but mainstreamed across a single CAP pillar, and be mandatory at Member State level. Our ideas are further outlined in the [IFOAM EU Vision for public goods under the CAP post-2020](#).

We are also convinced that the organic approach can play an important role in transitioning the European agri-food sector towards a more sustainable path. This is backed up by a wide range of

scientific evidence including a recent study, published in Nature, which identifies organic farming as a promising approach to achieving more sustainable food systems globally.³ With decades of experience pioneering sustainable food and farming systems, organic farming is a “living lab” for how farmers can respond to the growing demand for high quality food and at same time deliver benefits for the environment, animal welfare and rural areas. To support the development of more agroecological approaches across the whole agricultural sector, the organic movement is exploring how sustainability assessment tools could help to enhance the overall effectiveness and acceptability of public goods delivery as part of the next CAP reform. Further information can be found in a recent concept paper developed by the Organic Research Institute of Organic Agriculture – FiBL which we enclose as an Annex to this letter.

We trust that you and your fellow Commissioners will give our proposal your upmost consideration in the final version of the CAP Communication and we are looking forward to working with you and the wider stakeholder community – farmers, civil society groups and industry - to transition towards more sustainable food and farming in Europe post-2020.

Yours sincerely,



Christopher Stopes, President IFOAM EU

¹ The results of the recent CAP consultation saw both farmers and citizens identifying securing a fair standard of living for farmers and tackling environmental degradation and climate change as the key challenges facing EU agriculture and rural areas, with majority considering that these challenges are only addressed by the CAP to some extent current. These challenges can be understood to incorporate all three pillars of sustainability – economic, social and environmental.

² SDG Watch Europe (2017). Sustainability Principles for the future EU budget. Available at: www.ifoam-eu.org/sites/default/files/ngo_policy_mff_post2020_sustainability_principles_201706.pdf

³ Muller, A., et al., 2017, Strategies for feeding the world more sustainably with organic agriculture, Nature Communications 8.