

Press Release

International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements – EU Regional Group

Farm Ministers undermine potential for a greener and fairer CAP

Political negotiations between EU Institutions offer one last chance to steer the CAP towards a greener path

Brussels, 20/03/2013 – Last night Agriculture Ministers adopted their negotiating position on the reform of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). The agreement, however, represents another missed opportunity by EU leaders to build on the European Commission's proposals by slowing the transition towards a fairer distribution of direct payments and failing to move the CAP towards greater sustainability.

IFOAM EU Group (1) President Christopher Stopes said: "Despite citizens' calls for a greener and fairer CAP (2) and cuts in the EU budget, Agriculture Ministers have failed to act accordingly. We welcome the move to link greening to the basic payment through stricter sanctions, however a number of questionable exemptions would allow member states to side-step a solid greening. In contrast, the European Parliament vote sent a strong message that a package of measures should be the only basis for fulfilling Pillar 1 greening. If EU leaders are serious about delivering a more sustainable CAP for taxpayers' money, they must lift the environmental performance of all farmers by making greening mandatory".

"Targeted measures such as support for organic farming systems (3) and agri-environmental-climate schemes under Pillar 2 are the best vehicle to increase sustainability", added Jan Plagge, IFOAM EU Farmer Sector Group Chairman. "The European Parliament called for at least 25% of rural development funding to be allocated to these measures. Unfortunately, the agreement reached by Ministers fails to allocate a minimum spend and undermines the potential of Pillar 2 to enhance sustainability, by allowing farmers to be funded for exactly the same practices on the same area through both Pillar 1 and Pillar 2. The consequence of this move is a drain on money for measures that deliver advanced environmental and socio-economic benefits."

"As EU leaders now enter political negotiations between the Institutions, they have one last chance to salvage the green shoots left in this reform," concludes Thomas Fertl, IFOAM EU Vice-President, "To this end, they must ensure that advanced sustainability measures under rural development, such as organic farming, get a real boost to pioneer greener farming practices and to sustainably develop rural areas."

More information:

IFOAM EU Group, phone + 32-2-280 12 23, Fax: +32-2-735 73 81,
info@ifoam-eu.org, www.ifoam-eu.org

Press Release

International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements – EU Regional Group

NOTES:

- (1) The **IFOAM EU Group** represents more than 160 member organizations in the EU-27, the EU accession countries and EFTA. Member organizations include consumer, farmer and processor associations; research, education and advisory organizations.
- (2) What Europeans think of agriculture and the CAP, Eurobarometer, 2011
http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/ebs/ebs_368_en.pdf
- (3) Organic Food and Farming: A system approach to meet the sustainability challenge, IFOAM EU Group, 2010 www.ifoam-eu.org/workareas/policy/pdf/IFOAMEU_dossier_organic_farming_system_approach.pdf
Use and efficiency of public support measures addressing organic farming, Johann Heinrich von Thünen Institute (vTI), 2011 http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/external-studies/2012/organic-farming-support/full_text_en.pdf