



Press Release

International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements – EU Regional Group

European Parliament must raise level of ambition to increase sustainability across EU farming

Brussels, 19 June 2012 – Today the European Parliament’s Agriculture and Rural Development Committee Rapporteur Luis Manuel Capoulas Santos MEP outlined his ideas for the future of direct payments and rural development under the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) 2014-2020 (1).

- Capoulas Santos’ report delivers a good basis for discussion, but needs significant improvements to build a policy that can respond to the environmental and socio-economic needs of all farmers and rural communities.
- Organic farming as a system approach and best practice model for sustainable agriculture must be clearly supported across rural development programmes

Christopher Stopes, President of the IFOAM EU Group (2) said, “We miss a clearer commitment towards more sustainability in the greening of direct payments and in all rural development measures; but we welcome that Mr Capoulas Santos seeks to improve the Commission proposals by demanding that a minimum of 30% of member states’ rural development budget is spent on organic farming and agri-environment-climate measures. We also welcome the increased co-financing specifically for agri-environment-climate measures, with more scope for member states to transfer funding from pillar I to pillar II. Mr. Capoulas Santos’ approach towards greening of direct payments is ambivalent: whereas we appreciate that he maintains the Commission’s proposed greening component, he has missed the opportunity to develop a more effective basic agronomic package that can truly green EU agriculture across the board. We call on the EU Parliament to improve these proposals.”

Whereas the Commission’s proposals recognise the unique contribution of organic farming not only in terms of the production of high quality food and environmental protection by defining organic farming as having an equivalent value to the greening component, Mr Capoulas Santos’ report on direct payments seeks to exempt farmers from participating in other agri-environmental measures and regional or national environmental certification schemes.

Marco Schlüter, IFOAM EU Group Director, said “Organic farming goes beyond individual practices and is based on a system approach to sustainable agriculture (3). Moreover organic farming is built on a clear set of well defined practices, certified under the EU organic regulatory framework which



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has improved over the last decade and continues to be developed. If large numbers of farmers participating in agri-environmental measures and untested environmental certification schemes would be exempted from Greening as proposed in Mr Capoulas Santos' report, this risks increasing the bureaucratic burden for the greening while in the end failing to lift the environmental performance and to contribute to long-term farm viability EU-wide. "

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Notes

- (1) Draft reports on direct payments and rural development were presented today by Mr Capoulas Santos in the European Parliament's Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development :
<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/committees/en/agri/draft-reports.html>
- (2) IFOAM EU Group The IFOAM EU Group is the European working level within the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements. It brings together more than 250 organisations, associations and enterprises from all EU-27, EFTA and candidate countries. IFOAM's goal is the worldwide adoption of ecologically, socially and economically sound systems that are based on the principles of Organic Agriculture.
- (3) IFOAM EU Group, 2010. Organic food and farming: A system approach to meet the sustainability challenge: www.ifoam-eu.org/workareas/policy/pdf/IFOAMEU_dossier_organic_farming_system_approach.pdf