

Press Release

International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements – EU Regional Group

CAP trilogues must lead to a greener and fairer CAP

Transition towards greener farming practices and advanced sustainability need to guide the political negotiations between EU Institutions

Brussels, 10/04/2013 – On the eve of the opening of inter-institutional negotiations on the reform of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) the IFOAM EU Group (1) calls on the chief EU negotiators to remember the great responsibility they have to respond to the needs of farmers and citizens, and therefore deliver a CAP reform that places sustainability at the heart of EU agricultural policy.

“With Minister Coveney, Commissioner Ciolos, COMAGRI Chair De Castro and their colleagues now facing each other at the negotiation table, EU citizens’ demands (2) to mainstream sustainable food and farming must be their guide,” said Christopher Stopes, President of the IFOAM EU Group. “Untargeted direct payments must end and strong greening is needed. As the Commission and Parliament propose (3), the greening package must ensure that all farmers in receiving public support are required to fulfil basic agronomic measures. Organic farmers must be recognised for their environmental delivery and contributions to climate action. Exemptions from greening as proposed by the Council under Pillar 1 must be rejected.”

“Organic farmers are pioneers in the long-term development of our rural areas. Therefore we demand comprehensive support for agro-ecological approaches to be at the heart of the CAP reform,” added Jan Plagge Chairman of IFOAM EU Farmer Sector Group. “The Parliament’s position (4) that Member States should be legally required to allocate at least 25% of rural development spending to agri-environment-climate measures and organic farming is a small success that must be defended in the trilogue. However, we regret that the EU institutions have not made more ambitious and decisive steps towards supporting agro-ecological approaches in Pillar 2.”

“Funds desperately needed for advanced sustainability measures in Pillar 2 are severely threatened by the EU Institutions’ support for the introduction of costly insurance schemes which do not promote long-term and viable business models for farmers,” concluded Thomas Fertl, IFOAM EU Policy Vice President. “This could also be the case with the Council proposal which would allow double funding of low entry environmental schemes under Pillar 1 and 2 for exactly the same practices on the same area. The continued waste of taxpayers’ money must stop. Money should instead support advanced sustainability approaches in Pillar 2 including organic farming which are proven to boost green food production, enhance environmental and climate action and green job creation (5).”

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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 ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/ebs/ebs_368_en.pdf; European opinion on the use of public money in the agricultural sector, Factwise on behalf of WWF, February 2013, awsassets.panda.org/downloads/european_opinion_on_the_use_of_public_money_in_the_agricultural_sector_final_with_tables_1.pdf
- (3) European Parliament decision on the opening of, and on the mandate for, interinstitutional negotiations on the proposal for a regulation on establishing rules for direct payments to farmers europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P7-TA-2013-0084+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN&language=EN
- (4) Amendment 119, European Parliament decision on the opening of, and on the mandate for, interinstitutional negotiations on the proposal for a regulation on support for rural development by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P7-TA-2013-0086+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN&language=EN>
- (5) 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
Organic Approaches to Rural Development Policy Factsheets, IFOAM EU Group 2012 www.ifoam-eu.org/positions/factsheets/Pdf/Envi_Delivery_RD.pdf