

No EU budget cuts at the expense of farming sustainability

Van Rompuy's compromise proposal for the EU budget 2014-2020 cuts rural development and environmental payments dramatically and fails to address key challenges

Brussels, 15/11/2012 – The IFOAM EU Group¹ rejects the compromise proposal on the EU budget published yesterday by Council President Hermann van Rompuy² which seeks to weaken the greening component under CAP direct payments as well as cut the rural development budget by 9.3%. Organic farmers who are meeting these days in Brussels also underline that a strong Rural Development fund plays a critical role in addressing key EU socio-economic and environmental priorities and must not be the victim of severe budget cuts.

"Mainstreaming sustainable outcomes in the CAP is crucial for the future of our rural economies. Sufficient Rural Development funding is key to reaching this goal. Rural development measures that target the environment and promote the expansion of organic food and farming systems have the potential to deliver greater sustainability by providing healthy food, employment and environmental services," says IFOAM EU Group Vice President Thomas Fertl. "The proposed cuts put into question the ability of key rural development measures to deliver on CAP priorities, pouring cold water on the political will to deliver "public money for public goods" under this CAP reform and undermining the sustainability objectives of the EU 2020 Strategy."

"We call on the EU heads of states to heed our concerns and correct this mistake," adds Jan Plagge, Chair of the IFOAM EU farmer sector group. "In this time of financial crisis the EU must clearly invest in its farmers and rural areas with a key emphasis on environmental services, jobs and sustainable rural livelihoods. Van Rompuy's proposal to allocate up to 20% of the total EU budget for climate action and maintain EU financial contributions of up to 75% for environmental objectives under rural development could create incentives for allocating rural development money towards environmental measures such as organic farming. However it will inevitably fail to deliver greener outcomes if the overall CAP and especially the rural development budget are insufficiently funded."

More information:

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Footnotes:

- (1) The **IFOAM EU Group** represents more than 300 member organisations of IFOAM (International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements) in the EU-27, the EU accession countries and EFTA. Member organisations include consumer, farmer and processor associations; research, education and advisory organisations; certification bodies and commercial organic companies.
- (2) Article about budget proposal: <http://www.europolitics.info/sectorial-policies/van-rompuy-pushes-for-further-cuts-to-2014-2020-cap-budget-art345076-11.html>
- (3) Find out more about the CAP reform and IFOAM EU's position via this website: <http://www.ifoam-eu.org/workareas/policy/php/CAP.php>