



International Federation of  
Organic Agriculture Movements –  
EU Regional Group

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## ***Working for organic farming in Europe***

Open letter to  
José Manuel Barroso, President of the European Commission

Copies to:

Janusz Lewandowski, Commissioner for Financial Programming  
Dacian Cioloş, Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development  
Janez Potočnik, Commissioner for the Environment

Catherine Day, Secretary General European Commission  
Loretta Dormal Marino, Deputy Director General DG AGRI  
Karl Falkenberg, Director General DG ENVI

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### **Financial perspectives 2014-2020, future of rural development programmes**

Honoured President,

The Common Agriculture Policy (CAP) 2014-2020 will play an important role in meeting the pressing environmental challenges and protecting the natural resources essential for food production in the future. The Commission Communication COM (2010) 672 "The CAP towards 2020" recognises this fact by proposing a "greening" component for the first pillar and by suggesting to maintain and further improve rural development programmes under the 2<sup>nd</sup> pillar by fully integrating the challenges and opportunities of the environment and climate change.

**The IFOAM EU Group calls for a strengthened financial basis for the second pillar under the financial framework 2014-2020, as rural development measures are of utmost importance for the environment and rural society.**

#### ***Environment:***

Whereas the greening of the first pillar must contribute to basic improvements in the environmental performance of all farms, the second pillar is of crucial importance to achieve the environmental goals the EU is committed to. For example, it will only be possible to reach the EU biodiversity targets 2020 and 2050 on farm land if sufficient support is guaranteed to agri-environmental measures such as organic farming, High Nature Value farming and specific programmes targeting local challenges. Soil erosion, climate change and scarcity of clean water must be addressed to secure our capacity to maintain a sustainable farming system. The environmental challenge can effectively be met through programmes that go further than basic greening measures. This is especially important in regions that are particularly vulnerable to these threats, but if ambitiously applied, Rural Development Programmes can contribute to the further development and uptake of sustainable food and farming systems, locally and regionally adapted to the diverse conditions throughout Europe.

#### ***Rural society:***

The second pillar of the CAP has also been an effective way to contribute to the viability of rural economies, especially in peripheral regions. Keeping farmers in business in peripheral regions and under difficult farming conditions (soil,

climate, terrain) helps sustain cultural landscapes, which are associated with rich biodiversity; moreover farm related activities are often the only or predominant economic activity in these areas and therefore of vital importance for social sustainability.

Keeping farmers in business in peripheral regions beset with economic problems and often of high natural value, requires more than direct payments: It requires incentives for comprehensive rural development, including advisory services, vocational training, diversification of farm activities, new strategies for improved market access, production and marketing of quality products, etc. Agri-environmental payments contribute to the socio-economic welfare of rural societies.

**With a view to the food and farming beyond 2020...**

We do not know how exactly farming will look like in 100 or even 200 years. Scarcity of resources such as phosphorus and fossil fuels, as well as the impact of climate change such as droughts and heavy rain falls in some regions experienced with increasing regularity and intensity suggest that we need to invest in food and farm systems that are less reliant on external inputs, recycle nutrients, work in line with ecological systems and are resilient to changing climate conditions. Only a programmed approach through a robust 2<sup>nd</sup> pillar can help to bring system-level solutions to achieve overall farm sustainability and diversity, as well as socio-economic security for rural societies.

We therefore urge you to make a clear statement for a strong 2<sup>nd</sup> pillar in the Commission proposal on financial perspectives 2014-2020, expected to be published on 29<sup>th</sup> June.

Sincerely yours

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Christopher Stopes". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Christopher Stopes, President

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.