

CAP reform - proposals lack ambition to mainstream sustainability

Organic farmers and civil society must now stay on the ball to ensure the CAP meets future challenges

Brussels, 12 October 2011 – The European Commission has unveiled its proposals for the Common Agricultural Policy 2014-2020. Providing a slightly altered framework, the text continues to lack ambition where substantial commitments are needed to shape future farming to ensure the delivery of tasty food and a clean environment.

"This CAP reform comes at a time of scarce public funding and austerity discussions - which should be a reason to clearly re-focus funding towards measures that deliver to societal needs", states Christopher Stopes, President of the IFOAM EU Groupⁱ. "Society wants tasty and healthy food, clean water, diverse landscapes and vibrant rural economies. We also need to ensure biodiversity and food security for future generations, and food producers have to deal with climate change. All this cannot be obtained by continuing with business as usual – but although we can see some new greening attempts, the Commission proposals are much too close to that."

"The proposals paint some new doors on the wall, but pressure from civil society is necessary to finally open them up towards real progress. The texts need serious improvement if they shall deliver taxpayers sustainable value for their money!" says Thomas Dosch, Vice President of the IFOAM EU group. "Whereas we acknowledge that organic farming and other tools that are very useful for its development – such as short food supply chains – are now covered by the legislative text, a clear prioritisation across all measures is still missing. The Greening in the first pillar must be accompanied by a clear commitment to support environmental progress in the second pillar. "

"An adequate financial frame for measures that deliver real environmental benefits such as organic farmingⁱⁱ must be guaranteed. We acknowledge that the Commission finally proposes at least a minimum of 25% of budget dedicated to the environment - but this just retains the status quo and is by far insufficient to ensure the enhancement of the environment." adds Thomas Fertl, Vice President in charge of farm policy for the IFOAM EU Group. "The European Court of Auditors underlines that organic farming is a successful agri-environmental measureⁱⁱⁱ. But instead of giving clear priority^{iv} to organic farming and the environment, the present proposals rather threaten to give away money to doubtful insurance systems. This needs serious revision."

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

NOTES:

ⁱ 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.

ⁱⁱ 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; The Contribution of Organic Agriculture to Climate Change Mitigation, IFOAM/IFOAM EU Group, 2009: http://www.ifoam.org/growing_organic/1_arguments_for_oa/environmental_benefits/pdfs/IFOAM-CC-Mitigation-Web.pdf

ⁱⁱⁱ European Court of Auditors, Special report No. 7 (2011): Is Agri-Environment support well designed and managed?: "For some sub-measures, the Court did find evidence that the farming practices were effective in achieving their environmental benefits. This is particularly the case for organic farming, for which the effects are well documented"
<http://eca.europa.eu/portal/pls/portal/docs/1/8772726.PDF>

^{iv} The perfect **model for organic farming support** can be found in the study of Alexandra Pohl: How do European rural development Programmes Support Organic Farming? (April 2009); http://www.ifoam-eu.org/positions/Others_II/final-RD_study_7.1_web.pdf

The IFOAM EU Group calls for a **fundamental reform of the CAP**. The currently predominant agricultural practices continue to cause environmental harm, which places a considerable economic burden on society, whereas sustainable farming practices are neither supported consequently, nor remunerated for the public goods they deliver. This market distortion has to be ended by setting an appropriate political framework aiming at redefined CAP objectives: Sustainability must be mainstreamed in the new CAP. Organic farming as comprehensive approach to meet sustainability challenges, the only one with an EU-wide regulated certification system in place, offers a model for a system of best practices. Organic farming deserves particular consideration under all measures and axes: It should be the leading measure of the Agri-Environmental measures and a bonus for organic farming should be foreseen in all the other axes. Source: IFOAM EU position paper (2010): CAP post 2013 - Smart change or business as usual? http://www.ifoam-eu.org/positions/Papers/pdf/Position_IFOAMEU_CAP_final_7.05.2010.pdf