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CAP: Agreement falls far short of Green Deal goals

Common Agricultural Policy

Today, negotiations were concluded on the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) for the years 2023 to 2027. The agreement by representatives of the European Parliament, Council and Commission falls far short of the promises of the Green Deal to use less pesticides, protect the environment, climate and biodiversity and to promote organic farming. Only this week, the European Court of Auditors criticised that European agricultural subsidies continue to fuel the climate crisis, despite fewer than [100 billion euros](#) put aside for climate change adaptation and mitigation. The Greens/EFA will vote against this agreement and call on all MEPs who support action on the climate, environment and biodiversity, fair payments and small farmers to vote this CAP down.

Bas Eickhout MEP, Greens/EFA shadow rapporteur on the Strategic Plans Regulation in the Committee on the Environment and Vice-Chair of the Environment Committee, comments:

"This agreement falls short of the Green Deal ambition and the transformation and reorientation of EU agricultural policy that farmers, biodiversity and the climate so badly need. The CAP was supposed to be the big building block of the Green Deal. What remains is a series of empty slogans with big agri-business as usual or, in many cases, a deterioration of the status quo."

"The result of the negotiations does not do justice to the dramatic situation we face where species continue to go extinct, and pesticides, antibiotics and synthetic fertilisers pollute our waters. This agreement is a greenwashed gift to large agri-businesses. This CAP is unfair with unequal payments within and between member states, and abuse of migrant workers will remain unpunished in the CAP."

"Cosmetic changes cannot hide the fact that the protection of the climate, environment, biodiversity and small farms will be inadequate. The new "Performance" model is little more than a spending review with no assessment of its effectiveness on the ground; EU taxpayers will fund five more years of CAP for no positive change. We call on all our progressive colleagues in the Parliament to go against this conservative deal and vote down this CAP down."

Tilly Metz MEP, Greens/EFA shadow rapporteur on the Financing, Management and Monitoring regulation and Member of the Agriculture and Rural Development Committee, comments:

"Cosmetic changes cannot hide the fact that the protection of the climate, environment, biodiversity and small and medium-sized farms is being short-changed. The many exemptions from environmental measures shrink their benefits to a minimum. Thanks to the Council, no deal could be reached on capping payments to large farms, nor on effective distribution to smaller farms. The distribution of direct payments according to the size of farmland fuels the loss of farms in the European Union, with small and organic farmers suffering the most."

"EU governments have blocked demands for more sustainability and further watered down the already weak approach of the Commission. The agribusiness lobby and EU governments are holding on to the status quo and wasting the chance to secure jobs with shorter supply chains and fairer pay. This was a missed opportunity to build a European agricultural policy that works for climate protection, species conservation and locally produced and marketed products."

Background

At just under €387 billion, the Common European Agricultural Policy (CAP) accounts for almost one third of the European Union's Multiannual Financial Framework for the period 2021 to 2027. Around 70% of the CAP budget supports the income of six to seven million farms in the EU.

The Common European Agricultural Policy is a package consisting of the Regulation on National Strategic Plans, the Regulation on the Single Common Market Organisation and the Regulation on the financing, management and monitoring of the CAP. The CAP is due to come into force from 2023, following a two-year transitional regulation.

The most controversial was the regulation on national strategic plans. 20% of the direct payments of the subsidies amounting to about 270 billion are to be tied to so-called "eco schemes", i.e. environmental measures originally aimed at protecting the climate, the environment, biodiversity, to which animal welfare and the reduced use of antibiotics were added. The agreement gives the EU member states almost free rein with implementation. There is to be no cap on direct payments; the farms with the largest areas will continue to receive the highest payments.

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Responsible MEPs



Bas Eickhout

Co-President



Tilly Metz

Member

Contact person



Alex Johnson

Press & Media Advisor EN (English language press)

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