

CAP reform

Commission proposals broadly go in the right direction but devil will be in the detail

The European Commission today presented its communication on the future of the Common Agricultural Policy. The Greens broadly welcomed the direction of the communication, although noted the lack of detailed proposals makes thorough analysis difficult. Commenting on the communication, Green MEP and vice-chair of the EP agriculture committee **José Bové** said:

"While the general direction of the communication is to be welcomed, the devil will be in the detail and it falls short in terms of making sufficiently concrete proposals. The Commission has correctly acknowledged the key challenges towards which the CAP needs to be oriented, namely: climate change; biodiversity loss; the need for better water and soil management; measures to address price volatility and speculation; and better territorial balance and cohesion. Public aid to farmers and rural regions must aim to address these challenges.

"The recognition that price volatility and speculation, including abuse of market power by traders, need to be tackled is to be welcomed. It must be a priority of the CAP to address this if we are to promote sustainable farming and local food systems, and help create decent employment in farming and support thriving rural economies. The Commission mentions the prospect of a ceiling of payments per farm. This will be crucial to addressing the imbalances in the current system that lead to indefensibly high payments to big agro-businesses or landholders. Differentiated payments are envisaged by the Commission to support small farmers to produce sustainable food for local markets. This will require new measures to improve the infrastructure for short distance marketing."

Greens/EFA agriculture spokesperson **Martin Häusling** added:

"It is regrettable that the Commission views international trade in agricultural products through the prism of a liberal free trade agenda, without taking into account the negative impacts of direct or indirect dumping and intervention into external markets. As for the crucial issue of food security, the Commission seems to view this as some kind of opportunity for the EU to supply world markets through intensified production, rather than addressing the flaws in EU agricultural policy that exacerbate food insecurity problems. Furthermore, the provisions on rural development are far too vague."

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