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CAP reform

CAP reform gutted by agro-industry lobby and its proxies

The European Commission today presented its legislative proposals on the reform of the EU's Common Agricultural Policy. The Greens regret that the proposals have been severely watered-down to meet the demands of change-resistant member states and the agro-industry lobby. Commenting on the proposals, Green co-chairman of the EP agriculture committee **José Bové** MEP said:

"The planned CAP reform has been gutted to suit demands of those defending the status quo. While earlier drafts were not revolutionary, at least they pointed in the right direction. Today's proposals have been stripped of all ambition and, as such, will fail to provide the basis to properly reform the CAP and ensure it is a tool to promote sustainable agriculture and fair incomes for farmers. What is left has been tailored to the demands of the agro-industry lobby at the behest of their cheerleaders in the Council, like German chancellor Angela Merkel and French President Sarkozy, and in the European Parliament, like chair of the EP agriculture committee Paolo di Castro."

Commenting on the detail of the legislative proposals, Green agriculture spokesperson **Martin Häusling** MEP added:

"A core goal of this reform should be redressing the perverse system of payments to ensure it promotes a fair distribution of funds, which prioritises support for smaller farmers and local food systems, rather than benefiting large farmers and the agro-industry. Regrettably, today's proposals fall short on this front. The threshold or cap, beyond which direct payments should be 'degressive', is set far too high, benefiting large farmers and the agro-industrial complexes.

"We need stronger concrete measures to promote sustainable farming systems. While the Commission wanted to go in the right direction, and its proposals on 'ecological focus areas' are an important step forward, much of the other 'greening' proposals, such as on crop rotation, have been seriously watered down due to heavy lobbying. Sustainable farming and food systems are crucial for tackling the challenges agriculture is now confronted with, like climate change, loss of biodiversity and water- and soil protection. Reform without greening has no meaning - and those seeking to make this reform meaningless are misrepresenting their constituents by bowing to the interests of the few not the needs of the many.

"As for rural development measures, the proposal to drop the earmarking of specific support for agro-environmental measures, like diversification, is a mistake: there is no guarantee that member states will disburse these funds in a manner that is consistent with the overall goals of the reform."

On the coming legislative process, **José Bové** MEP concluded:

"These proposals definitely represent a missed opportunity for fundamental reform but this is not the end of the road. The European Parliament is a co-decider on these proposals and the Greens will work with those within and outside the European and national institutions who are serious about fighting climate change, protecting biodiversity and promoting a food system that offers healthy food and fair distribution of public money for all."

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