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CAP reform

EU agriculture policy to plough on as before after final EP vote

The European Parliament today voted to confirm an agreement on the legislative proposals aimed at reforming the EU's Common Agricultural Policy. The Greens strongly criticised the outcome, which is much worse than the position voted by the EP earlier in the year, and will fail to provide for the fundamental reform the CAP needs. Commenting on the outcome, Green MEP and vice-chair of the EP's agriculture committee **José Bové** said:

"MEPs have today put the final seal on this failed CAP reform, which has been a massive missed opportunity for overhauling the EU's agriculture policy. EU agriculture policy will plough on as unsustainably as before for the next 7 years. The final legislation will fail to provide for a fairer distribution of agricultural funds and will not deliver for the environment. EU governments strong-armed MEPs into accepting a deal below the already low ambition of the Parliament.

"Crucially, the proposed capping of direct payments to farmers has been hollowed out. Huge farming businesses which do not need the funding will continue to get big pay-cheques, whilst depriving other sustainable areas of the CAP from funding (1). This flies in the face of small farmers' and citizens' interests. The problem will be compounded by provisions allowing member states to shift spending from rural development funds to direct payment, even if a member state has above-average direct payment rates. This would be a major blow for efforts to promote sustainable farming and a vibrant countryside. Citizens must pressure their governments to not shift money out of rural development and to make the right choices for the few good but optional measures offered by the new CAP."

Green agriculture spokesperson **Martin Häusling** added:

"The rules for 'greening' the CAP are riddled with exemptions and will not be implemented on the vast majority of farms, so they will fail to truly make EU agriculture sustainable. The CAP will promote limited crop 'diversification' instead of crop rotation and only on a minority of farms. An important loophole being kept open by the Council is that pesticides and fertilisers can still be used on so-called Ecological Focus Areas (EFA): this means a farmer could grow a monoculture of genetically-modified soya and use pesticides and still declare this as EFA. This is clearly unacceptable and we await clarification through the delegated acts the Commission and Council are currently discussing."

José Bové concluded:

"The damaging export refunds instrument, which dumps EU farm products onto fragile markets in developing countries, will also be maintained. Using taxpayers' money to fund an outdated system will enhance public distrust of the CAP.

"We now have to already start work on the next reform, to build upon the shaky foundations established by this reform to create really sustainable farming systems that better link farmers and consumers and which don't destroy the soil, water and biodiversity that farming depends upon."

(1) See paper by José Bové on capping direct payments and the implications of this: /legacy/fileadmin/dam/Documents/Policy_papers/Time-has-come-for-a-fairer-CAP_2013-03-01.pdf

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Opinion

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Responsible MEPs



José Bové

Member



Martin Häusling

Member

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