Press release | 25.09.2013

CAP reform

Deal confirms massive missed opportunity for reforming EU agriculture policy

An agreement on 4 key legislative proposals aimed at reforming the EU's Common Agricultural Policy was reached between the European Parliament and Council in trialogue negotiations last night. 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:

"Last night's deal confirms the fate of this failed CAP reform and represents a massive missed opportunity for overhauling the EU's agriculture policy. Instead of the fundamental reform the CAP needs, the outcome of this legislation will fail to provide for a fairer distribution of agricultural funds and will not deliver for the environment. EU governments have pressured MEPs into accepting a deal at any cost and, as a consequence, have passed up the opportunity to make the CAP fit for the 21st Century. Throughout the process, Council refused to discuss budget-related issues before an MFF deal had been agreed, delaying the whole process. This led to a frantic late push to make a deal so that payments can continue.

"The final agreement abandons the proposed capping of direct payments to farmers. 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 proposals to allow member states to shift spending from rural development funds to direct payments. 15% of the rural development funds can be shifted toward direct payments, even if a member state has above-average direct payment rates, while member states below the average can even shift up to 25%. This would be a major blow for efforts to promote sustainable farming and a living countryside.

"The rules for 'greening' the CAP are riddled with exemptions, so they will fail to truly make EU agriculture sustainable, as they will not be implemented on the vast majority of farms. Instead of real crop rotation with legumes, which is a win-win-win for the environment, soil fertility and lowering farmers' costly dependency on chemicals, the CAP will promote weaker crop 'diversification' on a minority of farms. An important loophole is the failure to prevent the use of pesticides and fertilisers on so-called Ecological Focus Areas (EFA), meaning a farmer could grow a monoculture of genetically-modified soya and use pesticides and still declare this as an EFA. This is clearly unacceptable and we await clarification through the delegated acts the Commission is currently drafting.

"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."

(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

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