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Press release | 24.04.2024

EU Parliament continues to support big Agri over small and medium farmers

Common Agricultural Policy

Today, Members of the European Parliament approved the Commission's legislative proposal from the 15th of March to abolish, exempt or derogate from the environmental standards governing the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). During today's vote, the Greens/EFA Group again opposed this legislation, which weakens the CAP's environmental conditionality rules and even goes so far as to remove fundamental ecological and agronomic elements that have been in place for decades, sliding back to 2013 and even to 2003 on good farming practices beneficial not only for climate and biodiversity, but also for farmers' adaptation to climate change and reducing their dependencies on pesticides, fertiliser and feed.

The Greens/EFA Group has made concrete proposals to improve farmers' revenues: a fairer redistribution of CAP subsidies towards small & medium farms, a guarantee that prices paid to farmers reflect the evolution of production costs, and better protection against unfair imports from third countries. Today those who, only weeks ago, were side by side with farmers in the streets claiming they were fighting for better revenues for farmers just voted down all those proposals.

Bas Eickhout MEP, Greens/EFA Vice President and Vice President of the Environmental committee, comments:

"With this vote, the Parliament is making a mistake, with serious consequences for the survival of farmers and our food security. The changes introduced by the Commission removes or weakens important parts of the GAEC good farming practice standards that enable farmers to adapt to climate change and reduce dependencies on costly pesticides, fertiliser and feed. These changes also undermine the EU's climate, biodiversity, soil protection, and protein strategies.

"The proposal voted through today continues to favour the major players and industries in the sector. No significant measures are proposed to improve farmers' incomes. The Commission offers no solutions to unfair trading practices, the low bargaining power of farmers in the supply chain, the unfair distribution of CAP payments based on size and not need, or land grabbing. All to the great delight of agribusiness, which will continue to make massive profits at the expense of farmers, consumers, and the environment. It makes it

obvious that this proposal has nothing to do with solving farmers' real problems, and is undermining our democratic principles and the voice of the Parliament in co-deciding on EU laws."

More:

In 2021, the Greens/EFA Group voted against the CAP, in particular because of the unfairness of the system in place, which exclusively benefits the big players and industries in the sector to the detriment of the majority of farmers. Over the last 20 years, more than 33% of EU farmers have disappeared.

At the previous plenary session, a majority of MEPs approved the urgent procedure for this file. The Greens/EFA Group strongly objected to these proceedings as they are unfounded and violated classic democratic procedures and co-decision making.

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