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European Commission looking for savings in the wrong places

Reform of the Common Agricultural Policy

The Greens/EFA group has expressed strong concerns with the European Commission's planned reforms of the Common Agricultural Policy, due to be published on Friday (1 June).

The European Parliament today backed an own-initiative report on the reforms, which are expected to see CAP spending on rural development cut by 25 percent.

The Greens/EFA Group wants to see a more targeted approach, promoting rural development and small farms and investing money in transitioning to sustainable agriculture.

Thomas Waitz, Agricultural Policy Spokesman of the Greens/EFA Group, comments:

"The European Commission is looking for savings in the wrong places. Their scattergun approach will see far too much money spent on industrial agriculture, and will line the pockets of private insurance companies and the big machinery industry. This is not a healthy return for tax payers' money, nor does it ensure fair redistribution of funds.

"At a time when rural economies face considerable pressure, it is outrageous that the Commission wants to slash rural development spending. The Commission's planned cuts would seriously damage the rural economy and could bring an end to many smaller rural businesses.

"Europe needs a radically different agricultural policy. We want to shift direct payments away from industrial scale agriculture and support instead smaller and more sustainable farms. Farmers that meet high environmental, labour and animal welfare standards, including reducing pesticide use, should be rewarded for their efforts.

"The Commission is continuing to allow overproduction, aggressive export policies, and huge resource waste. This is no vision for the future. A sustainable European agricultural policy must focus on more climate protection; half of the EU budget must be spent on climate change mitigation and adaptation.

“Agriculture Commissioner Phil Hogan wants to push through the CAP reform before the European elections next year. Given the huge impact these changes will have on farmers and consumers, there needs to be time for a proper dialogue. A bulldozer approach will only cement the status quo.”

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