



European Parliamentarians must demand full transparency in CAP decision-making process

Dear Members of the European Parliament,

We are writing to you to highlight our concerns about the lack of transparency in the European Parliament debate on reforming the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). A transparent and comprehensive debate is essential to improving the CAP – which has caused more harm than good in many areas across the EU¹. Unless they are significantly strengthened the Commission's proposals stand little chance of achieving sustainable farming by 2020. We ask you to ensure that a full democratic debate takes place, taking into account the needs of all members of society, to deliver a farming policy fit to confront the ecological, economic and social challenges Europe faces today.

Since the ratification of the Lisbon Treaty the European Parliament is involved in taking decisions on reforming the CAP. This provides an excellent opportunity to make decisions on European farming more democratic, involving directly elected EU representatives in the discussions.

However, we are very worried to see that the transparency and democratic character of the CAP legislative process within the Parliament is being threatened. Important decisions are being delayed until after discussions on the Multi Annual Financial Framework (MFF) 2014-2020 have been finalised. If this is allowed to happen, the Agriculture and Rural Development Committee (COMAGRI) will discuss the proposals alone, leaving little or no time for adequate debate with Members of other Committees.

Rushing through a last minute agreement between the COMAGRI and the Council will jeopardise the democratic debate in the Parliament and exclude the majority of MEPs from shaping this vital policy.

It is time for the COMAGRI to include all MEPs in the CAP reform process by setting clear and strict deadlines for reports and the discussion of amendments, as well as sufficient time for debate and discussion in plenary.

Civil society's support for the CAP relies on the assumption that public money is and will be effectively spent on public goods accessible to all members of society. Therefore only meaningful change can justify the money spent on this policy. The reform must work to increase the environmental performance, and meet the social, health and economic needs of European citizens, agriculture and rural communities.

¹ The Truth behind the CAP: 13 reasons for green reform, at http://www.ifoam.org/about_ifoam/around_world/eu_group-new/workareas/policy/php/factsheets/CAPFactsheets.php.

The CAP impacts on many issues including our environment, our health and well being, animal welfare, equity, poverty reduction and social inclusion, the social and economic development of rural areas, and the sustainable livelihoods of people in third countries. It is thus paramount, that decisions include comprehensive input from all parliamentarians and not only a small group of representatives in COMAGRI. Therefore we urge you to ensure that a democratic and fully transparent debate on the Common Agricultural Policy takes place and leads Europe towards truly sustainable agriculture.

Yours sincerely,

Birdlife Europe
Corporate Europe Observatory
Euro coop
EUROPARC
European Environmental Bureau
European Public Health and Agriculture Consortium
Eurogroup for Animals
Food and Water Europe
Friends of the Earth Europe
IFOAM EU Group
WWF