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Europe

Brussels, 8 March 2018

EU Protein Plan for Europe: Please stand up for forests, people and animals!

Dear MEP,

On behalf of the undersigned NGOs, we are contacting you regarding the European Strategy for the Promotion of Protein Crops Report that you will be voting on in the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development.

We urge you not to compromise any further on our food sustainability and call on you to:

- 1. Ensure that the EU only imports soy that is free from deforestation and human rights abuses, by calling for an Action Plan to Protect Forests and Respect Rights**

Given the ongoing Free Trade Agreement negotiations with Mercosur countries, we are aware that the European Commission is considering delaying action to halt deforestation and forest degradation. Increasing imports of soy and beef from Latin America would increase the likelihood of the EU continuing to be complicit with human rights abuses, such as land grabs and deforestation. The EU already regulates illegal timber, illegal fisheries and conflict minerals, and MEP Denanot's own-initiative report on protein crops presents a unique opportunity to call on the Commission to come forward with an Action Plan to Protect Forests and Respect Rights. Such an Action Plan should require companies to exercise due diligence to ensure imports of forest risk commodities are free from deforestation and human rights abuses.

- 2. Support the transition towards agroecological practices in the EU and sourcing countries**

The debate on the EU's Protein Strategy is an opportunity to disincentive large scale crop monocultures and landholding concentration in Europe. A shift is needed from input-intensive crop monocultures, within and outside the EU, towards diversified community-scale agroecological farming for local consumption at fair prices.

- 3. Recognise that reducing demand for factory farmed animal products would reduce demand for soy**

EU demand for protein crops has risen due to increased consumption of animal products, in particular poultry (including eggs) and pig meat, as both animals are more intensively farmed. This has meant increasing reliance on imported feed. As long as producers are willing and able to meet consumers' demand for cheap animal products, industrial animal farming with high external inputs, such as protein crops, will dominate. Although EU policies do not directly target consumption, the debate on an EU Protein Strategy offers a key chance to set incentives to keep meat, dairy and egg production at a level which EU protein crops can meet, thereby reducing reliance on feed.

4. Ensure a sustainable EU supply of protein crops

Protein crops are a valuable source of human nutrition. It is therefore essential that the report focuses on both animal feed and human food. Due to the many negative impacts that industrially produced animal products have on people's health and the environment, the market for plant-based alternatives is rapidly growing and is set to expand by over eight per cent a year to reach €4.2 billion by 2020.

In order to meet this increasing demand in the coming years and to improve EU citizens' health, the EU needs a sustainable supply of plant protein crops produced in an agroecological way. This means no use of Genetically Modified crops, no artificial pesticides and fertilisers, and no monocultures. It will require the EU to agree policies which support the farming of a wide range of protein crops and the integration of protein crops in extended crop rotations.

We are at your disposal for any further information.

Yours sincerely,

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