



The CAP reform agreement betrays the commitments made by the EU

For ECVC, this CAP reform fails to meet the nine CAP objectives and the objectives set out in the Green Deal and the Farm to Fork and Biodiversity Strategies.

At the close of the trilogue negotiations on the CAP reform, European Coordination Via Campesina (ECVC) expresses its frustration and disappointment with regard to the agreed proposal, and repeats that this CAP does **not contain the necessary tools** to achieve the social, economic and environmental sustainability needed to address the situation of small and medium-scale peasant farmers and the demands of European society.

Since the beginning of the CAP reform in 2018, ECVC has stressed that the proposal does not respond to the needs of farmers or society and will make it very difficult to achieve a strong EU Food and Agriculture Policy.

Written almost 3 years ago, this CAP does not reflect the new realities or needs that have been highlighted by the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly regarding the ecological and social crises, food security, resilience and food sovereignty in Europe. Nor does it meet the objectives of the Green Deal, the Biodiversity and Farm to Fork Strategies, or the nine objectives of the CAP itself.

The current reform will not prevent or solve the disappearance of thousands of farms every year, the loss of farmers' income, the ageing of the farming population, the depopulation of rural territories, the impact of industrial agriculture on the environment, the intensification of production models and the consequent degradation of food quality, land grabbing, and the precariousness or degradation of rural workers' rights, among many other problems.

In fact, the CAP that has just been negotiated will deepen the differences between farmers in the European Union, with regard to production conditions and economic differences, as well as distorting the functioning of the single market at European level.

The objective of raising farmers' incomes to better match the average income of the rest of the population has been forgotten. The prices received by farmers are getting lower and lower due to the deregulation of markets, the dominance of the strongest actors in the agri-food chain and the misallocation of direct aid.

The volatility and drop in prices for farmers as a result of WTO and FTA agreements and the fact that products that do not comply with European regulations are allowed to enter into the market are not problems that can be solved with direct aid. In order to tackle them effectively, public policies are needed to regulate and control production and stabilise the market. The CMO regulation has been stripped of its content over the course of the CAP reforms, and does not include the necessary tools to stabilise the price paid to farmers, i.e. market regulation, control and distribution of production.

On the other hand, with regard to CAP aid, the current distribution of operational funds or state aid means that large companies are able to root themselves in production and speculative investments, causing the relocation of production or concentration in certain areas, depopulation of rural areas, and difficulties in incorporating young people into production and having access to land. The only definite consequence will be additional support for the export capacities of a few European companies to the detriment of local producers in other countries.

However, ECVC will continue the struggle to ensure a dignified life and prices for farmers, as well as healthy and sustainable production systems that respect the rights of small and medium-scale farmers

and citizens, and the well-being of the planet. Included below, there is an analysis and reaction to concrete issues that ECVC, with its national members, will continue to fight for within the national strategic plans, despite the failures of this reform.

CAP support

Subsidy capping remains **optional** for the Member States, at a maximum of €100,000 plus labour costs. CAP subsidies should have been limited to €60,000 and linked to the activity and the farmer, and should contribute to guaranteeing a fair income for farmers, equal to the average income of the population.

This CAP will increasingly encourage the expansion of farms, agroindustrial models and macro farm production as, according to European Commission figures, less than 1% of European farms would have been affected by the degressivity of aid and the implementation of a €60,000 cap per farm.

Redistribution of support will be compulsory for at least 10% of direct payments. But in reality, Member States can avoid this if it is duly demonstrated in their CAP strategic plan that the redistribution needs are adequately addressed by other interventions/instruments under the first pillar (provided that the intervention strategy demonstrates that the redistribution needs are met by these alternative instruments).

On the other hand, the **small farmer scheme**, which was supposed to redistribute support to the small and medium-scale farmers who need it most, will also be optional for Member States with a cap of €1,250 per small-scale farmer. For ECVC, this should have been compulsory and not limited to €1,250. Moreover, dedicating just 10% of the budget to supporting small and medium-sized enterprises is totally insufficient, given that farms with an economic size of less than €8,000 represent more than 68% of all farms.

Eco-schemes:

For **eco schemes**, the agreement has been reached on a list of qualifying **practices**, from which agroindustrial companies will easily be able to pick and choose minimal actions to obtain additional funding while continuing to pollute and use other very harmful practices. This will not enable a move towards a more sustainable model based on agroecology. Moreover, it is not guaranteed that sustainable and agroecological farming models will be supported through these schemes.

ECVC denounces the attempt to greenwash the CAP without making necessary regulatory changes and providing sufficient support for a sustainable food production model based on the social and family farming model.

Social conditionality

Social conditionality has been included for the first time in the CAP: beneficiaries of support will have to respect EU labour and social legislation in order to receive agricultural support.

Member States will have to implement these "social justice" provisions by 1 January 2025, while implementation will be voluntary as of 1 January 2023. According to a joint declaration by MEPs and the Council, which will be annexed in the regulation on national strategic plans, there will be a rendez-vous clause two years after the start of implementation (including the possibility to add new legislation). **ECVC calls for mandatory implementation from 2023.**

CMO

There has been some progress with Common Market Organisation, with crisis management measures such as voluntary production cuts have been approved without having to wait for the crisis to become widespread. ECVC proposes that the reduction of production and limiting production increases should be compulsory in periods of market crisis.

On the other hand, unfortunately, the **ban on importing products containing pesticides that are not approved in Europe (Article 188a) has not been adopted**. The Council, in its neo-liberal way, has refused to subject imports to European regulations on pesticides. Agriculture Ministers are turning their backs on European citizens on a crucial issue such as food safety. How far do they want to go in their neo-liberal bid to deregulate European laws?

This fact highlights the major contradiction between the objectives of the CAP and the European Green Deal, the F2F and Biodiversity Strategies on the one hand and Trade Policy on the other. The European Commission should commit to putting in place specific legislation on this issue in the near future.

Support for youth:

Although the reform increases the funds to support the incorporation of new farms to 3%, which is positive, it does not address the real problem which prevents the incorporation of young people. In fact, for ECVC, in the future this CAP will make it more difficult for new farmers to set up, because it will not improve the situation relating to agricultural prices, nor provide the access to land that is so necessary to tackle the ageing population of farmers. ECVC calls for transparency and for Member States to take on the responsibility to prioritise young people in their national strategic plans.

Contacts

Morgan Ody, Coordinating Committee of ECVC - +33 626 97 76 43 - France - FR,EN

Andoni Garcia Arriola, Coordinating Committee of ECVC - +34 636 45 15 69 - ES, EUS

Pier Francesco Pandolfide Rinaldis, ECVC Youth Articulation, +39 349 628 2963 IT,EN, FR