



CAP for the future: the transition towards a social and agro-ecological food policy

The CAP's objectives, which remain unchanged since 1962, should be radically reviewed to reflect social demands and the finite limits of our environment and planetary resources, and to take into account climate change, extinction and ecosystem collapse, and depletion of resources that affects us all. Since the creation of the WTO, the CAP has been obliged to fit into a framework designed to promote global markets and international companies. The last reform of the CAP brought greening measures and some targeting of money - yet many of these provisions have already been watered down. Key challenges for a more coherent food policy remain: climate change, biodiversity loss, animal welfare, and protection of public and environmental health. We need to focus future policies on providing sufficient nutritious and healthy food, sustainable use of natural resources, adequate and stable revenue for farmers, cohesion of rural and urban areas, and coherence with sustainable development goals, as well as minimising corporate power in the food system and food waste.

A consultation on Modernising and Simplifying the CAP was launched, concluding in July 2017. Reform is expected by 2020, with the Commission having published an initial position on 29th November 2017, and the Parliament setting out its own perspective in early 2018. The Commission will then publish a legislative proposal around June 2018, to which the Parliament and the Council will respond. Meanwhile, the Commission has announced its intent that the long-term budget is agreed by Spring 2019, within the deal on the multiannual financial framework; however, the Member States have stated they need more time. At this juncture, some stakeholders push for business as usual: further intensification of agriculture, which leads to depopulation of rural areas, dividing land into perceived productive and unproductive areas, and disjoining consumers from producers. Technology is offered as panacea for all difficulties, agricultural, economic or social - to the detriment of farmers, who are often already indebted. But such piecemeal fixes are misleading.

What is needed is a profound and comprehensive reform of agriculture and food policy. Reforming the agricultural sector without reforming the whole food system would be ineffective. Agriculture, food safety and public health, fair trade, environmental protection, climate and energy, economic and social cohesion, rural and international development, employment and education all jointly define our food system. But these policies are developed largely in isolation from each other. To make a concrete shift towards sustainable agriculture, we must widen the lens beyond the CAP, from agriculture to food systems, towards the creation of a Common Food Policy. What's more, a policy which is coherent, fair and truly sustainable will also be more acceptable to the citizens.

Our vision is a common agricultural and food policy which supports the transition towards a social and agroecological model: one which delivers sufficient amounts of healthy, nutritious, quality food to all EU citizens, respects social and labour rights of agricultural workers and migrants, ensures a fair income for farmers and supports micro, small and medium sized farms, while maintaining long term fertility, productivity and efficient resource use. We aim to restore agriculture and rural economies as an attractive prospect for farmers and rural businesses in all areas, not just the most geographically favoured regions, and to develop a food policy which delivers public goods including local jobs and vibrant economies, on-farm biological diversity, animal welfare, clean air and water and healthy, living soils.

Policy demands

Part A: Society - Reinvigorating local economies, for vibrant rural communities

- Re-distributing CAP funds - access to land for farmers, not big business
- Fair farming, fair prices
- Maintaining small and diverse farm structures
- Food distribution and consumption in a sustainable production system
- Building resilient, fair rural economies for all, empowering local communities, creating jobs
- Ensuring policy coherence for development, to “Do No Harm”
- Putting people in control of the food system
- Improving public health

Part B: Environment - biodiversity, climate and animal welfare

- Improving animal welfare
- Ecological infrastructure: farming with nature, for biodiversity and climate change adaptation
- Role of agriculture in climate action; beware of false fixes such as agrofuels and chemical no-till
- More funding for organic agriculture
- Higher Natura 2000 payments

Part C: Economy - Supporting farmers’ autonomy and their role in the transition

- Reducing input dependency and corporate control over food chains, increasing farmer autonomy
- Impartial, publicly funded farmer advisory systems & participatory research to drive the transition
- Less CAP *à la carte*, more common action for common challenges
- Combat debt: shift from grants to loans may increase debt & reduce rural development results
- Prevent insurance schemes eating up increasingly limited Rural Development funds
- Avoiding the debt and dependency traps of precision farming, big machinery and big data lobbies
- Maintain the budget for the CAP, to fund a transition to sustainable agriculture and rural areas

A. Society - Reinvigorating local economies, for vibrant rural communities

• Re-distributing CAP funds - access to land for farmers, not big business

There is a need for a new system of re-distributing direct payments based on new criteria. Hectare-based payments without both ceilings and conditionality upon strong and effective socio-ecological criteria are unacceptable: they lead to substantial leakage of public funds to non-farming landowners, and favour large farming operations which employ relatively few people and add little economic value to rural regions.

Presently, in the EU as a whole, 80% of the CAP subsidies are distributed to just 20% of the farms. In the context of ever more concentrated land, this policy has contributed to the disappearance of mostly smaller farm structures and loss of structural diversity. Furthermore, smaller farms and new entrants can no longer access land at a reasonable price. We need the following measures:

- Capping - The EU should put a *50.000€ ceiling per farm per year on direct payments*, only to be exceeded if the farm supports a high number of quality jobs or has a high social and environmental performance.
- Redistribution to the first hectares - *30% of the current total budget for direct payments should be re-allocated to the first hectares of each farm.*
- The principle of public money for public goods - any direct payments must be results-based, linked to criteria such as providing quality jobs, improving soil, water quality and animal welfare, boosting biodiversity etc.
- Respect of human and social rights of agricultural workers must be a condition of CAP subsidies.



- Ownership structure - The *ultimate beneficial owner of a holding or farmland should be identified*, to ensure that large holdings cannot be split up into several smaller farms just to bypass the redistribution mechanisms. This also guards against land grabbing and land concentration.
- **Fair farming, fair prices**
Farmers are squeezed between exploitative relations with retailers or bad market prices for their produce caused by the WTO and corporate domination of the food chain on one hand, and increasing production costs and high input dependency on the other. Disproportionate buyer power, due to excessive buyer concentration in food supply chains, tends to depress farm-gate prices and final food quality. This means lower incomes for producers and their employees, with widespread negative economic and social impacts, as well as difficulties in investing in the transition to more sustainable production. In addition, a deregulated market approach has provoked further price instability and volatility, notably via overproduction. A key demand is *fair, remunerative prices for farmers that cover the costs of production and provide a decent income, through fair retailer and supermarket contracts and regulation*, as well as support for *direct sale schemes and local food chains*; for example, we need a trading mechanism that *ensures against dumping prices for fresh fruits and vegetables. More transparency is needed from all actors in the supply chain*, enabling consumers to make informed decisions *and a new equilibrium of rights and obligations. Farmer autonomy and input independence should be promoted. A supply management system can mitigate volatility by matching supply to EU demand*, fairly distributing production volumes between regions and farmers, i.e. *mandatory limitation of production when necessary*, and matching livestock densities with the carrying capacity of the local environment.
- **Maintaining small and diverse farm structures**
Small farm structures maintain the socioeconomic fabric of the rural areas, and this multitude of supply chains ensures food security and resilience against shocks. We want to *ensure that the policy no longer ignores or neglects the smallest farm structures, but instead supports small farms to become economically, socially and environmentally sustainable*. Support for small and part-time farmers must consist of *comprehensive programmes*, looking beyond mere ‘simplified procedures’. *Through the Farm Advisory System and participation in European Innovation Partnerships, the new policy should improve access for these farmers to knowledge and advice, financing. Farmers should be encouraged and supported in diversifying their activities: the Active Farmer rules should recognise those efforts, rather than excluding part-time farmers or those with diverse income streams.*
- **Food distribution and consumption in a sustainable production system**
A shift towards sustainable food systems cannot be achieved without involving the entire supply chain. Yet farmers cannot be expected to rethink their production model, nor consumers to radically reorient their purchasing patterns, without a major shift in the incentives running through food systems. To reinvigorate rural communities and make farming a profitable economic activity, *as much value added as possible should remain in the region of production*: we must work to orient European buying choices towards *short supply chains and direct sales*, to strengthen the position of producers, rebalance margins in favour of farmers, and bring producer and consumer closer. Farmers should be empowered *to work together cooperatively to ensure fair prices, which not only cover the production costs but also provide a respectful profit*. Consumption should be driven by *regional production, prioritising seasonally and locally produced quality food*, accompanied by a *drastic decrease in consumption of meat to sustainable levels*, to reduce impacts on health, biodiversity and climate; *meat consumption must switch to markedly lower volumes of high quality, high sustainability, locally sourced produce*. Citizens must be empowered to make informed choices for their health and environment, based on *clear food labelling and accessible public information*. *Public procurement rules for food should prioritise local and high-quality produce* (e.g. organic), especially for those on low income and in schools.
- **Building resilient, fair rural economies for all, empowering local communities, creating jobs**
Our vision is vibrant rural areas that are attractive to live and work in, with diverse, interconnected local economies made up of small businesses. We want *continued investment in social infrastructure and support*



for community-led local development (CCLD) such as LEADER programmes that help empower communities to develop according to their needs. We are concerned about continually reduced funding of beneficial rural development measures, and call for *ring-fencing of successful approaches such as CCLD, agri-environmental measures, etc.* We need *well-distributed local infrastructure, such as markets and slaughterhouses, etc.*, for food processing, allowing for diversification of rural economies, in order to *add and then retain value locally and regionally and ensure territorial cohesion.* We want a rural development policy that keeps hands on the land, and defends small farmers against land concentration, land grabbing and urban sprawl, while driving the transition to sustainable farming; rather than the declining public investment we have seen in recent years, we need *well-funded rural development* to counter and reverse rural depopulation, especially by women and youth. The policy should value the vital role of women in rural societies and support equal representation of women in economic and political structures.

- **Ensuring policy coherence for development, to “Do No Harm”**

Even though export refunds will be phased out by 2018, the EU must re-think its often aggressively export-oriented policies and allow other countries to produce food for themselves, by *matching EU supply with EU demand* as far as possible. Outside of the EU, local populations are frequently facing environmental degradation and even infringement of their human rights, caused by our destructive consumption patterns, e.g. imports of soya for livestock feed and palm oil for processed food and biofuels. A first but desperately needed step is to *increase the share of EU vegetable protein production* and to *reduce dependence on imported, mainly GM soya from deforestation or land-grabs.* External effects of the CAP on developing countries e.g. dumping effects of subsidies, should be routinely monitored, enabling coherence with development, environment and climate policies and with human rights. Greens call to *re-launch the multilateral system, stopping bilateralism and submitting the WTO to international human rights, environmental and occupational health laws* and using them to *guarantee the right to food and food sovereignty.* We also call for coherence between the EU’s agricultural and trade policies, in which smaller farmers often lose out.

- **Putting people in control of the food system**

Agriculture and food policy must gear the EU towards food sovereignty and local and regional food markets. Policy must enable farmers and consumers to produce and buy food which ensures fair income for farmers, and positive effects on nature, public health, animal welfare and climate. This means bringing producers and consumers closer, with effective farmer cooperation and awareness-raising among consumers. Alongside existing labelling schemes such as Geographical Indications (GIs), we need *better labelling of origin and production methods,* also for processed food and meals sold through public institutions and in restaurants, so consumers can make informed choices. We also must ensure *equal treatment of consumers across the EU* - including the right of consumers to be sure that same package in each member state contains the same product.

- **Improving Public Health**

Poor diet has been identified by the WHO as one of the greatest threats to public health. Non-communicable diseases, such as cancer, cardiovascular disease, obesity and diabetes, kill 40 million people each year (70% of deaths globally). Many key risk factors for these diseases are dietary: increasing amounts of certain animal proteins and highly-processed foods, pesticide residues and the overuse of antibiotics. Intensive industrial agriculture in particular meat production is also co-responsible for the air pollution that kills 450, 000 EU citizens annually. An EU food policy should provide EU citizens with sufficient, high quality, nutritious and healthy food and reduce its environmental and health impacts. *Raising citizens’ awareness and providing them with the information to make sustainable consumer choices* should be supported. Public food services must serve high quality and healthy meals, not meat from factory farms. We call for *promotion of a healthy, plant-based diet,* with higher food taxes to disincentivise unhealthy products, and lower taxes to incentivise healthy products such as fruits and vegetables.

B. Environment - biodiversity, climate and animal welfare

• **Improving Animal Welfare**

Although all animals are recognised in the EU Treaty as sentient beings, more work is needed to improve animal rights and ensure better implementation of existing animal welfare rules for the almost 9 billion farmed animals in the EU. We must move away from intensive industrial agriculture, especially factory farming reliant on rainforest-destroying soya imports and antibiotics. Demand for such meat must decrease along with livestock densities in such animal production; we must *raise animal welfare standards and prioritise improvements in animal husbandry*, notably to also *slow the development of antimicrobial resistance*. Therefore we call for an *end to EU-funded promotion schemes intended to maintain or increase the EU's current level of unsustainable animal production*, both for exported animal products and for consumption within the EU; we also call for a *ban on live animal exports* with limited exemptions for breeding animals. *Transport of animals to slaughterhouses must be limited to 4 hours or 300 km*. EU funding must support sustainable and *pasture based meat and milk production*. Currently, many millions of farm animals suffer from poor housing conditions: a substantial shift of funding is needed to ensure that a higher percentage of the *CAP budget will be devoted to improving animal housing systems and management practices* that effectively improve the welfare of farmed animals. A *required minimum spending on animal welfare should be set* under Rural Development and an EU-wide programme should be established to *support and improve implementation in the member states*.

• **Ecological infrastructure: farming with nature for biodiversity and climate change adaptation**

Our soils are depleted, pollinators are dying, climate change brings more floods and droughts, eutrophication and algal blooms are choking our waters and killing our fish: biodiversity is plummeting as we live through a global extinction. Key ecological processes upon which agriculture relies are collapsing, as they are replaced by external chemical inputs. We need to build up biodiversity to kick start ecological processes: boosting pollination, building topsoil and sinking carbon, closing nutrient cycling loops to prevent eutrophication, regulating the water cycle, using beneficial species to manage pests and nourish crops. All these natural processes rely on biodiverse agro-ecosystems; they can allow long-term productivity and fertility, reducing and replacing chemical input dependency and, crucially, mitigating against floods and droughts and ensuring resilience against climate change, the biggest challenge we have ever faced. Key areas of action to invest in biodiversity and nature-based solutions are:

- ***Replacing pesticide use with agronomic practices and non-chemical alternatives*** that manage pests, so that mechanical, physical and biological methods are always used first; using organic and agroecological techniques will mean less susceptibility to pests in the first place and secondly will boost beneficial species in the agro-ecosystem that can do the job of plant defence and nutrition.
- ***Effective areas of ecological infrastructure*** - The underlying agroecological logic must be to break up monocultures (both of arable and permanent crops) with structural & biological diversity. These areas should be effective to boost biodiversity and be allowed to function ecologically, providing habitat for pollinators and beneficial predators to control pests, reducing soil erosion, and cycling nutrients and water.
- ***Replace monocultures with crop rotation with legumes*** - we call for *crop rotations including leguminous plants on all arable land*, which can now be controlled via EU satellites. Rotation breaks pests' reproductive cycles and rather than the resource depletion typical of monocultures, a leguminous component instead enriches the soil via nitrogen fixation, and can create local markets for food & feed legumes, replacing imported soya. *Smaller scale farmers should be empowered to work together on larger rotations*.
- ***Bring soils back to life*** by *re-booting soil ecology via composting and cutting erosion*. Humification will rebuild and deepen topsoils, protecting crops from floods and droughts, as well as sinking carbon. Beneficial species in a living, biodiverse soil also provide crops with defence, water and nutrition.
- ***More trees in agricultural landscapes*** will prevent soil erosion and increase biodiversity, defending against the floods and droughts that will become more common with climate change. *Incorporation of agroforestry methods* in both arable and pasture systems also brings resource synergies and extra



income in the medium term via fruit and timber. *We call for a full reversal of the old CAP logic that “grass is good, trees are bad”.*

- **Role of agriculture in climate action; beware of false fixes such as agrofuels and chemical no-till**
Producing one tenth of the EU’s emissions, agriculture can and must play a role in climate change mitigation. *Living, healthy topsoils can sink atmospheric carbon, albeit temporarily. Nitrogen-fixing bacteria in the soil and in legume roots can provide protection and nutrition, without resorting to emission-intensive synthetic agrochemicals. Grass-fed and pasture based animal rearing is more climate and environment friendly than systems based on imported feed and should be incentivised with coupled payments.*
But we *caution against misleading technical fixes*, like chemical no-till or ‘conservation agriculture’, which, reliant on herbicides like glyphosate, continues input dependency and does not improve soil ecology or sink carbon effectively. Also, GMOs are much less efficient in adapting to climate change than traditional breeding methods, especially farmers saving seed, while they increase input dependency and corporate control of the food chain. Synthetic biology is no panacea either, potentially impacting on smaller farms and encouraging biopiracy through patents on life.
Similarly, not only do *biomass-based fuels have an intrinsic carbon cost*, but their *over-extraction reduces the capacity of carbon sinks; it is vital to protect the ecological functioning of peatlands and forests.* Food- and feed-based agrofuels including imported *soya and palm oil displace food production and drive deforestation*, with related greenhouse gas emissions and impacts on biodiversity. They are responsible for land grabbing and increasing land and food prices, most clearly felt in the developing world. *Only agrofuels that meet strict sustainability criteria, and actually save on GHG emissions, taking into account emissions from indirect land use change, can be regarded as renewable energy. Any public support should be limited to more advanced biofuels made from waste materials that cannot be used earlier in the waste hierarchy, and where safeguards are in place to ensure protection of human rights.*
- **Higher Natura 2000 payments**
Current payments for Natura 2000 are insufficient and do not represent their high value to society. Farmers in protected areas face higher demands and requirements. To incentivise their role in safeguarding environmental assets, *farmers should receive higher Natura payments for providing us with public goods.*
- **More funding for organic agriculture**
This land use has grown from 2% in 2010 to 6%; as this sector grows it should *remain the forerunner of sustainable food systems; organic farming techniques should also be mainstreamed using the CAP-funded farm advisory systems and innovation platforms (EIP), to reduce and replace agrochemical inputs.*

C. Economy - Supporting farmers’ autonomy and their role in the transition

- **Reducing input dependency and corporate control over food chains, increasing farmer autonomy**
The decline of mixed farming has led to specialised arable production propped up by artificial inputs, notably fertilisers, and specialised livestock farming which produces too much waste. Agricultural systems could benefit from the circular economy principles; *linking local livestock and arable farming can create closed-loop nutrient cycles*, reducing the eutrophication in our rivers, lakes and seas. As the experience of organic agriculture shows, *resilience in agroecosystems can also lead to greater autonomy and financial stability for farmers*, as their input costs can be reduced:
 - Total input costs for EU farmers climbed on average by almost 40% between 2000 and 2010. Currently, EU agriculture is highly dependent on imported inputs that add to farmers’ production costs. Soya in particular comes mainly from GM/pesticide monocultures in the US or from destruction and land grabbing of tropical forests and savannahs in South America. We propose a *protein strategy that replaces imported soya with home-grown leguminous crops, as part of a longer rotation on all arable land*, stimulating local and regional markets in feed. The protein strategy must bring milk and meat



production down to a sustainable level, sufficient for the EU. We also must *encourage more pasture-fed systems*, as cows have co-evolved to transform grass into proteins, at lower but more sustainable output. *The calculation of the EU's protein needs should not assume the continued overproduction of milk, by cows fed on soya like bodybuilders.*

- Farmers are increasingly dependent on buying seed from an ever-smaller number of increasingly powerful agrochemical corporations, in the context of restrictive and unnaturally uniform seed rules. In the last 100 years, some 75% of plant genetic diversity has been lost, as a consequence of abandoning multiple local varieties in favour of genetically uniform varieties of a narrower range of species. Livestock diversity suffers the same trend. Our vision is for seed freedom, based on *farm-saved seed systems and seed exchanges that ensure genetically diverse, locally adapted crops that can rapidly evolve to the challenges of climate change.*
- Livestock breeding is also becoming more concentrated, especially chickens, with animals being bred for factory farming conditions and unsustainably high yields, so that animal welfare is low and veterinary bills are high. *The CAP should support better a wide variety of animal breeds, to allow farmers access to the widest genetic diversity of healthy, resilient animals, also for organic production.*
- **Impartial, publicly funded farmer advisory systems & participatory research to drive the transition**
Considering challenges like climate change and biodiversity, agriculture research has an important role to play to provide more support for the transition to an agro-ecological food and farming system. *Participatory research*, co-creating and sharing knowledge and successful approaches “farmer-to-farmer” are among the most effective methods to assist farmers in the shift to genuinely sustainable farming practices, alongside exchange between implementing authorities. The European Innovation Partnership (EIP) brings together researchers, farmers and other practitioners, and can be used to test and spread agro-ecological practices through a participatory, community-based approach. *More money should be spent on research for organic farming*: Currently, the percentage of research funds spent on organic farming is lower than the percentage of area farmed organically in the EU. *Publicly funded farm advisory systems* are vital to inform farmers of the benefits of shifting their production system and the means of doing so. It is vital to *redress the existing bias in advisory services which currently favour agrochemical use*, and instead to *properly implement strict integrated pest management (IPM) as required in the sustainable use of pesticides directive, ensuring that synthetic pesticides are a last resort, after agroecological techniques.*
- **Less CAP à la carte, more common action for common challenges**
The voluntary nature of many measures, brought about by the Member States’ pursuit of narrow interests during the last reform, have resulted in a CAP à la carte. Typically many options are not taken up, due to inertia against change and strong lobbies preserving the status quo. This is a particular obstacle in seeking a *fairer redistribution of direct payments*, both within and between member states, particularly old and new. Funds are also incoherently attributed, e.g. rural development funds are used to prioritise competitiveness at the expense of environmental, social and employment aims, often in sectors which already over-produce: *the CAP should not support or invest in unsustainable development*. Misuse and unfair distribution fuels nationalist/populist trends, and a growing feeling of unfair competition amongst EU farmers. We want a CAP that ensures fair and equal support for all farmers, rewarding more those who contribute more to ecology and sustainability. The challenges rural areas face are common to the whole of the EU and need common action; the COM would be failing in its duty if didn’t deliver this, leaving implementation as optional for Member States: *no Member State can hope to meet these social, environmental and economic challenges alone. The CAP must be genuinely common, not a series of individual national policies.*
- **Combat debt: a shift from grants to loans may increase debt & reduce rural development results**
Debt, high production costs and non-remunerative prices jeopardise many farms’ survival. With many farmers already in debt and/or unable to make profits, it is illogical to consider a shift from grants to loans as a panacea. Many banking services already present in the CAP basic acts are crucial, e.g. credits, mutual funds and savings accounts. But *loan-based ‘Financial Instruments’ pose considerable risks; they are new and untested, include private funds, and, of course, must be repaid.* Financial instruments must not turn



farmers into subsidised captive customers of banks and private credit companies. If used well, they might reduce funding pressure elsewhere, for public goods or community-based projects - but there must be *safeguards to ensure they do not increase indebtedness* in rural communities, especially if the Commission intends to broaden their use.

- **Prevent insurance schemes eating up increasingly limited Rural Development funds**

We see an ongoing risk that Rural Development funds will be siphoned off to insurance schemes, ‘risk-management tools’ and income-stabilisation systems, which were incorporated in the last CAP reform; in the Omnibus mini-reform this was further expanded even beyond WTO limits. We should not seek to emulate the now-discredited farm policy of the USA, which would leave little for traditional Rural Development measures, intended to boost rural infrastructure and biodiversity for the benefit of farmers within wider rural communities. *The best insurance against climate change is to adapt farming and land use practices to become resilient, e.g. rebuilding topsoil, and the best insurance against pests is dismantling monocultures and increasing structural diversity e.g. through crop rotation.* We already made this clear in the last reform round, when it first emerged; now it is policy, we want evidence of how effective and efficient this use of public funds really was.

- **Avoiding the debt and dependency traps of precision farming, big machinery and big data lobbies**

Mega-machinery and chemical input/seed lobbies aim to shift CAP money toward funding huge machines for farmers, justifying it as ‘innovation’ using ‘big data.’ Farmers are pushed to buy machines; the collected data is owned and sold on by the machinery companies; then farmers are targeted by input companies. Misusing the already strained Rural Development funds in this way would further lock farmers into input dependency and further debt. Whilst there is considerable scope for technologies - e.g. *predictive models* to forecast extreme weather/pest outbreaks, and plan farm work and interventions accordingly - we must beware of the not-so-hidden agenda of the ‘innovation’ and ‘big data’ lobbies. Precision farming may help to reduce water and pesticide use, but it fundamentally assumes a sterile soil and impoverished biodiversity. In contrast, *a living soil works as a buffer for both pest and nutrient management*, meaning less need to resort to pesticides and fertilisers in the first place. *Low-tech methods can be equally or more effective, are more appropriate for smaller or remote upland farms, and engender less debt or input dependency.*

- **Maintain the budget for the CAP, to fund a transition to sustainable agriculture and rural areas**

We strongly object to the current way funds are spent or distributed - the status quo is not an option and the way we use these EU funds must be radically changed. *Farmers must be supported if they are to change their practices to become more sustainable*, as in the short term the transition is financially risky. To achieve our many objectives, *we must maintain the CAPs current share of the budget to invest into the transition to sustainability.*

Conclusion

Maintain funding for the transition to a socially, economically and ecologically sustainable agriculture and food system in the post-2020 CAP Budget

The current CAP represents about 40% of the EU budget. In the negotiations on the post-2020 multiannual financial framework, Brexit will decrease the overall available budget, whilst also increasing the challenges rural areas and farmers are facing. Yet we cannot afford any further delay to the transition towards a socially and environmentally sustainable farming and food systems. This ambition must not be held hostage to an uncertain budget, as during the previous budget negotiations, when the multiannual financial framework was negotiated before it was sure what the CAP would contain. If farmers are to make a transition to sustainable systems, they should be encouraged and obliged to do so by use of public funds to support them during that transition at least, as sustainable agriculture is in the public interest. Pressure to reduce rural development funds, or to shift public money towards insurance companies and banks, must be resisted. We must maintain funding for the transition but fundamentally rearrange it, to make a food production system fit for the immense societal challenges we face, not least climate change.

The way we farm and the way we organise our food systems has a direct impact on the natural resources, including land, seeds, livestock, water, biodiversity, and knowledge - the global commons. These resources must be managed through collective, democratic control, framed through strong European policies, including the CAP. We must focus on boosting biodiversity and ecological processes, making them work for farmers. Living soils and biologically abundant and diverse agroecosystems will develop long-term fertility and productivity, and ensure resilient ecosystems which can mitigate and adapt to climate change. Crucially, this resilience will in turn ensure greater autonomy and independence for farmers, as they can avoid input dependency and debt.

Business as usual is simply not an option. We need to use the funds currently earmarked for the CAP in a fundamentally different way, to move beyond the CAP and to support farmers and consumers in the transition to a fully sustainable food production model.