



A FAIR CAP

**A LEFT MANIFESTO FOR
SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE
AND FORESTRY**

European United Left • Nordic Green Left

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENTARY GROUP



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SUSTAINABLE PRODUCTION & CONSUMPTION MODEL

Due to successive neoliberal reforms, an agro-industrial model driven by social and environmental dumping, where only financial interests prevail, now dominates the CAP. The food (horsemeat) and health scandals (glyphosate, animal abuse) of recent years bear witness to these excesses. Over the past 10 years, a quarter of European farms have disappeared, the equivalent of one farm every three minutes. The end of quotas, the opening to the world market has only reinforced a system dominated by agribusinesses upstream and major distributors downstream, creating agricultural aristocracies. This also has negative consequences in terms of public health, for agricultural workers but also for consumers, with the proliferation of food-related diseases (obesity, diabetes, etc.).

This is why the GUE/NGL is committed to a CAP freed from this productivity-based policy, which is harmful for both people and the environment. On the other hand, we want a family and local agriculture model allowing for quality production, reinvestment in the countryside and an ecological transition, aiming at food sovereignty for the people and fair remuneration for farmers.





THAT IS WHY WE CALL FOR:

- A relocation of production to favour short supply chains, allowing for better product traceability and favouring new forms of distribution;
- A redirection of aid towards small and family farms in a logic of ecological transition;
- The establishment of an annual exit plan for glyphosate and other substances that are harmful to health and the environment, while financially supporting farmers;
- A production model focused on ecological transition by favoring the rotation of cultures, agro-ecology and the rejection of GMOs;
- Implementation of land reforms by Member States to combat land speculation;
- Public instruments for the regulation of production (reinstatement of quotas to eliminate overproduction, planting rights etc.);
- A European system for guaranteeing public ownership of the genetic heritage of animals and plants in order to avoid its appropriation by multinationals;
- The creation of a public bank of seeds and reproductive material;





- The protection of the specificity of local products to be taken into account in EU laws;
- The establishment of public certification agencies and controls of organic production and labels to promote local expertise;
- A European plan to fight food waste;
- Food distribution and education programmes in collaboration with the WHO.

DECENT INCOME FOR SMALL & MEDIUM FARMS & HIGHER SOCIAL PROTECTION FOR FARMERS AND AGRICULTURAL WORKERS.

The CAP has been generating deep inequalities in the distribution of payments between producer countries and producers in the EU with 20% of the producers concentrating 80% of the CAP subsidies (in production terms). In addition, the CAP promotes, in practice, a model based on agribusiness centred on intensive practices that compromises the balance of our ecosystems. Stopping rural exodus, promoting farmers' renewal and rejuvenation, implies another model of remuneration that generates fair prices to production and reverses the current downward trend in farmers' incomes, which now stand at just 40% of EU average income.





WE DEFEND:

- Maintaining the CAP budget by refusing any nationalization of its costs;
- A sharing mechanism of the surplus-value that guarantees fair prices for production, thereby avoiding large-scale distribution abuses and also protecting consumers;
- Reversing the trend of decoupling production aid;
- A CAP that respects the specificities of each country, allowing an increase in production in the poorest Member States and ensuring the food sovereignty of the Member States;
- A fairer distribution of payments, increasing the modulation and imposing caps;
- A doubling of the young farmers payment up to 4% of the ceiling of appropriations;
- Public insurance to cover climate and health risks and rejection of private insurance schemes under the CAP;





- A public social protection system ensuring fair protection for farmers and rural workers in ill-health, unemployment and retirement;
- The creation of a European Charter for Small Family Farming allowing for the implementation of policies that develop and add value to this sector;
- All funding should be strictly conditional on strong compliance with the highest social standards in place in Member States in order to protect the rights of all agricultural workers, including seasonal workers;
- Rejection of the replacement of agriculture subsidies with financial instruments.

CAP, WORLD TRADE & THE END OF EXPORT SUBSIDIES

The current generalization of "free trade" agreements constitutes a serious risk for European agriculture, for its social model, and for consumer health. Mercosur, TTIP and CETA are clear examples of this.

Agreements of this type not only destroy the European agrarian model, but also destroy family agriculture and livestock husbandry of the countries of origin (since it is based on large estates), as well as the environment and biodiversity. Finally, the standards of quality and food safety of these countries are far below those of Europe, which means the massive entry of these products is detrimental to consumers.





CONCERNING THE ORGANIZATION OF MARKETS, OUR PROPOSALS INCLUDE:

- Building a new model of cooperation based on complementarity and mutual development;
- Recovering mechanisms, which were dismantled but are useful for farmers, such as guarantees, public storage, EU preferences, or quotas;
- Improving the transparency of markets through public price observatories, providing updated and understandable information;
- Improving the position of farmers and farm workers in the supply chain, with a meaningful role for trade unions and social agents;
- Introducing more forceful measures against unfair practices in trade;
- Promoting cooperation between producers and distributors, and consumers, simplifying administrative procedures;
- Global coordination of agricultural trade by Food and Agriculture Organization of the





United Nations (FAO), or a similar organisation set-up for that purpose, instead of the World Trade Organisation (WTO);

- All agricultural imports into the EU have to fully comply with European environmental, social and animal welfare standards;
- Banning speculation activities on food;
- Phasing-out export subsidies in order to avoid further market distortion in developing countries and reorientation of aid to exports towards aid to internal consumption;
- Prohibition of all forms of seed patenting, in order to protect farmers against multinationals and to protect local varieties as well as our genetic and cultural heritage;

TO CONCLUDE, FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE LEFT, IT IS NECESSARY TO DEMAND AN IMMEDIATE HALT TO THE NEGOTIATIONS OF THE FREE TRADE AGREEMENT WITH MERCOSUR AND OTHER FTAS.





A CLIMATE-FRIENDLY & HEALTHIER CAP

Even if the EU has enshrined in its treaty “the well-being of its peoples” and “a high level of human health” as official goals, the greening of the CAP has been largely overstated and industrial agriculture is still the biggest driver of biodiversity decline in Europe.

AGAINST THIS BACKGROUND, THE PROGRESSIVE LEFT

ADVOCATES:

- Rewarding farmers for the public goods they can deliver, such as climate action and the conservation of wildlife; the CAP should contain payments for ecosystem services, overseen by environmental authorities, building on the existing LIFE Programme approach;
- The primacy of public planning and regulatory approaches over market or fiscal tools to achieve the goal of pollution reduction, together with the refusal of any financial speculation around environmental goals;





- Ensuring that a promised 20% of the EU budget is effectively invested in climate action, preferably under Cohesion Policy, but will also include climate change mitigation projects in the agricultural sector;
- A shift to ecological horticulture and less, but sustainable, animal farming, while withdrawing support for intensive animal production;
- Providing sufficient public support to organic farming while rejecting any attempt to transform it into an industrialized, intensive model of production and ensuring strict certification to prevent fraud;
- Higher standards and better enforcement of standards on food safety, human nutrition, fair trade products, organic products, animal and plant health, animal welfare with a sustainable, judicious use of veterinary medicines, pesticide and fertilisers;
- Broader stakeholder involvement in the next CAP, with stronger voices in the debate on CAP reform from sectors other than agriculture, such as consumers, health, and environment;





- Preventing risks of fires, floods etc. through the sustainable use of water and by reducing soil erosion and soil desertification;
- Reduction in massive imports of unsustainably produced commodities to feed our livestock and less emphasis on export-led agricultural growth objectives;
- Meeting the Sustainable Development Goals, (seven out of seventeen SDGs have direct relevance for European agriculture) and other International agreements on Climate Change, Global Convention on Biological Diversity and EU air quality laws.





GENDER AND AGE BALANCE

The majority of women who work in family farming are not recognised as farmers. They have no recognised rights (single payment entitlements, coupled benefits, plantation rights, etc.). Income from their work is not even legally recognised.

Women farmers, who are owners, usually own the smallest farms and thus receive much less support from the CAP.

Women farmers are not present in the forums where the decisions that affect them are taken (institutions, direction of agrarian organizations or cooperatives, political parties etc.) which implies that everything that has to do with positive action aimed at promoting equal rights is not usually on the agenda.

Furthermore, 54.92% of farmers in the EU are over 55 years old and only 5.94% are under 35. Access to land is the main problem faced by young farmers, together with low incomes, long working hours and several other risks associated with their activity. The measures implemented by the CAP do not achieve the expected result in terms of generational shift.





IN ORDER TO COUNTER CAP'S GENDER AND AGE GAPS, WE DEFEND:

- Shared ownership and legally guaranteed equal pay in family farms for the women and men who work in them;
- Positive measures to ensure parity in the decision-making bodies of agricultural organizations;
- Accompanying young farmers at the start of their careers and ensuring that the criteria for funding are reality-oriented;
- A guarantee that taxation and tax periods for the aid received for the setting up of a farming activity do not threaten precarious financial situations during the first years of activity;
- Ensuring that persons joining the farming sector encounter no problems in receiving existing aid if they have not inherited a pre-existing farm;
- Implementing forms of support to persons joining agricultural activity and setting up small-scale farms, such as progressive installation or guaranteed provision of aid under the first pillar;
- A guarantee of good quality public services in all rural areas, and an increase in the attractiveness of rural areas by creating jobs also outside of the agriculture and forestry sector, as well as an improvement in the connections between urban and rural areas.





ANIMAL WELFARE

There is a huge gap between public demands for increased farm animal welfare and current legislation and initiatives. As the findings of the Special Eurobarometer 442 survey (2016) illustrated, farm animal welfare is a very important issue for EU citizens and there is an expectation that it should be further enhanced relative to the current situation.

Therefore, these points should be taken into consideration in the context of CAP reform:

- To ensure the proper implementation of existing animal welfare standards through regular spot checks and effective sanctions in cases of non-compliance;
- Mandatory use of surveillance cameras in critical parts of slaughterhouses in full respect of workers' rights in the work place;
- To reduce the number of animals per hectare, limit subsidies to those farms below a certain threshold of animals per hectare;
- Monetary incentives for voluntary adoption of animal welfare measures going beyond minimum legislative standards combined with higher regulatory standards extended to poultry production;





- Stricter limits on antibiotics use; prohibition of the use of reserve antibiotics;
- More tailor-made legislation on minimum standards for the welfare of specific species;
- Stricter regulations on live animals transportation; shortest distance from farms to the slaughterhouse;
- Prohibition of painful practices and the shredding of chicks;
- Replacing industrial production with pasture-based farming, thus allowing animals to engage in species-specific natural behaviours;
- Public food policies that promote balanced diets, including adequate protein standards and higher vegetable intakes;
- Encourage the promotion of labels that identify extensive livestock farming and high standards of animal welfare;





FOREST PROTECTION & SUSTAINABLE FOREST MANAGEMENT

Nearly half of the EU's land area is forest. Forests play an important role in environmental functions, are crucial for our wellbeing, fight climate change, conserve biological diversity, protect soils and preserve water resources.

Despite this important role, EU policies inspired by its neoliberal creed do not address the need to preserve the multifunctional character of forests. Over 60% of forest habitat types identified by the Habitats Directive are reported to be in 'unfavourable conservation status' and 27% of mammals, 10% of reptiles and 8% of amphibians linked to forest ecosystems are threatened with extinction in the EU region.

Climate change is first expected to affect the variety of tree species, having greatest impacts on those situated at latitudinal and altitudinal extremes. Increased periods of drought and warmer winters are likely to weaken forests further against invasive species.

Forestry activities do not need to be disastrous for the environment and ecologically sustainable forestry practices are available.





THAT IS WHY WE CALL FOR:

- Efforts to achieve a favourable level of protection for forests including pest control;
- A halt to forest fragmentation and deforestation and support to specific measures to prevent forest fires;
- Sustainable forest management practices that keep the balance between three main pillars of sustainable development: ecological, economic and socio-cultural development;
- Enhanced CAP financing for sustainable management of natural resources including forests, and for Natura 2000 network activities;
- Balancing sustainable food production and sustainable forest management;
- Promotion of pastoralism by the enhancement of undergrowth and non-grassy foraging resources
- Rejection of market instruments for management of forests, ecosystems and the soil: we need to stop overriding criteria for social and environmental value in favour of a mere logic of profit in the evaluation of forest development strategies;
- Promotion of public policies that take into account the specificities of each country in terms of climate and land property structure;
- Combating forest monocultures (at the service of industry) by providing specific support, delivering economic sustainability to native forests and species and avoiding desertification.





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