

PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate release

ARC asks Agriculture Council to keep an open mind

BRUSSELS, September 17, 2010 – The **Agricultural and Rural Convention 2020 (ARC)** is asking the 27 Ministers of Agriculture of the EU Member States, as they meet in La Hulpe for an Informal Council on Sunday 19 September, to keep an open mind to unconventional thinking in their discussion about the future of the Common Agricultural Policy

“The public debate launched by Commissioner Ciolos, and the “CAP post 2013” conference in mid-July, showed that European citizens and a wide range of civil society organisations are not happy with the status quo”, said Professor Michael Dower, an ARC initiator.

He added *“Rising public concern about climate change, food quality, animal welfare, the environment and territorial cohesion within Europe points clearly towards the need for new thinking. On behalf of civil society, we urge Ministers to be open to radical ideas. A future CAP must have broad support from the whole of European society.”*

The ARC brings together a wide range of civil society organisations at European, national, regional and local level. At the July Conference, it launched a call for:

- A paradigm shift in agriculture, from a dominant European model of intensive industrial farming and a centralised food industry to a sustainable and diversified pattern of regional and local production and processing of food, with closer links between farmers and consumers, high care for public health, and respect for the environment
- An economic renaissance of rural areas, building upon the strength and diversity of communities and cultures and the sustainable use of human and natural resources.

Following that Conference, ARC is preparing a more detailed and policy-based *Communication to the European Institutions on the future of the Common Agricultural and Rural Development Policies*. This will be finalised at a conference in Brussels on November 4 and 5, attended by a broad network of civil society organisations, and will be submitted to the Council, Commission and Parliament before the publication later that month of the Commission’s own Communication.

Professor Dower said *“We stand ready to support the Commission, Parliament and Council in the shaping of the future CAP, and expect to play an active role in the public consultation from November onwards, from the standpoint of the Communication that we will submit.”*

- ENDS -

See Notes to Editors attached

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ARC, the Agricultural and Rural Convention 2020, has been created as a platform to enable concerned citizens and their organisations to advocate a sustainable reform of the Common Agricultural and Rural Development policies of the European Union. Active within the platform is a growing number of civil society organisations, at European, national, regional and local level. They represent a wide variety of interests, including human rights, farmers, consumers, rural communities, nature protection, cultural heritage, animal welfare, minorities, public health, organic food and many others – [see list below](#).

For more information on ARC, please visit www.arc2020.eu/press.html or contact Zoé de York: zoe@arc2020.eu or +32 2 549 55 37, mobile: +32 473 22 44 84

The ARC Statement of Principles, submitted to the July Conference, is available on http://www.arc2020.eu/doc/press/ARC_summary_of_principles.pdf.

ARC is supported by AGORA - Working Group for Sustainable Development • AGRIREGIONIEUROPA • AGROM-RO Association Sangeorgiu de Mures, Romania • Armenian Women for Health & Healthy Environment NGO • Associação IN LOCO - intervenção, formação, estudos p/o desenvolvimento local • Association des Chambres d'Agriculture de Pyrénées • Association for Rural Development in Mountain Areas • Association for the Support and Promotion of Rural Initiatives • Associazione "Alessandro Bartola" Austrian Green Farmers Association • BIOAVIROM - Asociatia Bioavicultorilor din Romania, Buzau Local Action Group • Carpathian Foundation-Poland • CEEweb for Biodiversity • CIVITAS Foundation for Civil Society • Collectif Stratégies Alimentaires • Die Gruene Liga - network of ecological organisations • Dolina Strugu - Struga valley • Eco Ruralis Association • Ecologica • ECOVAST - European Council for the Village and Small Town • EUROMONTANA • EUROPE DIRECT - Carrefour europeo Emilia • Europe Direct CEIPREX – Extremadura • European Milk Board (EMB) • European Public Health and Agriculture Consortium (EPHAC) • European Rural Alliance (ERA) • Fédération Nationale d'Agriculture Biologique des Régions de France • Fondation Charles Léopold Mayer pour le Progrès de l'Homme • Foundation on Future Farming • Forum Synergies • Franco-Romanian Tourism Association "Tirgu Neamt-St.Just St.Rambert" • Fundatia ADEPT • Groupe de Bruges • Groupe PAC 2013 • Heimatbund Thüringen • IFOAM -EU Group • IFZ - Inter-university Research Centre for Technology, Work and Culture • Institut for Sustainable Development-Poland • Intercommunity Association "Tinutul Padurenilor" • LAG Kromme Rijn • LAM Foundation • LEADER Local Action Group • LAPAR - League of Romanian Agricultural Producer Associations • Lithuanian Centre for LEADER and Agricultural Training • Local Employers' Association for SMEs (PLIMM) - Calafat • Munlochy Vigil • Pesticide Action Network Europe • Portuguese-GM Free Coalition • PREPARE Partnership for Rural Europe • Research Institute for Vegetable and Flower Production, Risteco Italy - sustainable restaurant platform • Romanian Association for Equal Opportunities - APES • RURALMED Zeletin AFJ • SoyAlliance • Spanish Network for Rural Development • Terra Nostra Accademic Foundation for Rural Progress, Iasi • Tobacco Farmers Group 'Centre' -Romania • Umweltbund - Alliance of Beekeepers, Farmers and Consumers • University of Trás-os-Montes and Alto Douro - CETRAD • VODO Flemish Sustainable Development Platform • Vredeseilanden (VECO) • World Vision Romania • ...