

PRESS RELEASE

Civil society calls for a paradigm shift in CAP

BRUSSELS, July 21, 2010 – At DG AGRI's CAP post-2013 Conference, the Agricultural and Rural Convention 2020 (ARC) urged the European decision-makers to initiate a **paradigm shift in agriculture** and a **rural renaissance** to meet environmental and social challenges.

ARC spokesperson Professor Michael Dower was invited to present the position of the recently-created civil society platform alongside a panel of established stakeholders representing the agro-food industry. *“ARC is an innovative new process which aims to give civil society a strong voice. It is this voice of the citizens which has been drowned out in traditional policy making,”* Professor Dower later said.

*“Civil society is asking for a profound reform of policies for both agriculture and rural development. **The status quo is no longer an option**, and there was a general agreement on that in the conference”* ARC spokesperson Professor Michael Dower said. He continued *“the CAP has been becoming more sustainable since the 2003 reform, but it’s like a ship that has been turning slowly, and we now need to sharpen that turn and finish the job.”*

ARC therefore urged the European institutions to initiate:

- A **paradigm shift** in agriculture to **sustainable** farming everywhere and a diversified pattern of regional and local production and processing of food, with closer links between farmers and consumers, high care for public health, and respecting 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**.

Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development Dacian Ciolos declared he is supportive of the kind of network ARC is building because *“such initiatives can be very useful in harmonising the differences inside civil society.”*

“A paradigm shift is needed in agriculture” said Mr Ciolos in his closing address.

- 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.

ARC's statement to this Conference is the first step in a longer process. We will continue the debate, focused on the website www.arc2020.eu. In the autumn we will offer to the Commission and other European institutions a Communication from Civil Society on the future of the Common Agricultural and Rural Development Policies

For more information on ARC, please visit www.arc2020.eu/press.html

The ARC statement of principle is available on http://www.arc2020.eu/doc/press/ARC_summary_of_principles.pdf

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