



ARC2020 Press Release – for immediate release

Melt-down of the CAP reform?

Brussels, January 23 2013: Agro-industry gets its way in European Parliament's Agriculture Committee vote on CAP reform

ARC2020 - a broad coalition of 167 civil society organisations has expressed deep disappointment following "a melt-down of the urgently needed reform and greening of the CAP" after the European Parliament's Agricultural Committee (COMAGRI) adopted its position in a vote on the EU's Common Agricultural Policy (CAP).

*"A majority of members of the Committee have **bowed to the pressures of the European agro-industry**, which is taking farmers hostage for monocultures and factory farming," said **Benedikt Haerlin of ARC2020**. "We are fed up with violence against nature and farm animals. We want healthy food and farming with nature, family farmers and vibrant rural areas in Europe."*

The key of the EU Commission proposal for the CAP reform is "**mandatory greening**" of all farms as a pre-requisite for receiving direct payments per hectare, which form **more than two thirds of the 57 billion Euros presently spent on the CAP**. This Greening requires crop diversification, preservation of pastures and management of 7 percent of every farms arable land as "ecological focus areas" improving soil fertility, biodiversity and global warming performance e.g. by not using pesticides and fertilizers, flowering strips for insects and other biodiversity friendly measures.

With today's vote COMAGRI now proposes to **allow farmers to 'opt out'** of such agro-ecological minimum requirements and still get at least 70% of the direct payments. In addition it tries to **water down every single measure** with a diversity of loopholes, exemptions and so called 'equivalents'.

*"We hope to **convince members of other committees of the Parliament to use the time until the plenary vote in March for creating new alliances across parties and Member States**. We expect them to insist on the most efficient use of public money and a mandatory and credible Greening of Europe's agriculture", said **Samuel Feret of ARC2020**. Among the suggestions, proposed by other Committees but ignored by COMAGRI are the demand for **crop rotation** (not just diversification) including nitrogen fixing legumes, to reduce dependency on pesticides, fertilizers and imports of rainforest-destroying, usually genetically modified soy beans; a **ceiling for payments to large farms** and better support to smaller farms and disadvantaged regions; monitoring of CAP's **impact on developing countries'** small farmers and global hunger; a territorial approach to rural development which would strengthen **short food chains and better income for farmers**.*

Following the result of the vote, ARC2020 has announced that now is the time to ["Go M.A.D - Go Meet A Deputy"](#) - to convince the majority of MEPs outside Agricultural Committee not to support the melt-down of the CAP in the Parliaments plenary vote scheduled for March 12th in Strasbourg.

*"With the **narrow majorities** in the COMAGRI we are confident of finding a majority of MEPs supporting a real greening and fairer distribution, as well as spending taxpayers' money on public goods and not feeding most of it to multi-nationals, agro-industries and industrial farmers," said Stephanie Roth, Campaign Coordinator of ARC2020.*

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