

CAP Health Check: European Commission misses chance to green the EU Agriculture

Today's publication of the CAP Health Check proposals by the European Commission could have been a potential turning point for European agriculture, but it appears rather like a small step towards slight improvement of the existing CAP. Organic Farming as the most sustainable solution is almost ignored.

Brussels, 20/05/2008 – The legal proposals, presented by the EU Agriculture Commissioner Fischer Boel in Strasbourg today, provide no sufficient answer to the upcoming problems for Europe's agriculture and rural regions. The IFOAM EU Group (1) generally supports the Commission's plans to shift more money from the first to the second pillar budget of the CAP, but the share of 8 percent is still too low to provide a compensation for the recent cuts in the Rural Development budget. An increase of the compulsory modulation up to 20% could help to improve Member States' Rural Development programmes by offering targeted measures to secure the diversity of agricultural production and viable rural areas.

The intention to move towards a flat rate support is strongly endorsed by the IFOAM EU Group because the Single Farm Payment scheme, based on the historic basis of 2000-2002 which is applied by most Member States, created an imbalance between farms that had been working intensively and farms that used to produce a high diversity of products, often in a very extensive, ecologically sound way. IFOAM EU Group considers the bare Recommendation of the EU Commission for the flat rate schemes as insufficient and demands a clear deadline for implementing such a scheme in all member states. Without a clear mid-term perspective hardly any members state will change its currently implemented scheme.

Plans to dedicate up to 10% of the national budget to address disadvantages for farmers in certain regions or sectors, to support risk management measures and crop insurance systems can be considered as positive. Nevertheless, this part of the budget will in many cases not be sufficient to solve the problems foreseen in the proposal.

Despite the outstanding role of Organic Farming in delivering to the aims of the CAP, its environmental effects and its rapidly growing importance on the European food sector, it is nearly neglected in the proposal. There seems to be neither an assessment on the impact of the suggested legal changes on Organic Farming available, nor is Organic Farming properly taken into account as a solution to the highlighted challenges such as Climate Change, Water Management and Loss of Biodiversity. The unique chance to move further in European agriculture and food production



Press Release

International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements – EU Regional Group

should not be given away and therefore Organic Farming should be highlighted as a strategic policy goal in the CAP.

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Notes

- (1) The IFOAM EU Group represents the 330 member organisations of IFOAM (International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements) in the EU, EFTA and the candidate countries. Member organisations include: consumer, farmer and processor associations; research, education and advisory organisations; certification bodies and commercial organic companies.