



**Time to deliver a framework for a balanced agricultural sector:  
Act for a CMO that respects climate, biodiversity and farmers in Europe and beyond!**

Brussels, 3 March 2021

Dear Ms. do Céu Antunes,  
Dear Mr. Costa,  
Dear national Ministers for Agriculture and Secretaries of State,  
Dear Mr. Wojciechowski,  
Cc: CMO rapporteur and shadows in the European Parliament

We farmers', development, climate and environmental organisations, are writing to you to express our concern at the current state of the ongoing trilogue negotiations of the Common Market Organisation (CMO) in the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). The reformed CMO must become an effective tool to stabilise agricultural markets while reducing adverse effects on sustainability goals in the European Union (EU) and beyond. In its proposal the European Parliament, the Union's co-legislator, has included a number of important articles that help increase the crisis-resilience of EU agriculture, promote overall sustainability and allow for a transition toward better food sovereignty. We therefore urge you to seriously consider the proposals made in the European Parliament's CMO position from October 23<sup>rd</sup> 2020 and to ensure their inclusion into the final CAP.

With every passing year, climate and biodiversity crises are only getting worse and third countries are suffering from the adverse effects of the EU's dominant agricultural model. At the same time numerous studies point out that many farmers have not received cost-covering prices in years – chronic crises were a reality long before the COVID-19 pandemic. With countless farmers and citizens taking to the streets, with many of the CMO reform articles receiving a clear majority in the EP's plenary and with the ambitions of the European Green Deal and its strategies, the profound will and need for reform is evident. As co-legislator, the Council shoulders an important responsibility and the Commission's role is also crucial in the reform process. We, therefore, call on you to contribute to:

**Reducing harmful overproduction in agriculture**, as that would lead:

**For the environment:** To less waste and degradation of finite resources for unnecessary primary production and less damage from transporting, transforming and stocking surpluses. Also, it would allow the cost coverage for a more sustainable agricultural production, which increases the prospects of success for green and more environmentally friendly EU strategies.

**For farmers:** To a reduction in menacing price drops, debt and the excessive number of producers leaving the market. Ecological sustainability only works with economical sustainability, i.e. cost-covering prices for farmers.

**For development:** To less (indirectly subsidised) EU exports to developing countries and thus reduced pressure on local production and economies in these countries.

*Accepting Art. 219a and 219b of the Parliament's proposal would ensure less harmful overproduction.*

## **Assuring imports always meet EU standards without any exception, as that:**

**For the environment:** Ensures compliance with plant protection and animal welfare standards, a general drive for a more environmentally friendly production and avoids the entry of harmful products through the backdoor. In view of the carbon border adjustment mechanism, greenhouse gas emission standards should also be added.

**For farmers:** Avoids unfair competition and a weakening of efforts towards higher standards and allows for European food sovereignty and a (re)regionalisation of food supply chains.

**For development:** Avoids relocation of environmentally and socially harmful practices to other countries, where they would lead to the exploitation of producers, societies and the environment, would hinder their food sovereignty and disincentivise more sustainable production.

*Accepting Art. 182.1.1 ba & bb, 182.1.2 and 188a of the Parliament's proposal would help to ensure that EU standards are not undermined.*

## **Introducing and improving monitoring and management tools, as they allow:**

**For the environment:** To meet a pre-condition to comprehensive sustainability – a balanced market equipped with appropriate tools to prevent and remedy potential threats, including an evaluation of their impacts on climate, environment and biodiversity.

**For farmers:** To better understand and deal more effectively with the market disturbances that agricultural producers regularly experience and to learn from past crises with a view to avoid or better prepare for future crises.

**For development:** To keep track of relevant market activities and the impacts European market distortions have on third-country economies and production models, and how they can be best remedied or avoided.

*Accepting Recital 27b, Art. 1, 218a and 218b, 222a, 225 of the Parliament's proposal contributes to improving these tools.*

## **Including the prevention of market disturbances, as that allows:**

**For the environment:** To prevent avoidable irreversible damages to finite resources, habitats and species.

**For farmers:** To save public and private money otherwise needed to remedy fallouts. Prevention built on monitoring experience is cheaper for both, for farmers and institutions, cheaper than tackling problems once they have spread.

**For development:** To avoid spreading EU market distortions to third countries and thus hindering a sustainable development of local economies.

*Accepting the title of Part V Ch. 1 sect. 4 and Art. 222 of the Parliament's proposal would help to minimise negative consequences by tackling them in a timely fashion.*

**Ensuring more detailed and better information to improve transparency, as:**

**For the environment:** It allows to better understand and assess the potential environmental impact of economic activities.

**For farmers:** It contributes to more transparency about, e.g. the instrument of intervention not only for producers and other stakeholders of agricultural markets, but for consumers and taxpayers as well.

**For development:** Better intervention information helps preparing for possible European surpluses to be exported.

*Accepting Art. 16 of the Parliament's proposal would lead to better intervention information.*

*Also accepting Art. 165 would ensure more information regarding the extension of rules by representative organisations.*

A balanced sector is a pre-condition to comprehensive environmental, economic and social sustainability and to achieve and maintain the appropriate level of food sovereignty in Europe and beyond. This, in turn, would ensure high-quality products and a long-term future for Europe's agriculture. In light of the manifold challenges, which we urgently need to tackle, an appropriate legal CMO framework is the only way to avoid recurring crises and to bring long-term stability to the EU agricultural sector. We therefore hope that you will sincerely consider these proposals as they not only contribute to the fight against the climate crisis, to a better coherence with development policy and to reaching the goals laid out in the Green Deal, but they also help make Europe's agriculture fairer and future-proof. It is time to act and deliver.

**Yours sincerely,**



**European Milk Board**



**Friends of the Earth Europe**



**IFOAM**



**Vétérinaires Sans Frontières**



**European Coordination Via Campesina**



**Oxfam Solidariteit**



**SOS Faim**

**European Milk Board**

Rue de la Loi 155  
B-1040 Brussels  
Tel.: +32 (0)2 808 1935

**Friends of the Earth Europe**

Rue d'Édimbourg 26  
B-1050 Brussels

**IFOAM**

Rue du Commerce 124  
B-1000 Brussels  
Tel.: +32 (0)2 280 1223

**Vétérinaires Sans Frontières**

Avenue des Arts 7/8  
B-1210 Brussels  
Tel.: +32 (0)2 240 49 60

**European Coordination Via Campesina**

Rue de la Sablonnière 18  
B-1000 Brussels  
Tel.: +32 (0)2 218 45 09

**Oxfam Solidariteit**

Vier-Windenstraat 60 Rue des Quatre-Vents  
B-1080 Brussels  
Tel. +32 (0)2 501 67 00

**SOS Faim**

Rue aux Laines 4  
B-1000 Brussels  
Tel.: +32 (0)2 511 22 38