



# #LASTCHANCECAP

## AGRICULTURE POLICY MUST LIMIT BIODIVERSITY LOSS

**Biodiversity and ecosystem services largely contribute to human well-being and development priorities, therefore they are central to Agenda 2030.**



Besides SDG 14 and 15 focusing directly on their protection on land as well as below water, the importance of biodiversity and ecosystems is reflected in many of the SDGs and targets.



With 2.6 billion people drawing their livelihoods from agriculture, 1.6 billion from forests, and 250 million from fisheries, biodiversity contributes to achieving food security and improved nutrition (SDG 2).



Ecosystem services and other non-marketed goods make up between 50% and 90% of the total source of livelihoods among poor rural and forest-dwelling households, thereby helping end poverty (SDG 1).

Wetlands play a role in surface, subsurface and ground water storage, and reduce the risk of flooding (SDG 6), while biological resources provide many of the foods, building materials, energy, and medicines that are consumed in urban centres (SDG11).

Biodiversity supports our food supply from the soil to the delivery of vital ecosystem services such as pollination. Tackling drivers of biodiversity loss will bring benefits far beyond biodiversity alone, reaching human health and livelihoods, water use and climate stability.



# CHALLENGES

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- In Europe 60% of protected species and 77% habitat types are considered to be in **unfavourable conservation status**, and Europe is not on track to meet its overall target of halting biodiversity loss by 2020.
- The European Environment Agency has identified agri-food systems as **the main driver of species and habitat loss in the EU**. Agriculture has expanded into sensitive ecosystems and had far-reaching effects on biodiversity and important environmental services.
- Production-based **subsidies provided by the EU Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) have led to intensification** in agriculture and forestry, and, together with urban development, have led to biodiversity decline. Diffuse pollution, over-exploitation of resources, and growing impacts of invasive alien species and climate change contribute cumulatively to erode Europe's biodiversity.
- **Pesticides and other practices associated with intensive farming are wiping out whole levels of ecosystems**. Butterflies, bees and other wild pollinators, responsible for 80% of crop pollination, are in serious decline.
- **Farming is responsible for over 50% of nitrogen in water** and is a significant source of phosphates. Excess levels of these fertilisers in water bodies lead to eutrophication which can lead to the loss of many species.
- With intensification, rationalization, specialization and concentration of production, **modern farming has brought a tremendous decrease in agricultural biodiversity** fostering genetic erosion in crops and livestock.
- EU imports have been estimated to account for almost one quarter of the global trade in soy, beef, leather, and palm oil **resulting from illegal forest clearance in the tropics**. In addition to deforestation, the soybean industry is causing widespread displacement of small farmers and indigenous peoples around the globe.
- Less than half of EU fish and seafood consumption is met by EU production, meaning that **Europe's impact on global marine resources is also huge**.

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THE FARMLAND BIRD INDEX, ONE OF THE BEST INDICATORS OF THE HEALTH OF EUROPE'S FARMLAND ECOSYSTEMS AND WILDLIFE, SHOWED THAT **COMMON FARMLAND BIRDS LIKE CORN BUNTING, GOLDFINCH, LAPWING AND SKYLARK, HAVE DECLINED BY ALMOST 50% IN THE PAST 30 YEARS.**



115 MILLION HECTARES OF EUROPE'S TOTAL LAND AREA IS AFFECTED BY WATER EROSION AND 42 MILLION HECTARES BY WIND EROSION AND THIS WHILE **SOIL HOLDS 1/4 OF ALL BIODIVERSITY ON EARTH.**

**UNSUSTAINABLE FARMING PRACTICES ARE PROMOTED BY THE EU WITH ALMOST 60 BILLION EUROS PER YEAR.** EVERY CITIZEN PAYS 114 EUROS INTO THE EU'S AGRICULTURE FUND. IN THE BUDGET PERIOD 2014–2020, DIRECT PAYMENTS ACCOUNT FOR 72% OF THE OVERALL CAP BUDGET.



# CASE STUDY

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## **Results-based agri-environment measures (AEM) are an effective conservation strategy for species-rich grassland and could encourage wider uptake in agri-environment schemes across the EU.**

Since the year 2000, the Baden-Württemberg region of Germany implements a results-based AEM through which farmers can qualify for annual payments (two levels, according to results) if they demonstrate that at least four or six species from a list of 28 key indicator species/taxa of wildflowers were growing in their meadows.

Rather than a market-based instrument, this measure should be considered a reward or an incentive for farmers' intrinsic motivations to preserve and enhance biodiversity on their fields, thus this AEM tends to award producers

who farms sustainably. Studies showed also that this AEM has an educational role which therefore encourages further participation, while presenting low overall risk for farmers.

However, for such type of measures to be appealing, it is necessary to ensure adequate level of payment to cover a greater share of the opportunity costs. This may help to ensure a wider enrolment in the measure in the long term, while resulting in long-term savings, because of the high projected costs associated with the restoration of species-rich grassland ecosystems.



# RECOMMENDATIONS

The SDGs must serve as guidelines for CAP reform. All CAP structures and measures that do not clearly contribute towards the sustainability goals must be removed. Any schemes should be developed in a robust way in order for public money to deliver public goods. In order to build climate-resilient and healthy agro-ecosystems, the various policies shaping agricultural pathways – CAP, research, and extension policies – must be reintegrated around a new paradigm: a shift towards agroecology.

## MONEY FOR NATURE, ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE

For the EU to be able to deliver on SDG 14 and 15, a minimum reserved amount is required for biodiversity in the next CAP, covering interventions in both Pillars with a clear minimum environmental baseline defined for all member states and farmers. Money for the more sustainable farmers to carry out biodiversity-friendly management ensures that EU taxpayers also receive a benefit (public goods).

- The next CAP needs to deliver at least €15bn per year of targeted funding for effective biodiversity measures, to come out of a 50% ring-fencing across the CAP for the environment and climate.
- If the new flexibility is given to Member States as in the current proposal, then strong governance rules are needed to counterbalance it.
- Eco-Schemes need to be better defined, including their ambition and eligibility criteria.

## END TO PERVERSE SUBSIDIES

The continued subsidization of industrial agriculture is incompatible with Agenda 2030: it undermines our production capacity by exhausting the natural resources and ecosystem services needed to produce food – and therefore can no longer be an acceptable use of public resources.

- To make environmental measures more attractive, all payments under both pillars that facilitate the delivery of public goods for the environment, climate and animal welfare needs to be delivered as an incentive, and not as lost revenue.
- Risk Management Tools, such as insurance scheme for farmers should be voluntary for Member States and have lower co-financing rates.

## ENFORCEMENT OF LAW, IMPROVED GOVERNANCE AND PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK

Clear and strong rules which are enforced help the EU achieve the SDGs. Allowing illegal activities are driving less 'competitive' (often more nature-friendly) farmers out of business.

- The result-based approach should be constantly updated and rely on increasingly strong data collection, biodiversity values needs to be further integrated into national and local development with appropriate reporting systems.
- Effective 'conditionality' must cover compliance with all articles of EU environmental protection laws and its enforcement must be checked.
- Environmental authorities to be responsible for the environmental aspects of the CAP and fully involved in the overall negotiations and implementations.



We are 25 NGOs from across Europe working on social issues, supporting farmers, stopping climate change, protecting the environment, defending women's rights, young people, & gender equality, supporting fair trade, development, global justice, & workers' rights.

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