<u>Open letter to MEPs</u>
In view of the Plenary vote on the Dess report on the 23rd of June

Dear Member of the European Parliament,

We are writing to urge you and your fellow European Parliamentarians to seize the opportunity to tackle one of Europe's great challenges: reforming the currently unsustainable food and agricultural system.

The current model of food production is outdated and current food consumption patterns are not sustainable.

The EU can no longer justify a Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) which puts our environment increasingly under strain and subsidises systems that contribute to biodiversity loss, water scarcity, water pollution, animal suffering and climate change.

We can no longer allow a policy which is harming the natural resources farmers and consumers rely on, while having damaging consequences abroad and negatively impacting public health and Europe's long-term food security.

Europe's farmers, consumers and societies are facing increasing health problems linked to intensive production practices, and efforts must be made to decrease dependency on artificial inputs and encourage more resilient production systems.

We, representing environment, consumers, farmers, health and animal welfare organisations wish to highlight the urgent need for an ambitious reform of the CAP and ask you and all Members of the European Parliament to support this call.

The Dess report from the Parliament's Agricultural Committee has identified certain challenges but does not propose ways to fix the current CAP model. Instead it defends the status quo of harmful subsidies, paid by all taxpayers.

This is going against the will of European citizens, where the latest Eurobarometer poll demonstrates that 89% of Europeans want to see more environmental benefits from taxpayer's money.

These views are supported by a vast array of international and European institutions such as the Standing Committee on Agriculture Research, a European Commission appointed body whose third Foresight report highlights the urgency of taking immediate action:

"A radical change in food consumption and production in Europe is unavoidable to meet the challenges of scarcities and to make the European agro-food system more resilient in times of increasing instability…."

The report adds:

"Global systems for producing and distributing food must also be more resilient, more sustainable, and more equitable…."

Europe deserves a new agricultural policy that will promote a sustainable production and consumption system and remove harmful subsidies.

This should include:

1. A meaningful mandatory package of measures at farm level as pre-condition to receive direct payments in order to efficiently green the first pillar taking into account the recent protein deficit in European animal feed;

2. An enhanced and harmonised cross-compliance system including the Water Framework Directive and the Directive on Sustainable Use of Pesticides;

3. A well funded and targeted second pillar with a focus on agri-environmental measures;

4. Promotion of the further development of farming systems that use a low level of external inputs, contribute to climate change mitigation and adaptation, biodiversity and water protection with organic farming and High Nature Value Farming as system approaches to meet these challenges;

5. A clear link between food production, consumption and health and promotion of the development of local food markets and short supply chains for sustainable products;

6. Full consideration for animal welfare issues;

7. Promotion of measures to tackle the social and environmental damages generated overseas by the EU agriculture and food system.

We, members of civil society, will carefully watch how you will tackle these challenges with your vote on the 23rd of June. As it stands, the current Agriculture Committee report is too weak for our support.

Signed by:

European Environmental Bureau,
Birdlife Europe,
IFOAM EU group,
Greenpeace,
EPHAC,
Eurocoop,
PAN,
Eurogroup for Animals,
EUROPARC,
Friends of the Earth Europe.