



To: European Commission President-elect Ursula von der Leyen  
Rue de la Loi 200, 1000 Brussels

Cc: Frans Timmermans, Janusz Wojciechowski, Virginijus Sinkevičius

30 September 2019

## OPEN LETTER

### Subject: The European Green Deal and the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) negotiations

Dear President Von der Leyen,

We are writing to you concerning the European Green Deal and the developments in the current CAP negotiations, in light of what has emerged recently from the Agriculture and Fisheries Council, which now seems to be undermining most of the basic climate and environmental requirements of the CAP.

We welcome the new Commission's intention to propose a European Green Deal. We have every intention to work in a constructive way to ensure that it will be as effective as possible, based on the latest available science. Undertaking bold and effective actions is the only option to avert the catastrophic consequences on the horizon if we do not keep within 1.5°C of warming or prevent the collapse of biodiversity, including severe impacts on food production in Europe and beyond; with disruptive consequences for supply chains, and major impacts on the nutrition and wellbeing of millions of people.

Food production is a major contributor to the EU's greenhouse gas emissions—with the livestock sector alone accounting for between 12% and 17% of EU GHG emissions—and agriculture is the main driver of biodiversity loss in Europe. The CAP is almost 40% of the EU budget and is the main policy that can change practices on the ground. Yet, currently, its public budget is mostly spent inefficiently, whether that is on per hectare 'income support' payments that *inter alia* encourage destruction of nature, or on environmentally harmful subsidies such as payments for irrigation investments that lead to overexploitation of water sources.

Already scientists and the European Court of Auditors have concluded that the Commission's CAP proposal is not sufficient to deal with the environmental challenges we face, and risks increasing harmful subsidies. We are therefore extremely concerned by the progress on the file by both the Council and the Agriculture Committee of the European Parliament, who are rendering the Commissions' 'CAP Green Architecture' and 'Enhanced Conditionality' empty, in contrast to the improvements in the Environment Committee. **If we do not act in this CAP reform to turn agriculture from a problem to a solution in the fight against climate change and biodiversity loss, including reducing pesticide dependency, then the targets that the EU will set under the Green New Deal and the new 'Farm to Fork' strategy for sustainable food, will be impossible to reach.**

We therefore call on you to take decisive action to prevent this CAP reform from locking Europe into another seven years of unsustainable agriculture. **We urge you to take the necessary steps to ensure**



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**the next CAP will be an enabler, rather than an obstacle to, the European Green Deal, including, if necessary, being willing to withdraw the current Commission's proposal.**

We are ready to work with you to secure a future for Europe's children, which includes its future farmers, and would be available at your earliest convenience to discuss this critical issue in more detail.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ariel Brunner".

Ariel Brunner

Senior Head of Policy  
BirdLife Europe and Central Asia

On behalf of:

Arche Noah

The European Environmental Bureau

Greenpeace Europe

Pesticide Action Network Europe