

Joint demands on the post-2027 Common Agricultural Policy (CAP)

Agri-food systems are at the heart of the transformation EU citizens are demanding — from social justice and climate action to environmental protection and high farm animal welfare.

The undersigned **33 organisations, representing civil society and farmers' organisations as well as national coalitions**, advocate for a **coherent and integrated EU policy framework** for agri-food systems. This policy framework should secure fair incomes and decent livelihoods for farmers, restore biodiversity and ecosystems, safeguard clean air and water, replenish soils, drive effective climate action, and ensure all Europeans can access healthy and sustainable diets.

The Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) is an important element of this broader policy framework, and we regret that **no proper impact assessment or public consultation was carried out** before the publication of the legislative proposals in July 2025. As negotiations on the post-2027 CAP kick off, **we urge EU governments and lawmakers to consider the following recommendations:**

1. Make farmer income support fair.

Today, CAP payments continue to be primarily linked to farm size, with a very small number of large, already profitable farms receiving close to a quarter of these payments. For a fairer and more effective way to support farmers' income, we call on EU policymakers to:

- Support the **degressivity and capping** of solely area-based income support payments as a step towards **phasing out these payments altogether**, all while revisiting the capping threshold and degressivity mechanism to ensure they effectively make more budget available. Freed resources should be used in a **much more targeted way** (redistributed to farmers most in need¹, also contributing to creating employment in rural areas, and reallocated to agri-environmental and climate action spending).
- Ensure that degressive area-based payments consider farm income so that they **benefit farmers most in need**.
- Uphold a definition of "active farmer" while strengthening it with **mandatory exclusion criteria ('negative list') applying across the EU** to ensure that CAP beneficiaries are individuals engaged in genuine agricultural activity and food production, including land stewardship of agricultural areas for environmental reasons — not individuals receiving CAP payments via corporate structures, such as holding companies, while not actively involved in farming.

2. Create the economic conditions for the agroecological transition.

Ensuring fair, remunerative prices for farmers would allow the phasing out of area-based payments and would free up budget to support the organic and agroecological transition. We urge policymakers to:

- **Leverage the Common Market Organisation (CMO) Regulation** to ensure remunerative prices for farmers and to strengthen structures supporting the development of markets for organic, agroecological and fair trade products.
- Beyond the CAP, **strengthen the Unfair Trading Practices (UTP) Directive** and ensure **EU trade policy supports** — rather than undermines — a sustainable food system.

¹ In particular small farms, farms in areas with natural constraints, mixed farms, as well as young farmers and new entrants.

3. Make working in farming more attractive.

The EU has lost millions of farms over the past decade, while its farming population is ageing. At the same time, too many farm workers face poor working conditions and insecure livelihoods. To make farming attractive and sustainable for current and future generations, EU policymakers must act on both fronts and:

- Ensure that **no farm is exempted from controls and sanctions** related to Social Conditionality under the "farm stewardship" and safeguard the **integrity of Social Conditionality**.
- Improve the scope and enforcement of Social Conditionality and support the creation of quality jobs with **fair wages and safe working conditions**.
- Support the mandatory 'starter pack' for young farmers and the concept-based start-up aid for the **establishment of young farmers and new entrants**.
- Ensure **secure land access, affordable entry pathways, and long-term viability** for new entrants — the future European Observatory on Farmland should track land transactions and guide land market regulation towards prioritising agroecological entrants (such as organic farmers).

4. Invest in ecosystems and support farmers in the transition.

Thriving ecosystems are key to securing food production and farmers' livelihoods in the long run. The risk is serious that spending for agri-environmental and climate actions will strongly decline in the post-2027 CAP, unless EU policymakers:

- Reiterate the requirement for **no backtracking and increased ambition** in relation to current spending for the environment and biodiversity and promote greater transparency and comparability between Member States in the way that this is measured.
- **Earmark budget for Agri-Environmental and Climate Actions (AECAs)** that substantially increases annually over the CAP period, as agreed in the Strategic Dialogue. Payments for AECAs should be proportional to the level of environmental ambition and benefits.
- Within it, dedicate adequate funding to **payments for the transition away from factory animal production and pesticide-intensive systems towards sustainable and agroecological farming**. This includes practices such as organic farming, extensive animal farming systems, higher-welfare systems,² and agroecological methods which minimise pesticide use.

5. Get rid of harmful subsidies.

Not only does the post-2027 CAP proposal perpetuate harmful, untargeted area-based income support payments, but it also risks triggering a race to the bottom on climate and environmental ambition, reinforcing deregulation trends that weaken environmental protections. We therefore call on EU policymakers to:

- **Strengthen "farm stewardship"** at the EU level to ensure a level playing field for farmers, supporting sustainable management of the natural resources their livelihoods depend on and ensuring strong environmental ambition.
- **Eliminate and safeguard against harmful subsidies** (such as those for factory animal production, water- and pesticide-intensive practices, etc.), including through an improved "negative list" for investment support.

² Features of higher animal welfare systems include: cage-free, outdoor access, environmental enrichment, reduced stocking density, etc.

6. Guarantee the EU budget genuinely delivers on public policy objectives.

A robust monitoring and evaluation framework is essential for assessing the success of policies, ensuring accountability, and supporting evidence-based decision-making, with public participation and oversight in the development of National Plans also being crucial. EU policymakers must:

- **Strengthen climate and environment objectives** under the National and Regional Partnership Plans (NRPP) Regulation to ensure they make a tangible contribution to climate and nature laws and policies.
- Add supporting a just transition towards a sustainable and agroecological agri-food system as a specific objective of the NRPP Fund.
- **Prevent green- and fair-washing** by using meaningful indicators to track performance and by avoiding inflated coefficients to estimate contributions to policy objectives.
- **Ensure meaningful participation** of civil society and farmers' organisations, reflecting their broad diversity, at EU and national level, including through the provision of dedicated support.
- **Ensure full transparency** by requiring the immediate publication of the draft National Plans, the EU Commission's observation letters and the approved National Plans.
- Introduce a framework to classify the EU Commission's **observations on National Plans according to their binding or merely advisory nature**. Approval of National Plans should be delayed until they comply with the NRPP Regulation requirements.

