

## **Wild Europe contribution to public debate on CAP reform**

**Responses were requested by the European Commission to four questions, as listed below.**

**June 2010**

### **Q1 Why do we need a European common agricultural policy?**

There are 4 reasons to retain CAP, albeit radically reformed in favour of environmental policy:

- As an instrument for rural development & regional policy, to even out disparities in wealth per capita and lessen the impact of unemployment and emigration in less favoured areas
- To maintain and restore the health of the natural environment. CAP plays a prime role in biodiversity protection. Without central intervention, the free market does not value the social benefits of biodiversity nor recognise the social costs of damaging it.
- An important sub-set of this is the emerging profile of 'wild' areas of natural habitat where natural processes predominate, able to provide ecosystem services to mitigate climate change, enable adaptation and migration, support substantive gene pools for key species and offer social and economic opportunity. This was reflected in the 2009 EU Parliament vote of 536 vs 19 in favour of improved protection & funding for such areas.
- There is thus a strong ecological and socio-economic argument for radical restructure of CAP towards biodiversity while retaining support for local landholders, farmers and communities.

### **Q2 What do citizens expect from agriculture?**

EU citizens represent a diverse set of interests:

- As consumers they expect low-cost, quality food – consistent with high standards of human health and animal welfare
- As participants in an integrated environment, they wish to see sustainable food production that does not compromise a healthy ecosystem with stable species levels. This should also leave space for large 'wild' areas; notwithstanding rising global population and per capita resource consumption, which is increasingly feasible as a result of more open trans-European competition and higher levels of productivity – with some 40 million hectares of land currently abandoned without significant overall diminution in food output levels.
- As global citizens they wish to address the impact of tariff policies that disadvantage lower cost producers in less developed countries, foster an aid-dependency that hinders poverty alleviation and produce more expensive food.
- As taxpayers they wish to fund support that does not disproportionately benefit wealthier producers in the EU whilst failing to adequately support poorer regions

### **Q3 Why reform the CAP?**

The original strategic reasons for a Common Agricultural Policy have been substantially overtaken by events.

The contribution of agriculture to GDP is now less than a tenth of its share in the EU budget, and the issue of food security has changed 20 years post Cold War, reflecting the need to feed rising global populations with maximum efficiency.

CAP encourages uneconomic food production in a manner which is often environmentally unsustainable. The failure to achieve targets in the 2010 Biodiversity Strategy underlines the urgent need to reappraise the priorities it accords to conservation. Agri-environmental elements of CAP often deliver limited and short-term gains which cease when subsidies end.

There are great opportunities for re-structuring agri-subsidies towards better targeted programmes for protection and restoration of large, linked areas of natural habitat and process, particularly in regions of marginal farming and forestry. These can deliver both environmental and socio-economic benefits to local communities, landholders and wider society. The TEEB initiative is proving the economic value where such programmes are correctly oriented.

#### **Q4 What tools do we need for the CAP of tomorrow?**

For the 'wild' area agenda:

- Clearer targets, eg protection of key sites identified in a new Register; restoration of 12 million hectares in an ecological network
- More targeted fiscal, subsidy and policy instruments – eg guidelines for non intervention management of wild areas in N2000 sites; incentives for large scale restoration.
- Mechanisms linking wild area benefits to funding: eg supporting local landholders providing ecosystem services; incentivising initiatives to deliver urban social benefits - eg for youth at risk, healthcare; maximising value added for local communities from eco-tourism.
- Elimination of harmful anomalies – eg some renewable energy subsidies, negative impacts of GAEC provisions.
- Central focus on Natura 2000, linked to other programmes and including 1) EU areas outside N2000; 2) non EU areas in Europe ('neighbourhood' policies)
- Closer coordination between EC Directorates General
- Representation of the above proposals through an alliance of conservation, landholding, farming, forestry, business and urban social interests.