



GUE/NGL members of the Agriculture and Rural Development Committee in the European Parliament



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GUE/NGL is a confederal group in the European Parliament made up of 34 MEPs from 12 EU Member States working for peace, solidarity, social justice, equality, democracy and human rights in Europe and beyond.

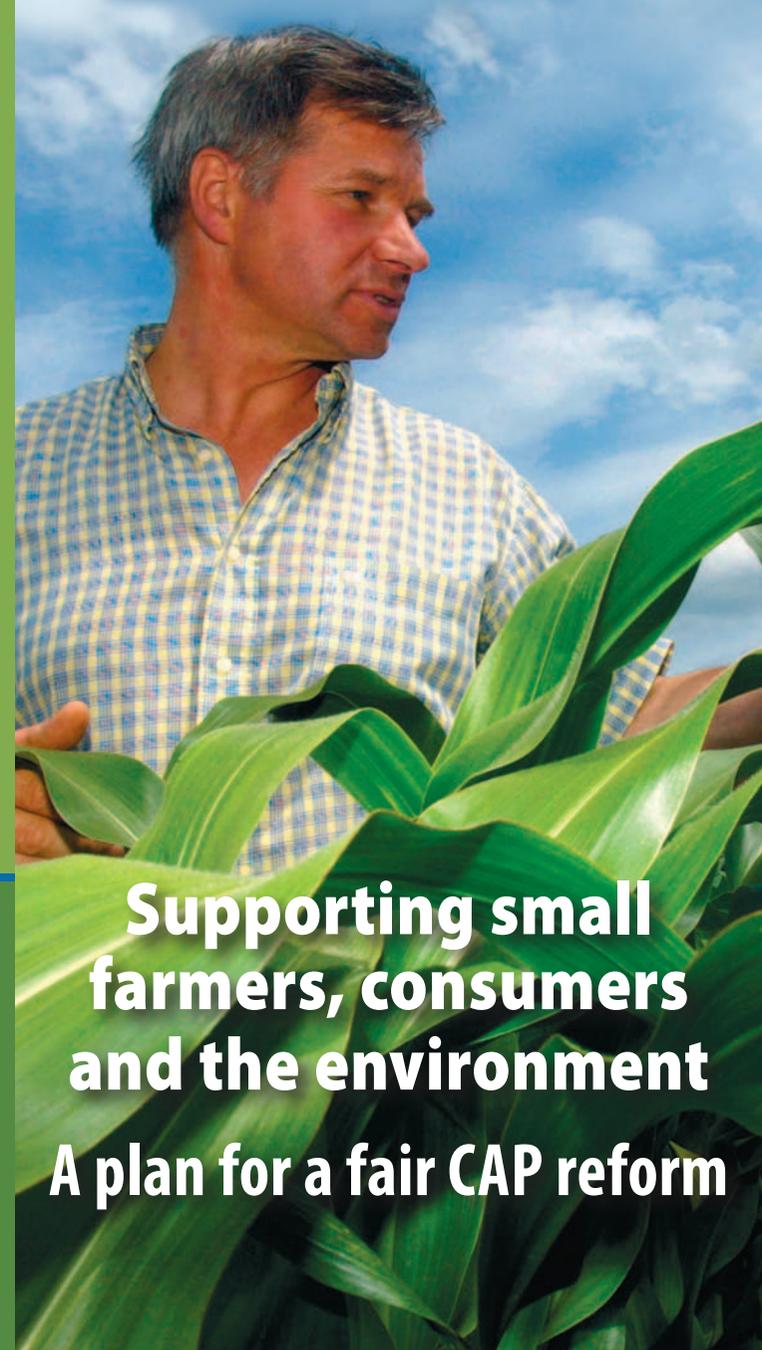
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Supporting small farmers, consumers and the environment

A plan for a fair CAP reform



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GUE/NGL's key demands for CAP reform:

- the right to food, food sovereignty and food safety be applied as a principle;
- priority be given to countries' capacity to develop their production for national or regional food needs, according to each country's specific characteristics;
- the main aim of the CAP should be the production of healthy and high-quality food in accordance with environmental protection;
- the application of the precautionary principle to GMOs in light of their health, environmental and socio-economic risks;
- the withdrawal of GMO species already introduced on foot of pressure from multinationals;
- flexibility and clarity in application.

A fair, simplified, and flexible CAP

The European United Left/Nordic Green Left (GUE/NGL) group in the European Parliament believes that assuring peoples' food sovereignty and food security should be the overriding goal of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP).

GUE/NGL emphasises that governments have an obligation to protect, respect and fulfil this fundamental human right whilst ensuring that such policies contribute towards environmental protection and are not harmful to developing countries.

To achieve this we need an agricultural policy framework that takes into account the specific production systems in each country and region; that supports small producers and is regulated throughout the food supply chain; and that guarantees a fair price to producers and boosts local markets.

It is essential that the reformed CAP is flexible and takes into account the different farming and rural cultures of member states. Simplification of the CAP is also crucial for both legislators and beneficiaries.

Any reform should recognise how farmers are able to contribute to the fight against climate change and should include instruments to both prevent hunger, and protect soil fertility and biodiversity. Finally, member states must make the results of all studies concerning the dangers and merits of new pesticides or farming methods publically available.

Food schemes targeting and ensuring enough good food for deprived persons should also be a part of European agricultural policy and must be safeguarded within a secure legislative framework.



A global concern

International financial speculation and market deregulation greatly contributes to hunger and poverty. They are catalysts for brutal increases in agricultural prices which then exacerbate problems of accessibility, particularly for those without or on low incomes.

The current food crisis, which is especially dire in the horn of Africa, is a consequence of increased speculation in agricultural commodities and IMF and World Bank structural adjustments.

The food sector, in terms of both production and distribution, is becoming ever more concentrated and controlled by multinationals which make huge profits while asking consumers to pay prices several times higher than those given to producers. This control creates conditions whereby a rapid increase in imports and speculative activity flourishes. This then places big food and retail companies in a dominant position which in turn directly affects food sovereignty.

GUE/NGL believes agriculture must be exempt from World Trade Organisation rules which promote the concentration of production in particular regions and countries.



Supporting small & medium-sized farms

The food crisis shows that market regulation in favour of small and medium-sized farms is indispensable. Any reform of the CAP must ensure that these farmers are getting a fair return for their products.

The food chain should be wholly transparent and agricultural products should not be sold at a loss. Small farmers' livelihoods should not be in the hands of big business and national ombudsmen must be set up to ensure and maintain an equitably functioning food chain that provides long-term security and price stability for producers in the agri-food sector.

Any market instruments must work to protect these principles, supporting smaller farms and cooperatives and stabilizing their revenues. Reform should be aimed strictly at active farmers and member states should be able to formulate and apply their own definition as to what constitutes a 'small' or 'active' farmer.

GUE/NGL wants to see a ceiling of €100,000 on direct payments to ensure the budget of the CAP is shared fairly. A minimum income for small farmers is also a vital part of any reform.

GUE/NGL is deeply concerned by the developments in the current CAP reform and rejects more deregulation and attempts to move to more intensive farming procedures, which would mean cutbacks for small producers.

GUE/NGL believes that Agricultural Policy should include a focus on sustainable farming and cooperatives, coupled with a political will to give priority to local and regional trade.