

European Parliament Intergroup
Biodiversity, Hunting, Countryside
“CAP – Out of the box thinking”

PRESS RELEASE

Brussels, 10th January 2017

The Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) accounts for nearly 40% of the total EU budget and is a crucial support mechanism for agriculture and the rural environment in Europe. It is an important tool that if designed and managed effectively can have a real impact on how European agriculture addresses climate change (both through reduced emissions and adaptation), manages land and the countryside to optimise provision of food, energy, biomaterial and ecosystem services and supports the economic development of rural areas.

But if it is to continue to maintain such a large share of the EU budgetary allocation, it has to show policy makers, stakeholders and European citizens that it is fit for purpose and good value for money.

On the 10th of January the European Parliament Intergroup on Biodiversity, Hunting and Countryside met to hear the RISE Foundation argue for a real reform, and put forward an entirely new way of thinking on how the CAP could evolve. The initial ideas were presented by the RISE Chairman Janez Potočnik and the project's Task Force - eminent agro-economists Professor Emeritus Allan Buckwell, Professor Emeritus Alan Matthews, Dr David Baldock and Professor Erik Mathijs.

The RISE Foundation CAP Task Force argued that if the European agricultural policy is to be effective, it needs to address the high level of dissatisfaction surrounding the greening elements and environmental benefits of policy and find new innovative ways to reduce complexities. It needs to address the discontent with the distribution of the supports and look at new ways to manage risk. And finally, RISE argued, we need to look at the very process of reform and encourage procedural adjustments to ensure that agriculture, environment and climate work together throughout the process to produce a joined up and effective agricultural policy.

The presentations were followed by an intense and lively debate which will feed into the further development of the ideas of the RISE Foundation leading up to the final release of the report on the subject on **27th March 2017**. www.risefoundation.eu

MEP Karl-Heinz Florenz, President of the Intergroup, said: *"Nobody is happy with the current European agricultural policy for different reasons. RISE presented us today a way forward, 'thinking out of the box'. I believe that our biggest problems are the failure to be sustainable and halt biodiversity loss and the failure to talk to farmers and include them in the decision-making. We should make more use of farmers' experience and knowledge as to what might be the best and most appropriate measures to take. In my opinion, it is the right moment to start the debate now in order to be ready for the CAP reform in 2020 and to be able to actively engage in the discussions of the future."*

Janez Potočnik, Chairman of the RISE Foundation, explained: *"The people who directly or indirectly manage our food systems are the largest group of natural resource managers in the world. If we are to reach the Sustainable Development Goals, it is imperative that we have a CAP that supports them"*

to realise their potential as critical agents of change in the transformation of current consumption and production systems.”

Professor Emeritus Allan Buckwell, the report Director, said: *“The constellations of the EU stars are not well aligned for a further significant reform after the mandate for the current CAP runs out in 2020, but our analysis shows it is essential that the next reform is more meaningful than the 2013 reform and thus we must do what we can to engineer the conditions to enable such reform to take place.”*

MEP Mairead McGuinness, said: *“To date, efforts to green the CAP has resulted in more complexity and criticism from farmers and environmental organisations. Environmental sustainability has to be at the heart of day to day farm management, but the CAP is also needed to guarantee economic sustainability and on this, it is found wanting. Tackling volatility, imbalances in the food supply chain and long term sustainability will require everyone to think outside the box, but the challenge of funding this new dynamic CAP may ultimately be the greatest one.”*

Media Contact:

Delphine Dupeux, Policy Officer, Intergroup coordinator
delphine.dupeux@elo.org / + 32 2 234 30 00

About the Intergroup “Biodiversity, Hunting and Countryside” of the European Parliament

The Sustainable Hunting, Biodiversity, Countryside activities and Forestry Intergroup was created in 1985 and is one of the oldest and most active parliamentary platforms. It gathers MEPs from different political groups and various stakeholders promoting wildlife conservation, sustainable hunting and fishing, as well as the sustainable management of the countryside and cultural heritage. The objectives of the Intergroup are to promote the role of hunting and other forms of sustainable use of wild species for biodiversity, wildlife management, rural development and forestry issues. Additionally, the Intergroup regularly focuses on cross cutting issues that affect socio-economic activities in rural areas and seek to build bridges between the civil society and decision makers. In 2004, ELO (European Landowners’ Organization) joined the Intergroup as Co-Secretariat, bringing expertise in countryside-related topics.

About the European Landowners’ Organization (ELO)

The European Landowners’ Organization is a unique federation of over 60 national associations from the 28 EU Member States and beyond, which represent the interests of landowners, land managers and rural entrepreneurs at the European political level. Independent and non-profit, the ELO stands for all rural entrepreneurs, promoting a prosperous countryside through the dynamism of private landownership and stewardship. www.elo.org

About the Rural Investment Support for Europe (RISE) Foundation

The Rural Investment Support for Europe (RISE) Foundation is an independent foundation which strives to support a sustainable and internationally competitive rural economy across Europe, looking for ways to preserve the European countryside, its environment and biodiversity, and its cultural heritage and traditions. It works as a think tank, bringing together experts to address key environmental/ agricultural challenges in Europe and develops high quality accessible research reports with clear recommendations for policy makers. It draws on its extensive network of rural stakeholders to highlight innovative practises developed at the farm level and provides a platform for debate on issues that affect rural communities. www.risefoundation.eu