



CAP-Reform Must Deliver to Safeguard Europe's Waters!

387 billion Euro of public funds require effective environmental standards

POSITION OF EUROPEAN ENVIRONMENTAL BUREAU, GRÜNE LIGA, NABU, LIVING RIVERS FOUNDATION, GLOBAL NATURE FUND, BODENSEESTIFTUNG, DEUTSCHE UMWELTHILFE, COALITION CLEAN BALTIC, DUENE, QUERCUS AND PAN GERMANY

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. ENSURE STRICT ENVIRONMENTAL OBLIGATIONS IN PILLAR 1: No direct payments to farmers without strict Cross Compliance including environmental standards based on the Water Framework Directive and binding obligations for water metering, nutrient balancing, pesticide application and erosion control.

2. INTEGRATE 10 % ECOLOGICAL FOCUS AREAS ON AGRICULTURAL LANDS FOR WATER, SOIL AND BIODIVERSITY IMPROVEMENT: Mitigate nutrient and pesticide effects from agricultural runoff and improve water dependent ecosystems with buffer strips, wetlands and riparian zones along all water courses, ditches, ponds and lakes.

3. SECURE SUFFICIENT FUNDING FOR AGRI-ENVIRONMENTAL MEASURES, COMPENSATION PAYMENTS AND ORGANIC AGRICULTURE IN A STRONG PILLAR 2 FOR SUSTAINABLE RURAL DEVELOPMENT: Support real environmental improvements through rehabilitation of wetlands, floodplains and riparian habitats, through land use adapted to natural water dynamics such as paludiculture and extensive grazing in floodplains, and through water friendly farming through organic agriculture.

Most of Europe's waters are currently not in the good ecological status that the Water Framework Directive calls for. **Europe's freshwater biodiversity is at an alarming state:** 37 % of freshwater fish species are considered threatened (particularly in Southern Europe and lower Danube river basin) as well as 44 % of Europe's freshwater molluscs. Habitat destruction, water pollution and water abstraction are among the main threats. Floodplains, wetlands and small water bodies in the agricultural landscape play an important role for freshwater biodiversity conservation.

Public spending within the EU Common Agricultural Policy is among the most significant pressures jeopardizing Europe's waters. These payments to a large degree support unsustainable farming practices, entailing massive environmental impacts on our waters. These well known impacts include

- **eutrophication** of rivers, lakes and coastal waters as well as European seas, such as Baltic and North Sea (caused by excess nutrients and erosion)
- **pollution** of ground and surface waters (e.g. with pesticides)
- **habitat destruction** (through excessive maintenance of water courses, drainage of groundwater dependent wetlands and flood protection)
- **overabstraction** of available water resources for irrigation
- **climate effects** (particularly on carbon rich soils and drained peatlands)

Public spending without strict environmental obligations will harm biodiversity even further and actively destroy public goods. In contradiction to both the precautionary and the polluter pays principle, **perverse subsidies** actually pay the polluter through **payments putting ecosystems out of service.**

The Reform of the Common Agricultural Policy post 2013 must deliver to safeguard Europe's waters instead of conserving bad status of water bodies. Future direct payments in the CAP need clear **Cross Compliance** standards based on existing EU-legislation, including the **Water Framework Directive** and the respective River Basin Management Plans as well as the **Directive on Sustainable Use of Pesticides**. All CAP payments should provide incentives for the establishment of more sustainable farming practices and contribute to achieving the environmental

objectives of the EU (WFD and Natura 2000) as well as providing benefits for climate change mitigation and adaptation.

Enough is known about both harmful impacts and environmental enhancement through agriculture to be certain that the CAP greening elements recommended in this position will be applicable throughout Europe and are indispensable to

- a) support the achievement of the environmental objectives of the WFD (good status) and
- b) prevent further deterioration of Europe's water resources (Art. 4.7 WFD).

For all river basins in the EU, Management Plans and Programmes of Measures were due in 2009. According to the WFD Art.11 measures (this includes farm level measures) must be made operational by 2012. All members states are in a position to integrate water related measures when shaping their operational programs until 2014.

Leaving the CAP without specific water related components until 2020 will prohibit good status in most of Europe's rivers, lakes and seas and entail further damage to Europe's waters at high costs for society.



* The EU spends an approximate 55 billion Euros per year on agricultural subsidies (www.farmsubsidy.org).
 Figure: GRÜNE LIGA Water Policy Office 2012

The signatory organisations ask the European Parliament, the Member States and the European Commission to

A) Ensure strict environmental obligations in Pillar 1!

Environmental obligations within Pillar 1 are key to greening the CAP. The following requirements on **good agricultural practice** should be introduced as compulsory for 2014-2020:

- A clear **baseline including Water Framework Directive requirements** is indispensable for sensible Cross Compliance. This must include clear and binding indicators and standards, such as water metering for farmers, obligations for nutrient balancing, erosion control and pesticide application in line with the Directive on the Sustainable Use of Pesticides.
- Including **10 % ecological focus areas** on agricultural lands is paramount. These areas should functionally **integrate wetlands, riparian zones and at least 10 m wide buffer strips** (on both sides of water courses, with no ploughing, fertilizer and pesticide application) into the agricultural landscape, providing benefits for water quality, biodiversity and climate change mitigation and adaptation.
- Obligations for **permanent grassland conservation, erosion control and crop rotation** with at least 3 crops and no crop exceeding 50 % of the arable farmland providing public goods related to water protection.
- **Water pricing in agriculture is essential** for allocating water resources more efficiently. It must be implemented throughout the EU (Art. 9 WFD; introduction of water pricing was due in 2010).

B) Secure a strong Pillar 2 for sustainable rural development!

In shaping Pillar 2, **sufficient funding must be secured and at least 50 % earmarked for agri-environmental measures** and other environmental improvements particularly the following:

- **Wetlands and other natural retention measures for water and nutrients need to be placed along the flow path of agricultural runoffⁱ**. In order to reduce nutrient losses within catchments, such functional integration into the agricultural landscape needs proper ecohydrological planning and advice. Existing and historic small water courses, ditches, ponds and wetlands indicate where such measures can be placed most effectively, preferably through restoration.
- **Extensive grazing in floodplains**
- **Paludiculture**: On highly degraded peatlands, rewetting and conversion of conventional farming practices to wetland adapted production of reeds and wood can provide benefits for water and climateⁱⁱ.
- **Rehabilitation of riparian zones, floodplains, wetlands and drained areas** through restoration and land use adapted to natural water dynamics that contributes to connecting biodiversity rich areas and Green Infrastructure especially in river and lowland corridors. Floodplain and wetland restoration offer synergies for agriculture, flood protection and biodiversity.
- **Farm Advisory Systems** need to professionally support more water friendly farming practices.
- **Support for organic farming needs to be included as a mandatory standard target** of agri-environmental schemes and other rural development measures. Cooperations between drinking water suppliers and organic farmers (e.g. in Leipzig and Munich) demonstrate the lower impact and the beneficial effects of organic farming on water resourcesⁱⁱⁱ.

In more general terms, CAP payments should **promote the establishment of more sustainable farming practices** and not continue to prevent the search for alternatives to environmentally harmful production schemes. There are sensible, cost-effective and economically viable farming practices which provide positive effects on a wide range of ecosystem services!

Payments for agri-environmental and other measures within Pillar 2 should be based on strong greening requirements, be targeted towards real environmental improvements and not serve as mere repair payments. Based on strict obligations for direct payments, they should **safeguard and improve the status of the fundamentals of the European Agricultural Model: Water, soil, climate and biodiversity**.

ⁱ cf. GRÜNE LIGA (2011): **Wetlands for Clear Water**. www.wrrl-info.de/en/docs/wrrl-sonderinfo_en.pdf

ⁱⁱ cf. www.yepat.uni-greifswald.de/paludiculture

ⁱⁱⁱ cf. GRÜNE LIGA (2010): **Factsheet Water Friendly Farming in Leipzig's Drinking Water Protection Zones**.

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