



## Media Release

### **Commission leaked document sketches a greener CAP, but much greater ambition needed if the CAP is to survive the gathering budget storm**

A leaked copy of the Common Agriculture Policy reform proposal obtained by BirdLife proposes a few steps in the direction of a greener and more effective CAP but fails to provide a solid foundation that would allow the CAP to survive the ever growing budgetary pressures.

BirdLife applauds the proposal to link basic income support to farmers to meaningful environmental commitments such as crop rotation and environmental set-aside but is deeply disappointed by the overall lack of ambition shown by the proposal. Despite claims of a greener and fairer CAP, the proposal completely fail to mention three critical areas: the first is High Nature Value farming, ignoring its environmental and social importance and increasing economic vulnerability. The second is the role of CAP payments to support the Natura 2000 network of important sites for nature across the EU, many of which depend on sensitive farming. The final startling omission is the role of agri-environment schemes which reward farmers for environmentally friendly practices and have a proven record of delivering effective results.

*“A CAP clearly rewarding farmers for the delivery of public goods is necessary to address the biodiversity and climate crises and to ensure long term food security. This proposal must be significantly improved if we are to be able to convince the European public of the need to invest vast amounts of money in the rural economy and the farm sector at times of great financial pressures”* says Ariel Brunner, Head of EU Policy at BirdLife International<sup>1</sup>.

The proposal also fails to innovate and put the policy on solid foundations. On the contrary, it proposes a few retrograde schemes for example, allowing member states to reintroduce production subsidies to pet sectors without a clear link to the delivery of public goods. This raises questions in terms of negative impacts on developing countries and the EU’s stand in international trade negotiations. It would also erode the 'common' aspect of the policy, deemed so important by the Commission for tackling cross border issues like climate change, biodiversity loss and ensuring a level playing field for farmers across Europe.

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<sup>1</sup> Stichting BirdLife Europe represents the European Division of BirdLife International.

The leaked draft is pointing in the right direction, but will need to be greatly improved in coming weeks if it is to provide a solid way forward for this important policy which is facing an uphill struggle to maintain its budget.

*ENDS*

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