

Title On Thursday 7 June, BirdLife Partners from across Europe have launched a [common declaration](#) on the place of Rural Development in the CAP at a Conference organized by BirdLife Europe, NABU and the RSPB (BirdLife partners in Germany and the UK). This [declaration](#) is calling for a greater proportion of the Common Agricultural Policy's budget to be spent on measures which deliver benefits to society and which will ensure the sustainability of European farming. The CAP, which covers the largest area of expenditure in the European Union's budget, dedicates only a quarter of its funding to rural development spending which includes targeted measures aimed at improving environmental and social outcomes. The current financial proposals remain unclear about the amount of money going to rural development and the environmental measures within the rural development budget. The joint declaration ["A Strong Rural Development Policy: The key to unlocking the CAP's green potential"](#) underlines the need to ensure that a higher proportion of the CAP's budget is spent on measures which deliver benefits to the environment and the society. At a time of economic crisis, each euro counts: a smart investment now stands for higher benefits and less problems in the future. Rural Development measures have already shown that they can bring added value in terms of the services it delivers to society and the contribution it can make to reach Europe's environmental targets by 2020. It also constitutes the main 'sustainability' tool of European Agriculture. Moreover, the declaration highlights the fact that the so called 'greening' of direct payments (Pillar I) can only fulfill its potential if it is combined with stronger and more focused actions in the CAP's Pillar II (the so called 'Rural development Pillar?'). Without such a combination, the greening measures planned in the Pillar I might not reach their full effect or be too easily bypassed. It will be crucial that Member States therefore green the whole of the CAP through both pillars and thereby are putting national and short-term interests aside in favour of sustainability and long-term food security. In this round of CAP reform, BirdLife Europe is calling for:

- A substantial increase in funding for Rural Development Policy;
- Significantly increased, and ring-fenced, funding for targeted and well implemented environmental schemes such as agri-environment and Natura 2000, within the Rural Development Pillar of the CAP;
- Strong greening measures which improve the environmental performance of the CAP's first Pillar.

Find the Common declaration on the place of Rural Development in the CAP [here](#). Find BirdLife Europe Position on Rural Development [here](#). Find BirdLife Europe Position on the CAP reform proposals [here](#). For more information, please contact [Tees Robijns](#), EU Agriculture and Bioenergy Policy Officer at BirdLife Europe