

Dear Commissioner Cioloş,

At the beginning of the CAP reform process you placed the environment at the heart of the debate. You championed policy changes that would ensure that the CAP better protected the natural resources that farming depends upon in return for billions of taxpayers' money. We, and civil society more broadly, trusted you to continue a trajectory of reform established over 20 years ago but instead vested interests successfully steered the process to a point where virtually all prospects for a greener CAP have been dashed.

This betrayal of the original goal is most clear when we consider what has happened to the flagship 'greening' measure – Ecological Focus Areas (EFA). EFAs should have resulted in a modest percentage of every farm being managed for the protection of the resource base farming depends on including wildlife. But this honorable objective has been watered down so that at best, EFAs will deliver next to nothing for the natural environment, and at worst will act as a bizarre form of financial support for protein crop production. If labeling law were to be applied in this case, the word 'ecological' would be deemed false advertising.

The Delegated Acts of 11 March 2014 already interpreted the Regulation in such a way as to diminish what remained of the green content of the reform. However, the declaration of the Commission released on 2 April weakens the greening yet further and really marks a low point in EU governance. It effectively announces that the rules just adopted are not to be taken seriously because even weaker rules will be adopted in a few months' time. This makes a mockery of the European Commission's role. It flies in the face of the most basic rules of good governance and the fact that it got the support of Commission President Barroso makes a travesty of this Commission's smart regulation agenda. Furthermore, giving in to the demands of a few individual MEPs without any formal request from the European Parliament gives the unfortunate impression that the Commission has been co-opted into someone's re-election campaign.

In an age of continuing, and worsening, environmental problems, as well as economic pressures across the EU, the fact that public money will continue to prop up harmful farming practices is a scandal of epic proportions.

Sincerely,



Jeremy Wates,  
Secretary General,  
The European Environmental Bureau



Ariel Brunner,  
Head of EU policy  
BirdLife Europe