

Will the Commission listen to stakeholders' call for a "fitness check" of CAP?

Today the REFIT Platform [1] published its opinion [2] on the Effectiveness and Efficiency of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). The REFIT Platform Stakeholder group recommends a "fitness check" of the CAP. And, encouragingly, even a few members of the Government group support a "fitness check" of the CAP although the majority of the Government group members wish to derail it. Will the European Commission step up its commitment to its better regulation agenda and listen to its REFIT Platform stakeholders?

Ariel Brunner, Senior Head of Policy, BirdLife Europe stated: *"This is the acid test for the Commission's commitment to REFIT to begin. It should be about better regulation and not just about dismantling legislation that protects citizens. We have a strong call from stakeholders and business to do a transparent evaluation of the effectiveness of the CAP which spends 40% of the EU budget. With a majority of EU member states unwilling to ask the question, the Commission must show that it stands up for an effective EU and not just for covering up failures on behalf of vested interests."*

More than 100 NGOs active in farming, development, environment, climate, animal welfare, food systems and public health, have demanded a review of the European food and farming system, a so called "fitness check" of the CAP [3]. The CAP, which accounts for almost 40% of the EU Budget, is not equipped to address the fundamental challenges that Europe is facing in the agriculture sector. The current CAP isn't delivering a policy that benefits EU citizens, farmers, our environment, our animals, our health and climate and that is why stakeholders are calling for a "fitness check". **ENDS**

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Notes:

[1] The REFIT Platform was announced in the 2015 Better Regulation Agenda. It consists of a Stakeholder Group, with 18 members and two representatives from the European Social and Economic Committee and the Committee of the Regions, and a Government Group, with one high-level expert from each of the EU's 28 Member States. Members will be supported in their work by the Commission's Secretariat-General. The members of the Stakeholder Group were selected through a public call for applications. The Commission has sought a balanced representation of different sectors, interests, regions and gender.

[2] REFIT Platform Opinion on the submission by the European Environmental Bureau on Effectiveness and Efficiency of the Common Agricultural Policy

http://ec.europa.eu/smart-regulation/refit/refit-platform/docs/recommendations/opinion_agriculture_i_4a_final.pdf

[3] Letter from 114 NGOs to European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker on CAP Fitness Check

http://www.birdlife.org/sites/default/files/attachments/ngos_letter_-_cap_fitness_check.pdf#overlay-context=europe-and-central-asia/common-agriculture-policy-reform

*BirdLife Europe and Central Asia is a **partnership of 48 national conservation organisations** and a **leader in bird conservation**. Our **unique local to global approach** enables us to deliver high impact and long term conservation for the benefit of **nature and people**. BirdLife Europe and Central Asia is one of the six regional secretariats that compose BirdLife International. Based in Brussels, it supports the European and Central Asian Partnership and is present in **47 countries** including **all EU Member States**. With more than **4100 staff** in Europe, **two million members** and tens of thousands of skilled volunteers, BirdLife Europe and Central Asia, together with its national partners, owns or manages more than **6000 nature sites** totalling 320,000 hectares.*