

Brussels – 7 September

Tweaking Rural Development policy will not deliver for environment and countryside – full CAP overhaul needed

BirdLife Europe and the European Environmental Bureau (EEB) have warned that new proposals (1) made by Agriculture Commissioner Phil Hogan to revitalise rural areas and promote sustainable farming will be rendered useless by the current structure of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) which works against these new objectives.

Faustine Bas-Defossez, EEB Policy Manager for Agriculture and Bioenergy, said:

“If the European Commission is as serious as it claims about a results-oriented policy then it cannot ignore the fact that the attempt to ‘green’ the policy at the last reform was a failure and is not going to deliver anything for the environment. Small changes to rural development policies will not have any impact unless the CAP as a whole gets a full overhaul.”

Ariel Brunner, Senior Head of Policy, BirdLife Europe stated: *“The Cork 2.0 declaration is full of good intentions but it carefully avoids the elephant in the room - the fact that most CAP subsidies are used to lock farmers into a failed agriculture model that destroys nature, harms people’s health and pushes farmers out of business. Unless the need to reform CAP subsidies is addressed, this declaration is not worth the paper it’s printed on.”*

The EEB and BirdLife Europe’s call^[2] for a Fitness Check of the CAP is even more pertinent now that the Cork 2.0 Declaration has shown consensus amongst civil society and stakeholders to move towards an agricultural policy founded on sustainable development. Rural Development objectives can no longer be an afterthought – they must be moved front and centre in a new Food and Farming Policy for Europe. **ENDS**

For further information, please contact:

Thomas Quinn, EU Agriculture and Bioenergy Policy Officer, BirdLife Europe & Central Asia

thomas.quinn@birdlife.org

+32 2 238 50 91

+ 32 491 90 46 50

Faustine Bas-Defossez, EEB Policy Manager for Agriculture and Bioenergy

faustine.defossez@eeb.org

+32 (0) 2 790 88 14
+32 (0) 4 87 244 270

Notes:

[1] Cork 2.0 Declaration 2016 http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/events/2016/rural-development/cork-declaration-2-0_en.pdf

[2] NGO letter to Commissioner Hogan ahead of Cork 2.0: European Conference on Rural Development
http://www.birdlife.org/sites/default/files/attachments/hogan_letter_cork_conference.pdf.

Uncap the Truth, spotlight on EU farming policy <http://www.eeb.org/index.cfm/library/uncap-the-truthspotlight-on-eu-farm-policy/>

The hidden truth (Rural Development) <http://www.eeb.org/index.cfm/news-events/news/new-ruraldevelopment-plans-and-the-environment-the-hidden-truth/>

Uncap the truth briefing <http://www.eeb.org/index.cfm/library/policy-briefing-uncap-the-truth/>

*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**.*