

To: Ms Ursula von der Leyen President of the European Commission

Subject: Re: Request for withdrawal of the CAP-proposal

Brussels, 16 November 2020

Dear President Von der Leyen,

Thank you for your swift reply to our letter, in which we brought to your attention the inconsistencies of the positions adopted by the EU Council and the EU Parliament on the CAP with your promises to EU citizens in the EU Green Deal.

We take note of your intention to stick to the spirit of the original proposal of the former Commission. However, we firmly believe that institutional continuity should not prevail over the major crises of ecosystem collapse and irreversible climate change and that our Union is facing; which, in our view, can only be solved thanks to a bold and ambitious Green Deal. Time has come to listen to scientists, youth, and European Auditors together with millions of other concerned citizens. Time has come to follow up on your promises for change.

We welcome the fact that you agree on the importance of the Green Deal to fight climate change and the loss of biodiversity. We welcome the need you express to ensure both the Farm to Fork and the biodiversity strategies, specifically the targets in key areas, are embedded in the new CAP.

But as your Vice-President Frans Timmermans said, we are upset too.

The EU Council and the EU Parliament positions protect the status quo, to ensure that 20% of farmers will still benefit from 80% of the direct payments, while watering down action and funding to protect climate, biodiversity, and small farmers.

There is an understandable eagerness to progress with negotiations but we would insist that enough time is given for a good job to be done, especially in these exceptional Covid times. This is the last chance CAP reform for climate and biodiversity – we don't want to arrive at the end of the programming period and find that we have failed current and future generations, as we did just before this reform round. Now that the EU has adopted the transitional regulation for the CAP, the CAP currently being negotiated will only enter into force in 2023. This lets us take the time needed to do a good job as lawmakers and ensure European agriculture becomes the fair and sustainable sector that our citizens demand.

Some would like you to be stuck in the role of honest broker. But you should have your own say in the negotiations. The European Commission is lawfully entitled to intervene in the legal process by presenting strong proposals of the Green Deal in addition to the proposal of

your predecessors from 2018. There is still a chance for you to be the driving force for greater sustainability in the CAP.

We also welcome recent statements by VP Timmermans that the Commission would withdraw if it sees too much watering down of the original ideals of the reform proposal. In particular:

- 1. We need a strong performance model that underpins a results-oriented CAP to ensure positive and ambitious action on the ground and the transition to sustainability. We insist on retaining a solid set of indicators to measure progress; all targets in the Green Deal's Farm to Fork & Biodiversity strategies must be included both as indicators and incorporated as EU level objectives.
- 2. No backsliding means the Conditionality rules of the Commission proposal must be upheld for a common policy across the MS and a level playing field of obligations and these good farming practices across the MS, for all CAP beneficiaries. Conditionality must be the baseline, applicable to all, that represents "No Harm" for biodiversity, for farmers' working conditions, as well as for animal welfare.
- 3. Ecoschemes must focus on climate and environment as in the original Commission proposal1, otherwise the reform becomes meaningless: Animal welfare spending should not be confused with environmental expenditure, and should be ring-fenced from elsewhere. Likewise, competitiveness is already well catered for in other objectives of the CAP.

You have the power to make this change, to ensure the CAP at least Does No Harm and at best delivers positive change, ensuring that one third of the EU budget helps meet the EU Green Deal. It is in your hands.

You can continue to count on us as progressive partners, as we are also intent on delivering on ambitious agricultural policy fit for purpose and meeting the urgent needs of farmers, and the climate, biodiversity and the environment crises.

Yours sincerely,

Bas Eickhout Benoît Biteau Martin Häusling Tilly Metz

Greens/EFA Members of the European Parliament