

# The Common Agricultural Policy after **2013** **Your ideas matter**

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## **Why do we need a European common agricultural policy?**

Society should take care of its agriculture. Agriculture plays a strategic role in the supply of food, in rural employment, in the management of land and natural resources. Yet today, our agricultural sector remains vulnerable, due to, among others, lower than average income, volatile prices, uncertainties and risks linked to resources and climate change, and low market power. Policies are therefore needed that correct market failures, act as a safety net, improve sustainability and enhance public goods that agriculture produces on top of food. This is to the benefit of society, and not just farmers. The European Union has to continue in playing a central role in this policy. Only the European level can ensure a properly functioning European market and guarantee a level playing field among Member States. In addition, a European agricultural policy adds value by offering a cross-border approach to common challenges and by encouraging solidarity among Member States.

## **What do citizens expect from agriculture?**

The most recent Eurobarometer survey indicates that, above all, European citizens expect healthy and safe food of good quality and at a reasonable price. Furthermore, citizens also expect a strong contribution from agriculture in preserving the countryside, developing the rural economy and in tackling the consequences of climate change. A majority of European citizens (85%) agrees that farmers should be encouraged to become more market-oriented, thereby implying the need for a competitive European agriculture. But also, 87% agree that financial support for agriculture must depend on compliance to rules regarding environmental protection, food safety and animal welfare, thereby underlining the need for an ecologically sustainable form of agriculture.

## **Why reform the CAP?**

Making European agriculture more competitive and more sustainable. This remains an important focus for the CAP. However, new challenges and changing expectations explain why the CAP's policies and instruments need to be improved. Steps should be taken to guarantee that EU agriculture can continue to contribute to EU food security. Farmers need more policy support to deal with an increasingly competitive global market and new uncertainties (e.g. price volatility). Within the EU, more is needed to improve the functioning of the supply chain. This includes more support for producer organizations. In addition, the rise of global food demand, climate change, biodiversity loss and increasingly scarce resources clearly show that good agricultural and environmental condition of land, water and other resources come under even more pressure. The future CAP should thus also enable the move towards a more ecologically sustainable agriculture.

## **What tools do we need for the CAP of tomorrow?**

We need tools that move us towards a more competitive, sustainable agriculture and enable sufficient own food supply. Market policies need to be modernized so that they are capable of dealing with the challenges of a globalised market. Within the EU, the private sector should play a bigger role in managing offer, price and risk. Producer organizations are an important tool to realize this, along with initiatives to improve the functioning of the supply chain. More investment support is necessary to go towards more competitive and sustainable structures, production processes and products. Enhanced agro-environmental measures can maximize the potential for environment-related public services. And within pillar II, agriculture in peri-urban areas requires more attention. Direct support remains justified to compensate costs for high EU standards, and to stabilize income. Additionally, targeted payments should provide support for specific objectives, areas or production types.