GREEN BUDGET EUROPE’S RESPONSE TO THE EU COMMISSION CONSULTATION ON THE COMMON AGRICULTURAL POLICY

Question 1: Why do we need a European common agricultural policy? (1000 characters max)

To decide why we need the EU Common Agricultural Policy at all, we should establish first what the objective of such a policy might be. Green Budget Europe (GBE) strongly believes that agriculture can be a driver of enhanced land management and sustainability and that the CAP can provide the means of dealing with the following issues:

- To safeguard biodiversity and protect rural ecosystems
- To address the problem of the negative ecological and carbon footprint of EU agricultural systems
- To safeguard jobs in agriculture in the EU and protect agricultural communities
- To reduce water pollution from agriculture and encourage improved water management systems.

The CAP could be designed to accelerate the transition of European farming toward the sustainable use of natural resources, encourage the development of innovative technologies and reward farmers for the delivery of public goods. It could serve to ensure best practice throughout the EU and establish a high standard of protection of natural resources and environments.

Question 2: What do citizens expect from agriculture? (1000 characters max)

EU citizens expect:

1. Food to be produced to the highest environmental standards at the same time as being healthy, safe, good to eat and of high quality while respecting social standards and animal welfare norms, and having gone through an equitable trading system.

2. Agriculture to incorporate management of the countryside and its ecosystems, including safeguarding rural biodiversity. They also see the countryside as a public good and a resource for all citizens to enjoy.

But EU citizens also have certain expectations from a Common Agricultural Policy. They expect their money to be spent in a responsible and efficient way – and this is not perceived to be the case for the CAP. It is widely known that the big winners from the CAP tend to be large landowners, while smaller or organic farmers, potentially providing a far more varied and valuable service, do not...
benefit to the same extent. Indeed, 85% of direct CAP payments go to just 18% of farmers or stakeholders in agri-business.

**Question 3: Why reform the CAP? (1000 characters max)**

Agricultural practices in the EU supported by the CAP are on the whole unsustainable. They are based on inputs that are artificial and potentially damaging to the environment and human health. Agriculture is highly dependent both directly and indirectly (nitrogen fertilisers) on fossil fuels. The current CAP cannot deliver efficiently on policy objectives to tackle these problems and reform the agricultural sector.

Most CAP spending is locked into entitlements that have no link to how individual farmers and land managers manage their land and what they deliver for society. Unsustainable, high carbon-emitting and resource-intensive farming is rewarded while more sustainable farming systems systematically receive lower payments.

The policy aims of the CAP must be modernised to support those who offer most by way of environmental and public goods and services. If the EU is to meet targets on e.g. environmental and social sustainability, the CAP must be properly aligned to public policy objectives.

**Question 4: What tools do we need for the CAP of tomorrow? (1000 characters max)**

GBE supports the proposal for a new CAP developed by BirdLife International, the EEB, the European Forum on Nature Conservation and Pastoralism; the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM EU Group), and the WWF. The report is available here: [http://cap2020.ieep.eu/vision/NGO-CAP-proposal.pdf](http://cap2020.ieep.eu/vision/NGO-CAP-proposal.pdf) and was launched as a concrete proposal for how a better CAP could be structured.

Targeted CAP payments should act as incentive measures to:

- Encourage sustainable, resource-efficient farming practices, e.g. organic farming.
- Encourage farmers to provide public goods e.g. preservation of biodiversity, carbon storage.
- Preserve rural communities and safeguard jobs.

All this should be done in a strategic, coherent and programmatic way, ensuring that beneficiaries and authorities can be made accountable. Principles like transparency, monitoring and evaluation, partnership (consultation), prioritization, cost-effectiveness, and avoiding externalities on non-EU countries should be kept at the heart of policy making. It is also essential that the CAP ensure the existence of functioning and fair markets within and beyond the EU and ends the dumping of EU products.