



Meeting the Food & Environmental Challenge: Resource efficiency, innovation and governance

Media Statement

Brussels, March 27, 2012

FFA2012 calls for ambitious EU agricultural policy fit for the 21st century

Today the Forum for the Future of Agriculture (FFA) celebrated its fifth anniversary with a call for the EU to put in place an ambitious new agriculture policy fit for the 21st century. The new Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) must enable Europe to make an effective contribution to food and environmental security at home and abroad. This means greater focus on knowledge transfer and innovation in farm technology and practices as well as incentivising farmers to provide the public goods and services Europe needs.

At FFA2012 EU Commissioners Dacian CIOLOȘ (Agriculture & Rural Development) and Janez POTOČNIK (Environment), as well as MEP Paolo DE CASTRO and Frans VAN DAELE, Head of Cabinet to the President of the European Council, were amongst the speakers addressing more than 1,300 delegates. Other speakers included representatives from across the food and farming chain, NGOs, and civil society. The floor was also given to the younger generation who shared their visions for the future of agriculture.

Delegates welcomed several aspects of the Commission's CAP reform proposal:

- a fairer sharing of rewards throughout the food chain
- the greening of Pillar 1 support
- tackling price volatility
- simplification for small farmers
- streamlining of cross-compliance rules
- proposed doubling of the R&D budget for agriculture and the innovation partnerships

But they expressed concern about the vagueness, lack of ambition and direction of some elements:

- redistribution of direct aid could adversely affect incentives to increase productivity and the environmental and economic sustainability of agricultural production
- vagueness of the new risk management tool kit and its ex-post approach with no reflection as regards preventive treatment of risk

Participants called for:

- more coherence between Pillar 1 and Pillar 2
- taking better account of the European Parliament (Dess and Lyon reports) advocating incentives for additional public goods production by farmers
- targeted, applied research and innovation for sustainable intensification of production, decoupling farm production from resource use
- reduction of regulatory blockers which prevent farmers and growers from taking up more disease, drought resistant and healthier high quality products preserving the environment
- more investment in knowledge transfer, education, training
- better extension services to help farmers increase both competitiveness and sustainability

In his opening address, the Chairman of FFA2012, Franz FISCHLER, said: *“The major global challenge of our times is to increase food production by 70% in order to feed 9 billion people. Achieving this at a time of land and water scarcity, soil degradation, and in the face of a changing climate, makes the challenge formidable in scale and geo-political in nature. The whole world needs to grow more from less, and the reformed CAP must support Europe in playing a leading role in achieving this.”*

Keynote speaker Parag KHANNA, Director of the Hybrid Reality Institute, a research and advisory group focused on human-technology co-evolution, added: *“The events of the past year have taught us that the global food system is nothing less than a foundation of geopolitical stability - or instability. We have to devote all our scientific, technological and policy tools to ensuring food security for a growing planet.”*

Dacian CIOLOȘ, EU Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development, said: *“Farmers need a CAP reform that shows the direction for the future. We must go ahead with a new vision of the role of the CAP and of the role of agriculture in society. This should allow the farmers to be part of a long term strategy to produce, preserve our natural resources and develop our rural areas.”*

Janez POTOČNIK, EU Commissioner for Environment, stated: *“European agriculture is on the right path towards more sustainable footing, but there is much to be done before that job is complete. Greening the CAP is the logical approach - it's what the public wants, it's what the environment requires, and it's what farmers need in the long-term to sustain their activities.”*

Keynote speaker Mauricio Antonio LOPES, Executive President of EMBRAPA (Brazilian Agricultural Research Corporation), highlighted the success story of Brazilian agriculture: *“We have been able to combine public policies, institutional building, human resource development and research and innovation to accelerate our competitiveness in agriculture. Because of this, Brazil has ensured its food security in less than 40 years. Also, it is impressive how we advanced towards more sustainable systems. Today we realize that “Green Economy” & “Economic Growth” are not necessarily antagonists, but complementary in the process of development.”*

John ATKIN, Chief Operating Officer at Syngenta and founding partner of FFA, commented: *“Today, people rightly talk about agriculture sustainability in economic, social, and environmental terms. This was not the case five years ago. However, Europe’s excessively cautious approach to farm technologies is unnecessary and acts as a barrier to sustainably closing the productivity gap. The EU and Member States must make a choice – are we going to just talk about innovation*

or will we really act to ensure that innovation gets into the hands of farmers who need it to grow more, high quality and affordable food, using fewer natural resources.”

Thierry de l'ESCAILLE, Secretary General, the European Landowners' Organization (ELO), concluded: *“Land managers are the best custodians of rural areas which are the bedrock of the food production system in Europe. European farmers already do a great deal to preserve soil, water and biodiversity. But higher environmental standards will need to be respected by all farmers with a regard to very different farming systems across the EU. Land managers are ready to go greener.”*

About FFA

The annual Forum is an initiative of the European Landowners' Organization (ELO) and Syngenta. It brings together a diverse range of stakeholders to catalyze thinking on the way European agriculture needs to respond to the major challenges that it faces in delivering food and environmental security. The Forum was created in 2008 in response to a belief that many EU policies impacting on agriculture are focused on solving yesterday's problems, such as overproduction, and do not deal with the new challenges and market opportunities. Challenges include feeding a growing world population, demand for a higher quality diet, increased demand for renewable sources of energy and changing weather patterns. With limited arable land available, there is a need to sustainably maximize production from that already under cultivation.

www.forumforagriculture.com

About ELO

The European Landowners' Organization (ELO), created in 1972, is a unique federation of national associations from the 27 EU Member States and beyond, which represents the interests of landowners, land managers and rural entrepreneurs at the European political level. Independent and non-profit making, ELO is the only organization able to stand for all rural entrepreneurs. ELO aims at promoting a prosperous countryside through the dynamism of private landowners. Its Secretariat is based in Brussels.

www.elo.org

About Syngenta

Syngenta is one of the world's leading companies with more than 26,000 employees in over 90 countries dedicated to our purpose: Bringing plant potential to life. Through world-class science, global reach and commitment to our customers we help to increase crop productivity, protect the environment and improve health and quality of life.

www.syngenta.com or www.growmorefromless.com

About RISE

The Rural Investment Support for Europe (RISE) Foundation is the only pan-European foundation devoted to the conservation and development of the rural world. Chaired by Franz Fischler, it deals with policy analysis and project financing.

www.risefoundation.eu

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