

LATVIA WAS PROMISED A GREEN AGRICULTURE REFORM — but this is what we got!



PROMISE



We were promised more farmland biodiversity but ...



REALITY



41%

of farmland in Latvia, or more than 80% of all farmers will not be covered by rules that protect biodiversity.¹

1

At least 41% of farmland in Latvia will not be required to include natural elements that protect biodiversity, such as buffer strips between fields, trees, hedges and ponds. This will make it even more difficult for animals such as birds, insects, butterflies and small mammals to survive in farmland areas. Less space for nature has further negative impacts on water and soil quality.



We were promised less monocultures and a more diverse and healthy landscape but...



22%

of all arable land in Latvia, or more than 60% of all arable farmers, are not required to carry out any meaningful crop diversification.²

2

Almost one quarter of the arable land in Latvia will not be required to do a three crop diversification. The government is thereby allowing large monocultures to perpetuate biodiversity loss, soil depletion and increased pesticide and fertilizer use. This results in irreversible and damaging consequences for the climate as well as air and water quality.



We were promised more targeted funding for environmental measures, but...



the greener Rural Development Pillar, where numerous public goods can be achieved, received a 20% cut, while the Direct Income Pillar was increased by 50.6%.³

3

Disproportionate cuts to the more conditional and environmentally-focused Rural Development Fund means that there will likely be less money available for green farmers, who are applying better farming practices to their everyday work.

¹ Statistics from Eurostat http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/statistics_explained/index.php/Agri-environmental_indicator_-_soil_cover

² Statistics from Eurostat http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/statistics_explained/index.php/Agri-environmental_indicator_-_cropping_patterns

³ Statistics from the European Council Conclusions on the Multiannual Financial Framework 2014-2020 and the CAP



The average European household contributed €277 per year to the CAP between 2007-2013.

In exchange for the billions of euros paid annually in taxes, Europeans were promised a green and more sustainable CAP reform.

But now the reform is over and greener and more sustainable farming is unlikely to take form because exemptions from green measures have become the rule rather than the exception. Even worse, in some countries this so called "green" reform will constitute a step backwards on previous environmental

achievements through disproportionate cuts to the much greener Rural Development Fund and a decrease in environmental requirements.

But it is not over yet.

Now all efforts have to focus on getting the most out of the implementation of the reform. The Latvian Government has the ability to make this happen.

Decision makers are urged to take this final opportunity and:

1

Use the **equivalence mechanism** under the greening only as a tool to improve farming practices, rather than watering down even further the greening of Direct Payments.

2

Compensate for the unfair relative cuts in Pillar 2 by moving money from the Direct Income Pillar 1 to the Rural Development environmental measures.

3

Ensure that the **Rural Development Programme** contains only truly sustainable measures that are going significantly beyond the greening requirements under direct payments

- Ensure an increase in funding for high quality environmental measures, such as agri-environment-climate, forest-environment and Natura 2000 measures in the 30% mandatory minimum spending and avoid any decline of overall funding.
- Ensure that Agri Environmental Measures help maintain landscape diversity and support traditional farming practices.
- Reject all environmentally harmful measures under Rural Development, such as the restoration of drainage systems without including solutions for minimizing pollution diffusion, and the establishment of forest monocultures.

Only if this is achieved can we see a Common Agriculture Policy that protects nature, maximizes opportunities for Latvian farmers and delivers on its promise for a greener Europe.



Andrejs Briedis, Latvian Fund for Nature:
andrejs.briedis@ldf.lv, tel: +371 26309648

Oskars Keiss, LOB Representative for Agriculture:
oskars.keiss@u.lv