



## PRESS RELEASE

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### **Public goods are vital to the society and should legitimize a strong CAP**

**Brussels, April 15th 2010: “Public goods: a new legitimacy for the CAP?”** Different experts from the European Parliament, the European Commission, Syngenta, BirdLife and farmers tried to provide answers to this critical question at a meeting organised in the European Parliament on 13<sup>th</sup> April by the Intergroup on “Climate Change, Biodiversity and Sustainable Development”. This event was unanimously recognized as a significant contribution to the ongoing discussion on the reform of the Common Agricultural Policy (PAC). The EP Intergroup meeting was chaired by **Mr Capoulas Santos, Member of the European Parliament (MEP)** and Chair of the subgroup “Agriculture” of the Intergroup.

“We need an ambitious CAP reform based on legitimacy and equity, giving the tools to farmers for being competitive and to help them face the challenge of an increasing demand within a sustainable model for EU farmers and citizens”, argued **Mr Capoulas Santos**. Public goods are vital to the society and should legitimize a strong CAP. It was noted that the concept of public goods was not a new one, since it dates back to the 1950’s. **Mr Scheele – DG Agriculture, European Commission** – defined this concept as an outcome of a deliberate action. Farmers deliver a wide range of public goods such as biodiversity protection, land management, carbon storage, attractive landscapes etc.

More than fifty years ago, although farmers provided some public goods, the policy did not encourage them to do so. **Mr Pexton - English farmer** – explained that he did not hear about biodiversity and that global warming was not even identified as a problem to be tackled. The primary objective set by the agricultural policy was to produce as much as possible.

Since then, the situation has changed. Feeding a growing world population in the context of lands and raw materials reduction while meeting society’s expectations represents a major challenge for farmers. **Ms Pommaret – FNSEA** - insisted on the fact that besides environment, public goods should include economic and social aspects. An ambitious CAP supporting a sustainable agriculture is vital.

The market being unable to ensure the delivery of high level of public goods, public intervention is needed. **Ms Hegarty – BirdLife International** - denounced the partial shift of CAP subsidies. Only 8% goes to agri-environmental scheme, the vast majority of subsidies being spent on direct payments delivering very little in term of environmental benefits.

Another critical element underscored by **Mr Quintart – Syngenta** - is research and knowledge transfer. Interestingly, Syngenta has created in 2001 the Agéris Farms Network. This Direct Partnership with farmers helps them implement good agricultural practices, preserve the landscapes, as well as communicate and share their experience.

**Mr Lyon – MEP, Rapporteur for the Own-initiative report on the “Future of the CAP”** - voiced his support for a “common, clear, simple and flexible framework to support farmers and benefit society in a more effective manner”. The CAP must not be re-nationalised. Incentives should be preferred to regulation and cross-compliance.

This meeting was organized by the Secretariat of the Intergroup composed jointly of the European Bureau for Conservation and Development (EBCD) and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN).

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