

IP/10/958

Brussels, 16 July 2010

Conference on CAP post-2013 to build on success of public debate

Roughly 600 delegates from all over the EU come to Brussels next Monday and Tuesday to discuss the future of the Common Agriculture policy after 2013. This Conference will seek to debate and draw some form of conclusions from the public debate on the post-2013 launched by the Commission in April, based on the four very fundamental questions of: "Why do we need a CAP? What do citizens expect from agriculture? Why reform the CAP? What tools do we need for the CAP of tomorrow?" The exchanges will form a useful platform for discussion before the Commission drafts its Communication on the future of the CAP, due for publication in November 2010. To accompany the Conference, there will be a Fair in the centre of Brussels (Place St Catherine) highlighting the diversity of Europe's quality agriculture products, where each member states will have a stand offering some of their national specialities to the general public.

Speaking ahead of the event, Dacian Cioloş, Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development, drew attention to the strong response that the public debate triggered, with nearly 6000 internet contributions from the general public in 2 months, as well as positions from some 80 think tanks and 93 Non-Governmental Organisations. "This shows that people feel strongly about the CAP, and the responses have illustrated that our policy is not "only" about food production, but also about the provision of broader public goods", he stated. "I am very much looking forward to the event on Place St Catherine on Sunday and Monday, as a celebration of Europe's diversity, open to everybody. This reiterates my fundamental belief that the CAP is not just for farmers, it is for all EU citizens, as taxpayers and consumers"

The Public debate – your ideas matter

From April 12 to June 11, the Commission held a public debate on the future of the Common Agriculture Policy, asking for responses from the general public to 4 very fundamental questions. In the course of the 2-month period, there were more than 5 800 contributions received from the general public, plus 93 stakeholders and 80 think tanks. There were more than 1000 responses from Germany & Poland, but there were also more than 100 from France, Latvia, Austria, Spain, Belgium, UK and Ireland. A summary of the contributions will be presented to the Conference on Monday, but the main thrust of the responses was as follows:

Why do we need a common agricultural policy? To guarantee the food supply, but not only that. Many citizens, NGOs and think tanks stressed the importance of ensuring fair competition conditions between farmers, the food industry and distributors. Preserving the diversity of agriculture throughout the EU territory was another major preoccupation.

What do citizens expect from agriculture? To provide safe food at affordable prices, sustainable use of land, keeping the rural communities vibrant: these are the main expectations emerging from the public debate.

Why reform the CAP? To address the volatility of food prices and assure decent living standards for Europe's farmers. Also to contribute to addressing the challenge of feeding the world, strengthen our capacity to deal with problems linked to the environment, to quality and food safety; improve the competitiveness of agriculture and conserve the rich landscape that is our common heritage.

What tools do we need for the CAP of tomorrow? There is agreement that we need to develop further our existing mechanisms. Some urge an increased emphasis on paying farmers for providing "public goods" especially linked to the protection and maintenance of the environment.

The July 19/20 Conference – the CAP post-2013

The 2-day conference will start with a summary of contributions to the public debate, details of a new EUROBAROMETER study on citizens' attitude to the CAP, and then a panel discussion with different experts of various issues raised. Monday afternoon will be spent in workshops related to food security, the future of rural society, environment & the provision of public goods by agriculture, and quality, diversity, & health. Tuesday's morning session, chaired by DG AGRI Director-General Jean-Luc Demarty will consider ideas raised in the workshops. There will then be further workshops relating to maintaining food production capacity, maintaining the diversity of rural society, ensuring the provision of public goods by agriculture, and promoting quality & diversity of food supply. Tuesday afternoon will then see to draw some conclusions from the discussions.

More information

- For more details, see
- http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/cap-post-2013/conference/index_en.htm
- and
- http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/events/flavour-for-life/index_en.htm
- The conference will be webstreamed live at
- <http://webcast.ec.europa.eu/>
- There will be a press point by Commissioner Dacian Cioloș in the Charlemagne building at the end of the conference (sometime after 17.30).
- Accredited journalists will have access to the conference, although they cannot be guaranteed a seat in the main chamber.

"Flavour for Life" Fair – celebrating the diversity of European agriculture

Brussels Mayor Freddy Thielemans will join Commissioner Dacian Cioloș and Belgian Federal Minister of Agriculture Sabine Laruelle to open the "Flavour for Life" Fair at Place St Catherine on Sunday at 11am. The Fair will include stands with food specialities from all Member States, and cultural animation programmes, such as Spanish olive oil tasting, folklore dance groups, a Portuguese FADO singer, and other music groups. The Fair will close on Monday evening with a reception for conference delegates, which will include the prizes for the recent competition to design the EU organic logo, which came into force from July 1, 2010.