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DECLARATION BY A GROUP OF LEADING AGRICULTURAL ECONOMISTS

Reform the EU's Common Agricultural Policy!

Leading agricultural economists from all over Europe have agreed on a declaration on the future of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). This message comes at an important moment, as countries are taking positions for the negotiations of the post-2013 CAP and the next long-term EU budget. Now is the time to define the future objectives and priorities of the EU.

[Valentin Zahrt](#), Coordinator of the Declaration and one of the signatories, says: *"Agricultural policies are run by vested interests: Farm lobbyists and farm ministers. They claim to be the only ones to understand agriculture. Many consumers, tax payers and business people feel that something is wrong with our agricultural policies, but they lack the expertise to challenge the farm lobby. That is why this expert declaration is so important: It shows that independent scientists also disapprove of current agricultural policies, and it explains which reforms are needed."*

Reform of the CAP, which still receives more than 40% of the EU budget, will be crucial for a new, growth-oriented European agenda after the economic crisis. It will also be a decisive factor in the fight against climate change. Agriculture is responsible for roughly 10% of the EU's greenhouse gas emissions, but the current CAP does little to make agriculture more climate-friendly.

In their Declaration, the agricultural economists argue for a fundamental reform of the CAP. They propose the abolition of market intervention and blanket income support to farmers. Instead, subsidies should be targeted at the provision of public goods of European interest, such as the preservation of biodiversity.

"The positions most governments adopt on agricultural policies are driven by political opportunism and narrowly-conceived national interests. By contrast, this declaration, signed by agricultural economists from all over Europe, makes a case for our common European interests", says Valentin Zahrt.

Zahrt adds: *"Too many people in Brussels are busy fighting over the top jobs in the EU after the Lisbon Treaty comes into force. This declaration draws attention to the crucial issues that the EU has to resolve. Reform of the Common Agricultural Policy is the key to a more competitive and sustainable EU budget"*.

The Declaration will be presented and discussed at a high-level event in Brussels on **November 18, 10.30–12.30**. The speakers include:

- **Paolo De Castro**, Chairman of the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development of the European Parliament,
- **Pekka Pesonen**, Secretary-General of the European farmers' union Copa – Cogeca
- **Prof. Ernst-Detlef Schulze**, contributor to the 2007 Nobel Peace Prize for the IPCC and lead researcher of the 'Assessment of the European Terrestrial Carbon Balance'.

The declaration, the list of signatories and more information on the CAP can be found at www.reformthecap.eu.

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