



Regional Forum for the Future of Agriculture Helsinki, Finland Press release

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High ambitions for the future of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP)

Participants to the Regional Forum for the Future of Agriculture in Helsinki (Finland) agreed today that if Europe is serious about its ambitions, especially those related to climate change and biodiversity, then it needs to properly fund the CAP. These ambitions demand to put the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goal's (SDGs), set out by the UN, in the centre of the food systems agenda. These goals must be achieved at a time of political uncertainty on the world stage and the European Union itself, as it grapples with the final shape of the CAP reform and its Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF).

In order to deliver on both production and environmental performance, there was broad agreement amongst participants that CAP remains the best tool with which to deliver change and help European rural areas turn challenges into opportunities. Artificial limits on direct payments run counter to the spirit of economic success and will not help young or new farmers enter the sector if Europe is seen to limit their ambition.

Furthermore, participants agreed that agriculture has a key role to play in addressing global challenges. A growing global population, a changing climate combined with continued pressure on the environment calls for increased food production using more sustainable methods. Without significant changes at global, European and local level, future generations could face not only reduced production, but also biodiversity losses. During the discussions in Helsinki, FFA Regional speakers and participants agreed that we must enhance sustainable management of natural resources, as they have become more know-how and capital intensive, require more research and development, as well as more innovative capital investment. Farmers, foresters and land managers need to be better educated, better trained and better informed.

The discussion and debate held today in Helsinki are part of a Europe-wide search for solutions to the questions raised at the main FFA event in Brussels, which will see its 12th annual edition in Brussels on April 9th of next year.

Jari Leppä, Minister of Agriculture and Forestry said: “The new CAP proposition has to deal better with the climate and environment challenges if you want Finnish to support it. It has also to better balance its financing and improve the simplification. Member States must have the right to choose the measures that are the most suitable for each country.”

Thierry de l’Escaille, Secretary General of the ELO said: “While we appreciate the new direction of the CAP that will bring the policy closer to the farming business, we are unsure whether or not the means are currently in place to back up the ambition.”

Henrik Creutz, President of the Finnish Landowners’ Organisation said: “The discussions taking place during the Forum for the Future of Agriculture (FFA) are enhancing new visions and opening new ways of thinking about agriculture and forestry future. This is crucial to ensure that as representatives of the private land managers we have the right tools to improve a sustainable management of natural resources.”

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Notes to editors

The regional FFA in Helsinki is part of the FFA series of conferences, which aim to address topics of both food and environmental security. This Regional Forum, held at the Ritarihuone in Helsinki, examined the global need for sustainable food production, especially in alignment with several of the SDGs, before focussing on how Europe’s Common Agriculture Policy could contribute. The final session was dedicated to sustainable management of natural resources and how farmers, foresters and land managers can deliver the needed changes on the ground.

For further information contact:

Anne Marchadier
Director Business Development
European Landowners' Organization
Mobile: +32 491 22 76 47
Email: anne.marchadier@elo.org

Anna Bakola
Head of External Communications EAME,
Syngenta
Mobile: +32 488 43 94 85
Email: anna.bakola@syngenta.com

About the Forum for the Future of Agriculture (FFA)

The annual Forum and regional events are an initiative of the European Landowners’ Organization (ELO) and Syngenta. FFA brings together a diverse range of stakeholders to catalyse 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

agriculture are focused on solving yesterday's problems, such as overproduction, and do not deal with 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. Every year, in addition to the annual Forum in Brussels, FFA organises two regional events with local partners in order to continue the discussion at the regional level.

www.forumforagriculture.com

About the ELO

The European Landowners' Organization (ELO), created in 1972, is a unique federation of national associations from the 28 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, the ELO is the only organization able to stand for all rural entrepreneurs. The ELO promotes a prosperous countryside through private property dynamism. Its Secretariat is based in Brussels.

www.elo.org

About Syngenta

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