

Public consultation identifies challenges for future Common Agricultural Policy

European citizens believe that agricultural policy should continue to be managed at the EU level, and that helping farmers and protecting the environment should be its two main goals.

These are among the key findings of the [public consultation](#) published today on modernising and simplifying the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), which received more than 322,000 submissions from a wide range of stakeholders, including farmers, citizens, organisations and other interested parties

Speaking at "[The CAP: Have your say](#)" conference today in Brussels, where the findings were disclosed, Phil **Hogan**, Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development, said: *"Today is another milestone on the journey towards the future of the Common Agricultural Policy and an opportunity for stakeholders to contribute further to the debate. The response to the public consultation shows the level of interest that there is in the CAP, which continues to support a dynamic agricultural sector, ensures safe and high quality food for 508 million citizens and provides for significant investment in rural areas."*

The high level of participation in the consultation shows that agriculture and its role in society has become an increasingly important issue for many European citizens. The vast majority of respondents (90%) are also clear that there is a real added-value in managing agricultural policy at the European level, as it ensures a level playing field within the single market and ensures that agriculture can respond more effectively to the shared challenges such as environmental protection (85%) and tackling climate change (73%). The need to maintain economic, social and territorial cohesion across the EU (86%) as well as the need for a common framework of sharing best practices (91%) was also frequently mentioned.

Clear aims

The findings of the consultation are also clear about what the Common Agricultural Policy should achieve. Ensuring a fair standard of living for farmers is a key demand, with a majority of respondents (88%) recognising that farm incomes are lower than the EU average and that farmers receive only a small amount of the final consumer price for food (97%). Direct income support for farmers is considered the best way to achieve this (66% of respondents).

The other main aim of the CAP should be to ensure that farmers are encouraged to play their part in tackling climate change and protecting the environment, protecting biodiversity, reducing soil degradation and ensuring a more sustainable use of pesticides and fertilisers.

It is also clear from the findings that citizens and farmers alike want the future CAP to be simpler and less bureaucratic in order to more effectively rise to these challenges.

The findings of the consultation will feed into the Commission's ongoing reflection on the future of food and farming. A Communication on modernising and simplifying the CAP will follow an impact assessment of possible future policy proposals.

Background

The online public consultation on modernising and simplifying the CAP was launched on 2 February 2017 and ran until 2 May 2017. It was open to all interested citizens and organisations and organised through a questionnaire in all 23 official EU languages.

The aim of the consultation was to gather views from farmers, organisations and any other interested parties on three main issues: agriculture, rural areas and the CAP today; objectives and governance of the CAP; and agriculture, rural areas and the CAP tomorrow. It included 28 closed questions (multiple choice), five open questions and the possibility to upload position papers.

For More Information

All replies to the consultation and a summary of the results will be published [here](#).

"The CAP: Have your say" – conference reports and documents will be available [here](#).