



To the Participants in the CAP trilogue negotiations

Karlsruhe, 10 December 2020

No Alternative to Immediate Redirection of the CAP: Appeal for Drinking Water Protection to European Commission, Council and Parliament

Dear Participants in the CAP trilogue negotiations,

the European Union's (EU) Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) for the period 2021-2027 is now in the final decision-making phase: the interinstitutional trilogue negotiations between the European Parliament, the Council and the European Commission. The International Association of Waterworks of the Rhine basin ([IAWR](#)) and the associations of drinking water supply in the basins of the rivers [Meuse](#) and Scheldt, with a total population of 81 million, are starting an urgent appeal to all those involved in the trilogue: The preliminary decisions of the [EU Parliament](#) and the (Agriculture) [Council](#) stand in the way of the urgently needed redirection of the CAP and most likely cannot be changed anymore significantly. Moreover, all preliminary decisions are [incompatible](#) with the [European Green Deal](#). Water is irreplaceable and clean drinking water is indispensable for everyone (SDG 6). Therefore, there is no way around a future-proof transformation of agriculture - the question is whether the road will be taken in time. We are not allowed to deprive future generations of intact drinking water resources. So give now a clear signal for the redirection of the agricultural policy!

Analogously to the climate crisis, to secure drinking water supply, we must urgently avoid missing the point in time when it is still possible to reverse the present level of pollution caused by plant protection products/pesticides, their derivatives and (nitrogen) fertilisers from agriculture. It must not happen that damage control of water bodies is the only remaining option, but no remediation with the aim of restoring their natural water quality. Groundwater bodies in particular, whose age is often several decades or even millennia, may be polluted for an unforeseeable period of time if the urgently needed protection of these drinking water resources is not introduced now with the CAP 2021-2027. It is state of the art in science and technology that not all pollution of waters used for drinking water supply can 100 % be removed by technical methods. With a view to future generations, this makes it all the more important to value and keep this basis of life clean by making every effort to stop agricultural inputs and surpluses - as well as climate change to restabilise the water cycle. To do so, causes must concretely be tackled and the sources of pollution must be phased out gradually. The CAP 2021-2027 and the European Green Deal offer a historic opportunity that must not be missed.

Therefore it is imperative to align the CAP 2021-2027 with the European Green Deal and its targets for 2030, in particular the targets of the [Farm-to-Fork](#) and [Biodiversity](#) strategies: Reduce pesticide use by 50%, fertiliser use by at least 20%, antibiotics use by 50%, organic farming on 25% of the land, at least 30% of the EU's land as protected areas. This will also significantly contribute to the implementation of the [EU Water Framework Directive](#), for which measures are currently being prepared for the third management cycle 2022-2027. The subsidies of the CAP 2021-2027 must be brought in line with the targets of both the European Green Deal and the EU Water Framework Directive:

1) Both CAP funding pillars must unbureaucratically provide funding for the introduction (or maintenance) of certified organic farming. Without financial support, the risk of switching to



organic farming is hardly bearable for farmers. To keep drinking water (water for human consumption) clean, organic farming must first of all be implemented in water protection areas with agricultural use in order to effectively protect these particularly vulnerable areas of drinking water supply shortly.

2) Instead of blanket area payments, all direct payments from taxpayers' money must be linked to a truly "good agricultural and ecological condition" ([GAEC+SMR](#)) as conditionality of the common good. Stricter environmental requirements only in individual Member States would lead to competitive disadvantages in the EU internal market and therefore to a lack of acceptance in the respective Member States. Therefore, a fixed framework for agricultural policy must be implemented throughout the EU, provided with simple control and strict enforcement mechanisms.

3) The agricultural transformation must be accompanied by educational programs on existing best practice examples in organic farming/[agroecology](#) and research programs based on these.

4) Soil-conserving cultivation methods are a prerequisite for water storage in soils and groundwater recharge and counteract by natural retention both water scarcity and flood hazards. Additionally, in the ongoing climate changes, water pollution will increase and e.g. double, if in dry periods the same pollutant quantities are discharged into halved water quantities. In order to halt and reverse these flawed developments, a true conditionality is required (see No. 2).

5) The corona crisis is highlighting how vital basic supply is. The importance of regional economic cycles and value chains, short trade and transport routes with regional production, at least within the EU ("reshoring"), instead of orientation towards (CAP-subsidised) competitiveness with low prices on world markets, is becoming visible. The CAP direct payments are partly responsible for ever-increasing conventional agricultural production at the expense of the environment and, due to surpluses on the supply side, are causing prices to fall, which is continuously threatening the existence of small farms within the EU and regional markets outside the EU. A redirection of CAP direct payments is required to resolve this.

A look beyond the horizon of drinking water protection shows that an agricultural transformation is also being pushed vehemently for numerous other public goods: Climate protection, nature and biodiversity conservation including insect and bee protection, protection of the aquatic environment, air quality and particularly soil (fertility) protection. In addition, there is the protection of (small) farms, but also consumer and public health protection, because also low and middle incomes must be able to afford a healthy nutrition with unpolluted food, not to mention animal welfare in industrial meat production. In short: The target is a conversion to drinking water/climate/nature/ biodiversity/insect/bee/water/air/soil (fertility)/(small) farmer/ consumer and animal friendly agriculture.

The overall direction is already set by the European Green Deal including the Zero pollution action plan "[Zero pollution action plan](#) - Towards a zero pollution ambition for air, water and soil" ([IAWR et al., Feedback on Roadmap](#)). From a drinking water supply's point of view, there is only a future for Europe if the European Green Deal is filled with life and implemented with united forces. In this way, the seeds can be sown so that our descendants can also enjoy clean drinking water and a livelihood. Already today, the protection of their drinking water is already an urgent concern of the population.



We kindly are at your disposal for requests and further cooperation.

With kind regards and best wishes for good health

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Wolfgang".

IAWR President
also on behalf of RIWA-Meuse and RIWA-Scheldt

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Wolfgang".

IAWR Managing Director

Attachment: [IAWR 12-point Catalogue of Measures](#), No. 6b

Distribution: After 7 days on IAWR website, <https://en.iawr.org/news/>; press release