The Common Agricultural Policy post-2020: Views and recommendations from scientists to improve performance for biodiversity

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Background

Biodiversity loss and ecosystem degradation threaten farmers and farming.

The CAP has so far not succeeded in halting this trend.

March 2020: Over 3,640 scientists call for 10 actions to ensure the CAP addresses sustainability challenges

PERSPECTIVE

PEOPLE & NATURE   BRITISH ECOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Action needed for the EU Common Agricultural Policy to address sustainability challenges

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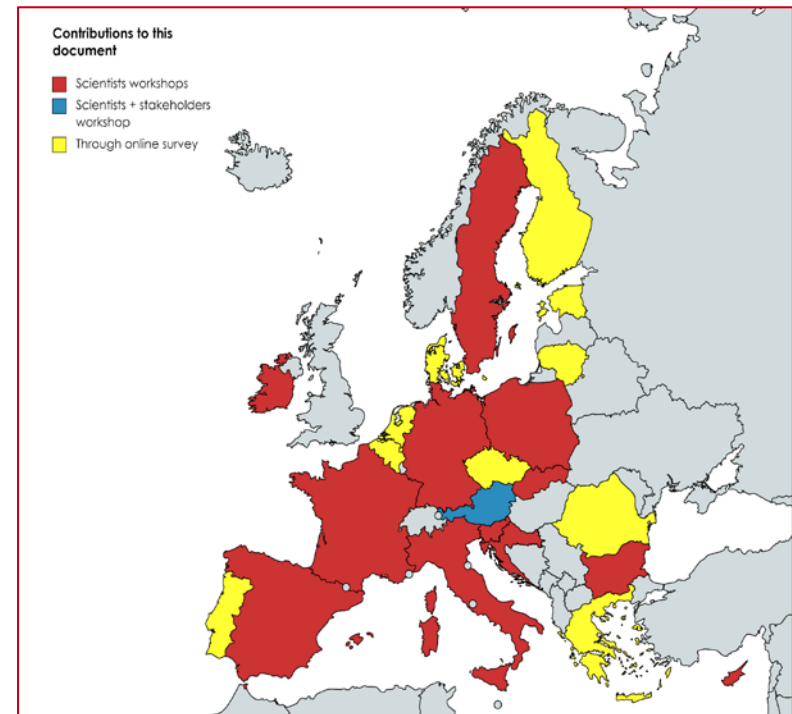
Pe'er et al. (2020) People and Nature

Background

Meetings with policy-makers led to an invitation to harvest science-based recommendations to ensure CAP achieves its biodiversity objective
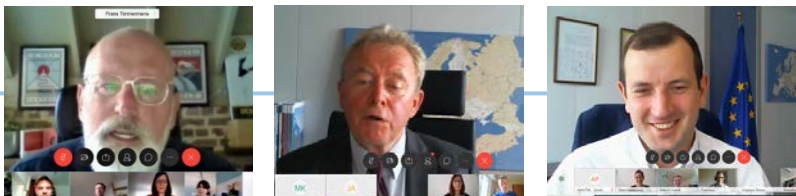
Methods:

- Workshops in 13 Member States
- Follow up online survey

Inputs received from
>300 scientists & other experts
22 Member States

Map produced using MapChart (https://mapchart.net/europe.html)

Outcomes I: key emerging principles

- **Landscape features & semi-natural areas** (esp. **grasslands**) key for success

- Habitat **diversity & multifunctionality**: win-win for biodiversity, climate, soil, water...

- **Spatial planning and regionalization** enhance payment efficiency

- **Collaborative & result-based approaches** enhance effectiveness & efficiency

- **Communication, education and farmer engagement** to...
  - Improve acceptance of compulsory measures
  - Increase uptake of voluntary measures
  - Facilitate learning and adaptive management
  - Generate a sense of ownership and stewardship

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Outcomes II: Optimizing Green Architecture's design

Enhanced conditionality: set high standards, across the entire farmed area

> **GAEC[1] 2** (protection of wetland & peatland):
> ➔ Apply **on all land**
>
> **GAEC 9** (protection of landscape features & non-productive land):
> ➔ Min 5% **on all land**, no production-oriented options.
>
> **GAEC 10** (ban on converting or ploughing permanent grassland in Natura 2000 sites):
> ➔ extend to Ecologically Sensitive Permanent Grasslands **beyond protected areas**.

Agri-Environment-Climate Measures (AECM): Invest in the most established instrument

- Expand budgets

- Employ attractive payments to generate benefits to participants

Outcomes II: Optimizing Green Architecture's design

Eco-schemes can double the total budget for biodiversity if they…

- Are **evidence-based**, clearly linked to biodiversity objectives
- Go beyond conditionality, complement AECM
- Are financially **attractive** and **simple** for administrators and farmers
- Strive for **continuity** over time (multi-annual implementation)

Risks:

- Annual design
- Dilution by ineffective measures or other objectives
- Competition with AECM

How should the different intruments work together?

John Finn, Ireland

List-based Eco-schemes?

A menu of options has pros and cons

If adopted, scoping is critical

Include (examples)

- Protect & Restore non-productive land and landscape features (➔ 10%)
- Extensive permanent grasslands
- Restoration of habitat quality
- Wetland protection and restoration
- Field margins, buffer strips, fallow land
- …

Exclude (examples):

- ‚Boost' schemes
- Precision farming
- Catch crops & green cover
- Intensive grazing
- Forestry & unsustainable afforestation
…

Horizontal standards: soil, water use and chemical inputs

# Outcomes III: Implementation

Targets:
- **Align with EU Green Deal** and other strategies & agreements *(Hervé Guyomard, France)*
- Regionalize to suit national and regional conditions
- Set interim targets

Criteria to evaluate ambition in Strategic Plans *(Yanka Kazakova, Bulgaria):*
1) Acknowledging the problems
2) A **clear intervention logic** and **breadth of actions**
3) Adherence to principles of **no dilution, no backsliding**
4) Ambitious **budgets**
5) Investments into **knowledge and administration**
6) Suitable indicators to ensure **accountability**
7) Sufficiently detailed Strategic Plans to suit **local needs** and show **adaptive capacities**
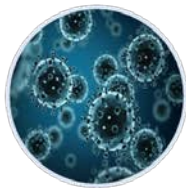
Monitoring and reporting

Commission's should support Member States in...

Performance evaluation (monitoring) → clarify incentives and sanctions

Preparation for the 2023-2027 implementation period

- Close mapping gaps
- Expand monitoring of biodiversity, water use and chemical inputs
- Expand knowledge support systems

Member States should...

- Invest more in (biodiversity) monitoring → Proportionally to investments *(Tanja Šumrada)*
- Report yearly
- Make data accessible

Selection of indicators

Well established, monitored, data and methods available

Biodivesity indicators (examples):
- Birds
- **Butterflies**
- **Pollinators**
- Plants
- Species of conservation interest (Article 17)
- Invasive species

Landscape-level indicators (examples):
- **HNV farmland - extent / spatial distribution**
- Extent of biodiversity-relevant habitats
- **Habitat quality measures**
- Landscape heterogeneity, crop diversity, field size(s)

Key is to link indicators to implementation data for performance evaluation

Thank you!