



Good Farming



Posted by: ARC2020



2010 Agricultural and Rural Convention Communication

State of play of farmland concentration in the EU: how to facilitate the access to land for farmers

Vote Breakdown

 524

For

 37

Against

 45

Abstain

 79

Absent

281 votes required to pass.

A report provisionally adopted on 27th April 2017 by the European Parliament makes a specific call on the EU Commission to fight land concentration.

[\(Votewatch data\)](#)

ARC2020 and the reform of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP)

Following an inclusive process of gathering reform proposals on the future of the Common Agriculture Policy during one year from a wide range of NGOs and stakeholders, ARC2020 published the “Communication from civil society to the European Institutions on the future Agricultural and rural policy” which was signed by more than 150 organisations and published the same day at which the European Commission published its own reform proposals.

Since the reform of CAP has been approved and implemented in the various member states of the Union, ARC2020 has become an independent NGO. Since then, and coinciding with the new Parliament term, our work has focused on areas while do in some significant ways chime with the Parliament’s themes. We try, through our focus on agroecology, to give both people and nature a more coherent voice.

Since its inception, ARC2020 has been engaged with the European Institutions – indeed policy making in the agri-food and rural spheres by these institutions has been a strong focus of ours. In a way, the history of ARC can be seen through the lens of our engagement with the Parliament, Council and Commission.

ARC 2020 was launched in 2009 as a European network and civil society platform for a radical paradigm change in EU farming and food policies. IHECS was one of the founders of this initiative and hosted the ARC secretariat at the beginning. ARC2020 participated in some of IHECS lectures and radio emissions and kept in contact when the organisation moved to other partner organisations and places.

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During the various consultations and negotiations that followed this building

During the various consultations and negotiations that followed this building of civil society alliances for more sustainable farming and better food policies, ARC2020 facilitated dialogues and debates between civil society, the European Commission, the European Parliament and the Council. One key conference took place in the European Parliament in 2012 with presence of all three EU institutions involved in legislative decisions on the reform.

From the beginning then, ARC2020 has had a strong relationship with the European institutions – making contributions, mobilising citizens and acting as platform for the voices of civil society.

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Key developments

For ARC2020, the impact of pesticides on CAP supported farm's ecological focus areas (EFAs), the rapid loss of farmers and farmland, the lack of adequate incentives for young farmers in CAP, fewer farmers via timid legislation on landgrabbing and land concentration all deserve attention - and, all need fixing! Thus, efforts to deal with these topics have been spotlighted:

MEP-led consultations on land access

Progress is being made towards land access – and against land concentration – in the EU, with a consultation by the Finance Directorate General in July 2017. DG FISMA (tasked with Financial Stability, Financial Services and Capital Markets in the EU) is conducting a consultation on legal means of regulating access to land in accordance with EU legislation. A key driver in developing the momentum for progress on land access has been Green MEP Maria Heubuch MEP. With this consultation, there is a real opportunity to contribute to access to land for smaller scale farmers.

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Parliament vote to ban pesticides from Ecological Focus Areas

Following a four year campaign by NGOs, progressive farming organisations and some very committed MEPs and their advisors, pesticides will be prohibited from ecological focus areas (EFAs). In June, the European Parliament agreed with the European Commission that agricultural land designated for the preservation of biodiversity must not be treated with pesticides.

Parliament adoption of a report against land concentration

In April, the European Parliament made a specific call on the EU Commission to fight land concentration. The report “calls on the Commission to maintain, during the development of the draft CAP for the period after 2020, measures to combat the concentration of agricultural land and to develop additional measures in support of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises.”

Agreement between Parliament and Council on a new organic regulation

In June 2017, the Council of Ministers and European Parliament reached agreement on a new EU Organic Regulation. A preliminary agreement has

been reached after 20 months of trilogue negotiations. The main outstanding issues, which delayed agreement for so long – pesticide residues, seeds, soil based production and derogations for non organic seeds, animals and products – have either been settled or deferred.

The rejection by the European Parliament of a Commission proposal on seed regulation

In March 2014, the EU Commission's proposal for plant reproductive material law, or 'seed regulation', was rejected by a Parliament vote over concern that it would give too much power to the Commission, leaving EU countries with little leeway to adjust rules to their individual needs. The draft, which would have favoured a drastic loss of biodiversity, was rejected with 650 votes to 15.

In these, the Parliament's thematic areas of protecting nature, fighting poverty and youth participation are chimed with. And we have not been afraid to hold power to account when other significant players in the EU process have pointed to concerns – the Ombudsman has, for example queried the Commission on [pesticide regulations](#) as well as on [TTIP negotiations](#).

ARC2020 has kept a close eye and contact on the role of the European Parliament and the Commission as well as on member states while the 2010 reform has been carried out in past years. At the Parliament's agriculture committee, MEPs have focussed on the divers of crisis that have emerged due to the lifting of milk quota (April 2015) and various forms of surplus production and market liberalisation. ARC2020 interviewed a number of MEPs during the reform process, asking them very straightforward questions on their precise commitments for more sustainable farming and food practice.

Looking forward to 2019

This process of reaching out directly to MEPs during the reform process was a very exciting process, and can be recommended as we are approaching a new reform of CAP and other EU policies after 2019, when a new EP will be elected, and after 2020, when the new Commission will make new proposals for reforms in many EU policies including CAP.

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ARC2020 is now preparing for this new reform process. Our website includes a section called “[After CAP](#)” including many articles and opinions of individuals and stakeholders on the future of CAP, rural policies, better food policies, including public health, youth employment and sustainable modernisation. We are curious about the On Our Watch contributions and would be happy to set a link between our websites to keep mobilising people to work for a sustainable future of European and Europe.
