



*Climate Action Network (CAN) Europe is Europe's leading NGO coalition fighting dangerous climate change. With 200 member organisations active in 40 European countries, representing over 1,700 NGOs and more than 40 million citizens, CAN Europe promotes sustainable climate, energy and development policies throughout Europe.*

**7 February 2025**

## **CAN Europe views on Vision for Agriculture and Food**

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**To European Commissioner Agriculture and Food Christophe Hansen**

**CC: European Commissioner for Climate, Net Zero and Clean Growth Wopke Hoekstra**

Dear Commissioner Hansen,

In CAN Europe's view, **the Vision must show how to move towards a comprehensive just agroecological food system transition while constructively contributing to achieving ambitious climate targets in a manner that is fair to farmers, rural communities, consumers and the public at large.** The agricultural and food sector in the EU is going through significant challenges in the face of its contributions as well as its exposure to rising levels of climate change and extreme weather events, soil degradation, water scarcity, and biodiversity collapse, while there is a need to increase biodiversity protection and nature restoration. Likewise, millions of farmers are confronted with rising production costs and often low farmgate prices, bureaucracy, and exploitation from deep-set incumbents in agriculture and food systems. Cost increases for food in combination with quality of food and sustainability considerations are among the major concerns in the cost of living challenges millions of consumers face. In this regard, CAN Europe also acknowledges the important achievements of the Strategic Dialogue on the Future of EU Agriculture process.

Transitioning to agroecology, coupled with measures to support farmers and consumers, can alleviate many of these concerns and can show that our agri-food systems can also be a critical part of the solution to climate mitigation and adaptation. Agroecology integrates ecological principles into agricultural systems, promoting biodiversity, improving soil health, reducing peatland emissions, restoring nature, and reducing the need for polluting chemical inputs (and the cost for farmers), and needs to be promoted in a more landscape approach beyond the production at the farm level.

**Against this backdrop, CAN Europe asks you to integrate the following aspects when developing the "Vision For Agriculture and Food":**

1. The Vision should support the case for a **binding and ambitious sectoral gross emission reduction target** so that the EU agri-food sector contributes its share to emission reductions, to be developed in the context of the post-2030 climate targets.<sup>1</sup>
2. With industrial livestock production being the main cause of EU agriculture emissions, **a strategy is needed for the transition to a more resilient and sustainable EU livestock**

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<sup>1</sup> CAN Europe's overall climate target position on climate neutrality by 2040: [CAN Europe's Position on the EU Climate Targets & an Equitable GHG budget for the EU - CAN Europe](#)

**sector through a territorial approach** (incl. quantitative reductions of livestock in the context of wider sustainability considerations);

2a. A dedicated **funding mechanism** should support the agri-food just transition.

3. **Reform the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) to support the just transition to sustainable food systems** including through

- Phasing out harmful subsidies, including area-based direct payments, which are linked to the size of the farm rather than the sustainability of practices;
- Reform income support to be more targeted to those farmers and communities most in need;
- Incentivising sustainable practices and supporting the transition to agroecology.

4. Ensure **fair prices for farmers and consumers in a socially-just way by** addressing unfair trading practices and making the sustainable, less emission-intensive choice the easy one for consumers, like encouraging MS to differentiate VAT (e.g. plant-based, organic, locally sourced products 0%, unhealthy, less sustainable food highest VAT), while avoiding adverse cost of living impacts on low- and middle-income population segments.

5. Move to a **policy framework that ensures emission reductions across the food chain as an all-actor task**, including by implementing supporting policies including:

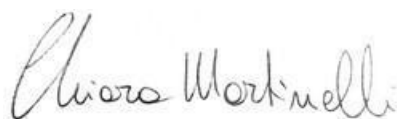
- revising the Public Procurement directive,
- addressing and reducing food waste,
- developing an EU Action Plan for Plant-based Foods.

6. We support the application of the **polluter pays principle** in the agriculture sector. Therefore, options for socially-just carbon pricing should also be considered within a wider policy-mix, while practices that have a positive impact on climate and the environment are rewarded.

7. Ensure **consistency between trade policy and sustainability requirements**: Achieving this will require the EU to rethink its approach to market access for exports and imports, considering the positive and negative externalities of agri-food trade on environmental sustainability, the competitiveness of EU producers, animal welfare, labour standards, and consumer factors such as price and choice.

We stand ready to engage further on the future of the European agri-food systems in light of the challenges that the climate crisis poses.

Yours sincerely,



Chiara Martinelli, Director