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European civil society launch **‘European food declaration’**

Towards a healthy, sustainable, fair and mutually supportive Common Agriculture and Food policy:

Brussels, March 16 – On the eve of a European Parliament hearing which will debate the future of Europe’s agriculture policy a broad alliance of European, national and local civil society organisations concerned with the future of food and agriculture in Europe, are today launching a ‘European food declaration’ to mobilise European citizens and authorities to reshape the Common Agriculture Policy (CAP). [1]

The future of the CAP after 2013 will be debated tomorrow at a hearing of the European Parliament’s Agriculture Committee. Nearly 200 organisations from 24 member states have so far signed the declaration and believe a strong message is needed, not only for EU policy makers, but also for national policy makers. The declaration calls for a complete overhaul of the current system and outlines the policy objectives of a new Common Agriculture and Food Policy for the future.

Over the last 48 years, the CAP has led to an industrialised food system heavily dependent on fossil fuels and the unsustainable use of natural resources, and contributes massively to climate emissions and global loss of biodiversity. The CAP has also led to unhealthy diets in Europe and continues to damage developing country food systems. The new CAP must respond to these challenges Europe is facing by supporting the development of fair, inclusive, transparent and sustainable food systems.

“The European Union must recognize and support the crucial role of sustainable family farming in the food supply of the population. All people should have access to healthy, safe, and nutritious food. The ways in which we grow, distribute, prepare and eat food should celebrate Europe’s cultural diversity, providing sustenance equitably and sustainably” the declaration reads.

Sustainable family farming creates jobs and contributes to more inclusive rural communities.

For decades transnational corporations and the World Trade Organisation (WTO) have dominated decision making in food and agriculture policy. The declaration calls for people in Europe to re-appropriate agriculture and food policy. It demands that a new Common Agriculture and Food Policy must guarantee and protect citizens’ ability and right to define their own models of production, distribution and consumption, and more effectively manage precious resources and ensure biodiversity.

This declaration is the first step in efforts to build a broad movement for change towards food sovereignty in Europe, including EU policies and practices.

The coalition says: “We encourage organizations, groups and individuals concerned with the future of farming and food to sign this declaration online on www.europeanfooddeclaration.org and to use it as a tool to initiate discussions about what kind of food and agriculture policy we need.”

[1]See www.europeanfooddeclaration.org/who-are-we for the list of 187 initial signatories from European countries.

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