

Farming ministers confirm CAP reform deal

EU farming ministers have accepted the provisional deal struck with the European Parliament last Friday on the key elements of the **common agricultural policy (CAP) reform**, thus bringing the proposal a step closer to becoming part of EU law.

The agreement paves the way for a **fairer, greener and more performance-based CAP** that seeks to provide a sustainable future for European farmers. The new CAP bolsters environmental measures, and also includes provisions to ensure more targeted support for smaller farms and help young farmers enter the profession.



‘Today we have agreed the most ambitious CAP to date. This is a good deal for farmers and for Europe, which will strengthen the European agri-food system, making it more sustainable and fairer for everyone. The agreement provides for a modernised CAP that supports the transition to greener and more climate-friendly farming, increases respect for social and labour rights, and ensures that farmers remain competitive without leaving anyone behind.

Maria do Céu Antunes, Portuguese Minister for Agriculture

What happens next?

Work will now take place at inter-institutional level on the remaining technical details of the proposed reform, following which it will be formally approved by both the European Parliament and the Council. The new CAP will cover the period 2023-2027; a transitional arrangement agreed in 2020 will continue to apply until then (see below).

Member states will have until 31 December 2021 to submit their **draft national strategic plans** for approval by the Commission.

A new social dimension

The post-2020 CAP places greater emphasis on the **social dimension** of farming. Under the new agreement, farmers and other beneficiaries receiving direct payments will be subject to an administrative penalty if they do not provide adequate employment conditions as set out in the relevant EU legislation. It is the **first time that EU agriculture legislation has included a social dimension** and marks a historic step forward in the way the CAP takes

conditions for farm workers into account.

An environmentally ambitious CAP

The new CAP sets out a number of measures aimed at encouraging farmers to adopt **'greener' farming practices**. These include:

- enhanced conditionality standards that farmers need to meet in order to receive CAP support, including the **preservation of carbon-rich soils** through protection of wetlands and peatlands, and minimum shares of arable land to be dedicated to landscape features to protect biodiversity
- **eco-schemes** to support and/or incentivise farmers to observe agricultural practices that benefit the climate and the environment
- an increased share of rural development funding to be spent on **green interventions**
- **tracking of climate and biodiversity expenditure**, in line with the aims of the European Green Deal

Support for smaller farms

The CAP reform package also includes measures aimed at **redistributing funds in favour of small and medium-sized farms**. Under the agreement, member states will be required to redirect 10% of direct payments to benefit such farms (in principle through redistributive payments, unless they can prove that they can achieve the same effect via other comparable instruments).

Focus on performance

The reform also includes a shift from a focus on compliance to a **performance-based CAP** that will give member states the freedom to implement tailor-made interventions on the basis of strategic planning and specific shared objectives, in line with their needs.

Background

The Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) accounts for around a third of the EU's budget. Its aim is to:

- provide affordable, safe food for EU citizens
- ensure a fair standard of living for farmers
- preserve natural resources and respect the environment

On 1 June 2018, the European Commission presented **three legislative proposals** aimed at making the CAP fit for the future:

The main aspects of the proposals were:

- more **targeted direct payments** and **rural development interventions**, both

subject to strategic planning

- a new **'green' architecture** based on environmental conditions to be met by farmers and additional voluntary measures under both pillars
- a **performance-based approach** (the 'new delivery model') whereby member states would have to report their achievements each year

In October 2020, under the German presidency, the Council agreed its negotiating position, or **'general approach'**, on the reform of the CAP. This included increasing the environmental ambition of the CAP, in line with the aims of the European Green Deal.

CAP transitional regulation (2021-2022)

In late 2020 the CAP transitional regulation was adopted, the aim of which was to **ensure continuity of CAP legal and financial support** to farmers and other beneficiaries before the new reformed rules came into effect in 2023. The regulation ensured that payments would not be interrupted, while also providing time for member states to prepare their national CAP strategic plans.

[Visit the meeting page](#)

WHO and ECDC launch indicator framework to evaluate the public health effectiveness of digital proximity tracing solutions

Countries have readily employed innovative technologies throughout the COVID-19 pandemic to support the implementation of public health and social measures. Digital proximity tracing—using smartphones or purpose-built devices to capture anonymized interactions between individuals then issuing alerts—emerged during the pandemic as a new means of support to government-led programmes for contact tracing.

ECDC and WHO developed this indicator framework in consultation with public health experts globally. The framework will provide countries with a standardized approach for evaluating their use of digital proximity tracing solutions. It will also assess the extent to which these solutions have aided national contact tracing strategies for COVID-19.

“This new indicator framework has been developed through a strong collaboration between ECDC and WHO. It offers countries a standardized approach to gather the evidence and assess the

contribution that digital proximity tracing technology has made to large-scale contact tracing efforts for COVID-19. We anticipate that it will become an invaluable tool,”

said Dr Natasha Azzopardi-Muscat, Director of the Division of Country Health Policies and Systems at WHO/Europe.

“Digital proximity tracing technology is a new tool for a new challenge – COVID-19. It is vital that we evaluate its public health effectiveness in order to understand how best to use this technology right now as well as for future pandemics,”

said Vicky Lefevre, Head of Unit for Public Health Functions at the ECDC.

“This indicator framework provides a concrete approach for countries to gather and evaluate evidence on the use and performance of national digital proximity tracing solutions. This knowledge will be vital in our understanding of the public health impact that such approaches have had during the COVID-19 pandemic and their potential to be applied in mitigating future public health threats”

said Soumya Swaminathan, Chief Scientist, World Health Organization.

The framework proposes a list of indicators to assist public health authorities in measuring:

- the extent to which digital proximity tracing solutions have been used;
- the extent to which they have been successful in detecting contacts at risk of infection;
- the speed at which digital proximity tracing approaches can notify potential contacts, when compared to conventional contact tracing; and
- enablers and barriers to their usage.

[Remarks by President Charles Michel following the European Council meeting, 24-25 June 2021](#)



Je souhaiterais commencer par remercier extrêmement chaleureusement António Costa et l'ensemble des équipes autour de lui pour l'accomplissement d'une

présidence dans un contexte difficile, mais avec beaucoup de succès. Ce sont de très nombreux dossiers qui ont pu progresser de manière significative, dans le cadre d'une parfaite coopération entre les institutions. C'est la démonstration du fonctionnement engagé de l'Union européenne. Avec beaucoup d'amitié et de chaleur aussi, António, je te remercie pour cette pleine coopération. Il y aura ce week-end un match de football (entre la Belgique et le Portugal) qui donnera lieu à davantage de confrontation. Mais ce sera sur le terrain sportif, pas sur le terrain politique.

J'en viens maintenant au Conseil européen.

Vous le savez, c'était un Conseil européen avec beaucoup de dossiers sérieux, difficiles pour certains d'entre eux, à l'agenda. Mais il y avait aussi un dossier qui n'était pas à l'agenda, qui a nécessité un débat. Et j'ai effectivement décidé d'ouvrir le débat sur la situation des LGBTIQ+ en lien avec une législation en Hongrie. C'était un débat qui était difficile. C'était un débat qui, à certains moments, a été rude. Mais c'était un débat qui était aussi nécessaire. C'était un débat au cours duquel il y a aussi eu de l'émotion. Parce qu'il touche à l'intimité des convictions, en lien avec la conception que l'on se fait les uns et les autres des libertés fondamentales. C'est pour cela que ce dossier et ce débat étaient tout à fait indispensables. Ça a été aussi certainement l'occasion de faire en sorte que l'on puisse s'écouter mutuellement et que le Premier ministre hongrois puisse entendre les convictions exprimées par de nombreux collègues autour de la table.

J'ai eu l'occasion de rappeler le principe de l'état de droit qui fonde ce projet européen, de la primauté du droit européen. Et de noter aussi l'engagement d'une démarche au départ de la Commission en lien avec cette situation. Je forme aussi le vœu que la Conférence sur le futur de l'Europe soit une occasion utile pour faire progresser ces libertés fondamentales. Elles sont le ciment de ce projet européen, qui est d'abord une aventure humaine qui nous rassemble et qui nous réunit, et pour lequel nous devons être tournés vers l'avenir.

Enfin, je reviens maintenant aux différents points dont nous avons discuté. Je serai relativement rapide pour certains d'entre eux parce que vous avez accès aux conclusions de nos réunions.

We had the occasion to have a lunch with António Guterres. This was an important moment to reaffirm our belief that the multilateral approach is the best way to address the global challenges of the world. This was also the occasion to reaffirm the strong partnership between the UN and the EU, and we intend to strengthen this very strong partnership. We addressed many topics, some global challenges like climate change, like health, covid-19, migration but of course, we addressed some geopolitical challenges. Then we discussed Covid-19 and exchanged views about the pandemic.

Three important points, very quickly. First, mobility. How is it possible to coordinate, to cooperate, especially when we face new variants. Second topic: international solidarity. We had the opportunity in the past to reaffirm our commitments to demonstrate our effective international solidarity. And then

the question of the lessons learned, based on the report put on the table by the Commission. This is an important, useful and interesting starting point. With the Slovenian presidency, we intend to work on that to be able by the end of the year to try to be more concrete about the deliverables that we will decide and agree on.

Un mot rapidement sur la question de la migration. Le débat n'a pas été très long sur ce sujet dans la salle parce que le débat avait été préparé par nos équipes, par les ambassadeurs qui ont travaillé. On a pu rapidement se mettre d'accord sur des conclusions opérationnelles. L'idée c'est de se concentrer principalement sur la dimension extérieure de la migration et de demander à la Commission et au Haut représentant de travailler sur des propositions extrêmement concrètes au départ de l'identification de pays prioritaires, des pays d'origine et des pays de transit pour lesquels nous voulons utiliser l'ensemble des instruments à notre disposition, sur le plan européen, mais également avec nos États membres.

Et puis nous avons eu l'occasion, au cours du dîner, d'aborder les questions internationales. Je ne suis pas très long sur la question de la Turquie, je pense qu'Ursula von der Leyen sera plus détaillée sur ce sujet.

Nous avons adopté des conclusions sur le Belarus, des conclusions sur l'Éthiopie, sur le Sahel, sur la Libye, et naturellement on réagira aux questions qui seront posées.

Il y a eu une discussion à nouveau sur la Russie. Cela a été l'occasion, après un débat de grande qualité il y a un mois, de faire un pas en avant et de clarifier la manière dont on veut envisager la mise en œuvre des cinq principes qui fondent, selon nous, la relation avec la Russie. Nous avons réaffirmé l'importance de mettre en œuvre les accords de Minsk, nous avons réaffirmé aussi notre engagement à prendre des sanctions chaque fois que c'est nécessaire et envisager les différentes options en termes de mesures restrictives. Il est important aussi d'être engagés pour des contacts de personne à personne, d'être engagés avec la société civile russe et de soutenir nos valeurs en termes de droits fondamentaux comme nous l'avons fait régulièrement tout au long des derniers mois et des dernières années. Nous avons aussi répété notre engagement à l'adresse du Partenariat oriental. Nous aurons d'ailleurs, avant la fin de l'année, un sommet du Partenariat oriental. Nous avons aussi discuté des modalités et des conditions pour le dialogue politique avec la Russie et, bien sûr, je reviendrai sur ce sujet s'il devait y avoir des questions en lien avec cela.

This morning we discussed the economic recovery, but also the summit of the eurozone. It was an important and a useful debate because our goal this morning was clearly to offer a forward-looking exchange of views about the economic challenges. What are the strengths, what are the strong decisions that we took with the positive effects that are visible. But also what are the topics that we need to address in the next months to make sure that we will be strong and that we will be able to strengthen our single market on the one hand, but also to strengthen the eurozone, on the other hand. And it was a very good debate, an opportunity for all the leaders to express their views and their priorities with an interesting exchange of views with Paschal

Donohoe and Christine Lagarde.

Voilà, en bref, en tout cas autant qu'il est possible, le résumé. Et, bien entendu, nous nous tiendrons à votre disposition pour réagir aux questions posées. Merci.

[Visit the meeting page](#)

[Speech by President Charles Michel at the Statehood Day ceremony in Ljubljana](#)



Cher Président, cher premier ministre, chers amis slovènes, chers amis européens

Il y a 30 ans, j'avais 15 ans. Je suis particulièrement fier, particulièrement ému de me trouver devant vous à côté du drapeau slovène, à côté du drapeau européen pour vous dire "bon anniversaire, happy birthday Slovenia!

"Que tous les peuples prospèrent". C'est un extrait de ce poète du XIX^e siècle, pacifiste France Prešeren, votre hymne national, un extrait gravé dans le marbre, à Bruxelles, pas loin de mon bureau, depuis la première présidence par la Slovénie de l'Union européenne en 2008.

Que tous les peuples prospèrent, c'est aussi plus que jamais un engagement qui doit être d'actualité lorsque l'Europe et le monde font face à des défis si importants pour notre avenir, pour l'avenir des jeunes générations.

Le projet européen est fondé sur des valeurs de démocratie, des valeurs de liberté, des valeurs d'état de droit parce que c'est le meilleur garant pour garantir la dignité de chaque personne.

La diversité, la tolérance et le respect, ce sont des forces, jamais des faiblesses,

Je suis fier aussi, je suis ému à côté du drapeau slovène, à côté du drapeau européen avec vous, de lancer la présidence par la Slovénie du Conseil de l'Union européenne pour les six prochains mois.

Nous avons vu ce soir une fois encore, la beauté de la Slovénie, le talent, l'énergie, l'optimisme et la confiance.

L'Europe est une famille, l'Europe est une grande famille et c'est ensemble, rassemblés, qu'on va écrire une belle page pour l'avenir de ce projet qui

nous rassemble.

Congratulations dear Slovenian friends, all the best for Slovenia, all the best for Europe.

[Europol supports the French Gendarmerie in taking down Ivorian network behind scam in excess of €13 million](#)



A year-long investigation led by the French National Gendarmerie (Gendarmerie Nationale – Section de Recherches d’Agen), under the authority of the investigating Magistrate at the Judicial court of Bergerac (Juge d’Instruction au Tribunal Judiciaire de Bergerac), with the support of Europol, has resulted in the dismantling of an organised crime group involved in large-scale financial fraud and money laundering across Europe.

A number of house searches were carried out in Paris on 23 June. A total of eight individuals – all of Ivorian origin or nationality – have been arrested as a result for their involvement in this scheme.

Usurping the name of existing French or foreign companies, the fraudsters would order goods of an important value with a payment delay of 30 days. Taking advantage of this delay, they would disappear with the goods and never honour the payment. Instead, the criminals would move the goods across Europe before handing them over to a Turkish criminal network in charge of their sale. The criminal proceeds were then laundered and reintegrated into the

legal economy.

Over 80 companies – both in France and abroad, have been identified in the framework of the investigation carried out with the support of Europol. The total losses amount to at least €13 million.

Europol supported the action day in France by deploying two of its specialists to Paris. The evidence seized during the course of this action is now being analysed to identify further investigative leads across Europe.