

Breakthrough deal on CAP

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After a breakthrough was achieved on the reform of the Common Agricultural Policy, ALDE MEPs welcomed the deal as a big step in the right direction, but stressed that the Liberal and Democrat Group would have liked to go further in the area of market liberalisation. The ALDE Group also expressed disappointment that MEPs were not given the chance to discuss issues that formed part of the Multi Annual Financial Framework (MFF) that was negotiated by national governments behind closed doors in spring.

George Lyon MEP (UK, Lib Dem), who negotiated the horizontal regulation and direct payments dossier on behalf of the ALDE Group, commented:

"In the Lyon report adopted by the Parliament back in 2010, I said that sustainability had to be at the heart of the new CAP if we are to address the huge challenges of a doubling of demand for food while at the same time reducing the use of scarce resources.

"I believe we have a reform that takes a huge step down the road towards delivering a more sustainable EU agriculture and it signals quite clearly that we are breaking from the past with a more targeted use of financial support in return for farmers delivering key public goods.

"We also introduced measures to stamp out the abuse by so called 'slipper farmers' who were getting payments but not doing any active farming.

"The one area I have deep concerns about was Council refusing to negotiate in areas where the MFF conclusions strayed into co-decision matters such as capping of farm payments, flexibility to move money between pillars 1 and 2 and the crisis reserve.

"This is a deliberate attempt by the Council to steal back co- decision powers given to the Parliament by the Lisbon Treaty and it is unacceptable to MEPs."

Britta Reimers MEP (Germany, FDP), who negotiated the single market organisation regulation on behalf of the ALDE Group, added:

"From a liberal point of view, the discussions around the single market organisation regulation were too focused on market intervention mechanisms. The ALDE Group would have liked to see a significant step forward towards market liberalisation in the farming sector.

"We are particularly displeased that we were not able to reach a satisfactory deal for the milk sector because of a loophole for producer organisations and inter-branch organisations."

"However, the ALDE Group is pleased that sugar quotas will be phased out by 2017.

ALDE MEP Marit Paulsen (Sweden, People's Party), who negotiated the rural development report on behalf of the ALDE Group, said:

"I am very pleased that the possibility of subsidising the same greening measures under the first and the second pillar, the so called 'double funding' issue, has been explicitly ruled out.

"I also welcome that farm safety and animal welfare will be among the priorities for the European

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agricultural fund for rural development (EAFRD)."