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EuroHealthNet and the Common Agriculture Policy towards 2020

Responding to the European Commission Open Consultation on the Impact Assessment of the Common Agriculture Policy (CAP) towards 2020, EuroHealthNet highlights the key role that CAP can play in improving health and re-tackling health inequality. The CAP can contribute to strategies aimed at reducing health inequalities and preventing chronic disease, producing enough food to feed a growing world population and a greener agriculture policy that reduces emissions from food production and transportation. For EuroHealthNet, food and agriculture policy should be based on equity, rights to safe, affordable, nutritious food, and good governance and transparency in the food supply chain. As decision makers prepare to set the CAP rules for the next decade, EuroHealthNet is among public health bodies calling for evidence on healthy food to be a bigger factor.

EuroHealthNet has contributed to the joint response of the EU Public Health and Agriculture Consortium (EPHAC). EuroHealthNet’s contribution to the Impact Assessment of the Common Agriculture Policy (CAP) towards 2020 is available [here](#).

While quality is important in maintaining EU competitiveness in agriculture, this must not be at the expense of the affordability of a safe and nutritious diet for all. The primary role of EU agriculture is and should remain guaranteeing the production of safe, nutritious, affordable food. Pressure on land and water resources make it increasingly important to focus on production of food. Food should not only be viewed as a commodity, but as universal human right. CAP should not promote production and export of “crops” or products defined as public health damaging (such as tobacco) whilst the EU is increasing efforts and funding to encourage healthier lifestyles.

For EuroHealthNet, the CAP should address extreme price volatility in food prices, not just to ensure the livelihood of farmers, but ensure that food is affordable for all layers of society. Instruments should be



developed that not only manage crisis but work towards a more sustainable and fair food system, addressing concentration and power in the food system to prevent distortions and instability in prices or food availability. CAP must also support investment in innovation in agriculture and food, providing a balanced research agenda that not only invests in new technology, but agro-ecological and human ecological models of research.

EuroHealthNet director Clive Needle is the current EPHAC Chair. Speaking as the consultation closed, he said *“We are aware the big debates will be about direct payments, food security and sustainability. Public health has a contribution to make on those issues, but in return we ask that improving health and wellbeing is recognised as a priority, as it now is in the EU Treaty. I believe many EC officials directly realize that. The challenge is to encourage parliamentarians and ministers to support wellbeing for their voters on the historic first occasion there has been co-decision on CAP rules. A clear impact assessment will help to demonstrate why they should do that, and health bodies are trying to ensure evidence is available when choices are made.”*

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EuroHealthNet is a not-for-profit network of regional and national agencies responsible and accountable for health promotion, public health and disease prevention in Europe. Its aim is to improve the health of European citizens by striving for a healthier Europe with greater health equity between and within countries. EuroHealthNet does that by supporting projects and policy development together with its members and the EU institutions; by exchanging information and by communication in and beyond its network.

More information available at:

www.eurohealthnet.eu

www.health-inequalities.eu

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