

Forword

Dear colleagues,

In the last couple of months OPERA initiated a variety of discussions around the Implementation of the Sustainable Use Directive, National Action Plans and recently the Common Agricultural Policy. As a result of these we together with various experts and stakeholders functioning as a scientific think tank, produced various documents (policy papers, discussion documents etc) which can be downloaded from our webpage.

This third issue will deal with the new reform on the Common Agricultural Policy since various meetings took place during the last two months, partly organised by OPERA and a lot of discussion were and are still happening around this topic. If you have any comments or would like to share your point of view with us please email us info@opera-indicators.eu

Regards

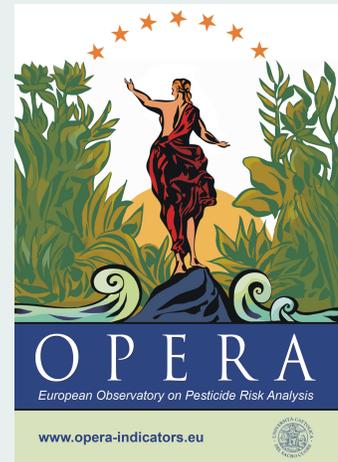


COMMON AGRICULTURAL POLICY (CAP)

For many decades the Common Agriculture Policy has shaped the way Europe's land is managed and farmed, but it is clear that it is now in need of further reform to enable the policy to respond to future challenges. A number of issues are forcing the debate about the future of the EU's land into centre stage: the growing global demand for food, the threat of global warming and the threats to Europe's environmental quality; all brought into focus by the debate that is just starting on the next EU budget.

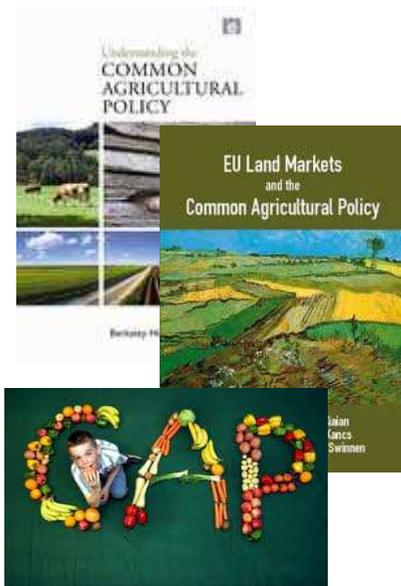
Agricultural activity has a strategic role through its multifunctional contribution to the economy and the well being of the consumers and farmers, as well as through its role in the sustainable management of natural resources and combating climate change.

The reform of the Common Agricultural Policy will have a major impact not only on the agricultural production but also on the society as whole. More specifically from our perspective the new policy should provide for a sound basis for the development of the agricultural sector as well as ensuring its long term sustainability.



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OPERA'S ROLE IN SHAPING THE NEW CAP

In the process of reforming CAP, OPERA as a scientific think tank committed to provide solutions to the important issues in the agri-food sector, has taken up the challenge to participate by:

- Providing for an **informal environment for debate, communication and exchange on information** and ideas on important topics of the policy;
- Providing **conceptual bridging solutions** between agricultural, health and environmental concerns to be included in the CAP;
- Delivering and disseminating **policy papers and studies** on certain important topics in the discussion on the reform of the CAP

Our aim is to contribute to building up a compromise at European level which swiftly replies to the challenges faced by agriculture and society. We also seek to identify subjects which need more scientific attention and evaluation as to contribute constructively to the decision making.

OPERA Research Centre's contribution is divided in three major conceptual parts: ensuring competitiveness of EU agriculture; appropriate use of EU's natural resources; achieving transparency of the food chain and market stability.

COMMENTS TO THE CAP PROPOSAL

Five farming and environmental NGOs have come together with proposals to transform the CAP with the objective to help farmers improve on the sustainability of their activities and to reward those who deliver the environmental benefits.

They believe that the CAP is failing citizens, farmers and the environment, and requires radical change to justify the 53 billion Euros it distributes annually on behalf of European taxpayers. They do recognise that changes to agriculture over the last 50 years have benefited society by providing plentiful and safer food. However, they argue that this achievement is based on the unsustainable use of natural resources and has damaged the environment. Furthermore, they highlight their ongoing concern about pesticide residues in food and the potential health implications of exposure to agricultural chemicals.

You can find OPERA's opinion on the proposal at http://www.opera-indicators.eu/assets/files/Documents/Private/comments%20to%20CAP%20_OPERA_.pdf



ROUNDTABLES ON THE REFORM OF THE CAP

OPERA has been organising through its **office in Brussels** a **series of events** dedicated to the **debate on the possible policy solutions** for the numerous problems faced by CAP.

The **first roundtable of stakeholders** organized dealt with "How can the new CAP ensure competitiveness of the European farming" with the subject introduced by the Deputy Director General for the Coordination of Rural and Water Policies, representing the Spanish Presidency of the European Union.



<http://www.opera-indicators.eu/assets/files/Documents/Outcome%201st%20Roundtable%20on%20CAP.pdf>

The **second roundtable of stakeholders** organized focused on "Transparency of the food chain and market stability in the future CAP" with the subject introduced by the former Director of the European Commission responsible for the Economics of agricultural markets.

<http://www.opera-indicators.eu/assets/files/Documents/Private/OUTCOME%202nd%20Roundtable%20on%20CAP.pdf>

The **3rd Roundtable on the Reform of the CAP** debated on the subject of "**Public goods and sustainable use of resources**" exploring on the possible avenues for the CAP after 2013. We have also explored the implications on agriculture of the EU 2020 strategy where one of the priorities is "**building a bio-economy by 2020**". DG Research has been entrusted with the task of developing by 2011 a Communication on how to build the bio-economy of the future.

<http://www.opera-indicators.eu/assets/files/News/cap/OUTCOME%203rd%20Roundtable%20on%20CAP%20Reform.pdf>

Contact caproundtable@opera-indicators.eu

Regarding delivering and disseminating studies, a conference was organized for the launch of the study: "**EU agricultural production and trade: Can more production efficiency prevent increasing 'land-grabbing' outside of Europe?**" conducted by the Humboldt University of Berlin.

A summary of the panel debate can be downloaded: http://www.opera-indicators.eu/assets/files/News/DebateOUTCOME_Agricultural_Production_and_Trade.pdf



COMMISSION CONFERENCE: CAP AFTER 2013

On 19th and 20th of July the European Commission (EC) has organized a conference designed to summarise the public contributions received in the open consultation process and to discuss on the possibilities to be explored in building the future policy.

Due to the quality of the OPERA roundtable consultations and the awareness raising of our activities, in addition to the written contribution on the future of CAP submitted to the EC, OPERA has been invited to participate to this important conference despite the fact that it had been involved in this field only for three months (since April 2010).

“Today the environmental and social responsibilities of agriculture have broadened in scope. Changes underway are marking out the great challenge of the future for agriculture: produce more, pollute less and enhance the quantity and quality of services provided for society” Paolo De Castro

EUROPEAN AGRICULTURE AND NEW GLOBAL CHALLENGES



Source: cafebarbel.com

On 13th July, in occasion of the presentation of the book “European Agriculture and new global challenges” written by Prof. Paolo De Castro, chairman of the European Parliament’s Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development, remarkable speakers pointed out the strategic and challenging priorities in designing future CAP. Land and water are only few of several key issues crucial for farmers’ activity as well for country stability.

You can download the document S&D conference: <http://www.opera-indicators.eu/assets/files/News/cap/13th%20July%20SD-EU%20Agri%20and%20new%20global%20challenges1.pdf>

OTHER NEWS ON OPERA

OPERA MEETING ‘INFORMAL EXPERT GROUP ON SUD’

The OPERA meeting Informal Expert Group on SUD took place in Brussels on 14th June. More than 60 representatives from State Ministries, Universities, Associations, and Companies, NGOs gave their precious contribution to the knowledge exchange and debate.



The main outcomes which underline OPERAS opinion are:

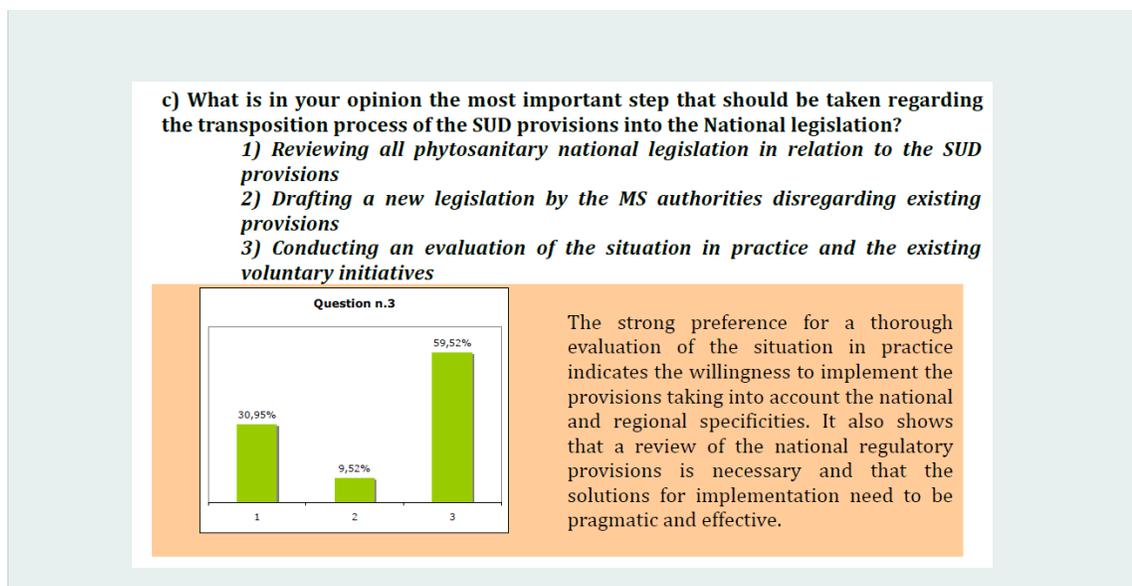
- Implications for the different actors in the agricultural sector and the benefits these solutions bring to society and environment need to be considered. The economic crisis requires that any implementation solution has to be judged also against the economic and social implications.
- The general context, of rising food prices and global lack of progress towards food security (including the aprox. 20 million people undernourished in EU) can not be ignored. Thus adoption of new solutions and promoting the use of efficient ones is suggested.
- Questions about sustainability and competitiveness of modern European agriculture compared to the third countries need to be addressed.
- Scientific analysis has to be considered as a useful and objective pillar to take the future political choices regarding not only agricultural sector but also consumers and the society.
- Wide public consultations need to be considered, to involve all actors to discuss about transposition of the SUD at country or regional level in order to identify the best possible solutions.
- After 10 years of research at EU level on risk indicators, an agreement between politicians and the scientific community has not yet been reached mainly due to data gaps. Identification of a balanced combination of the existing indicators, collected and calculated already, to be able to judge the progress of implementation and the impact of different measures could be a solution.
- There is a strong need for identifying harmonised solutions for certain elements of implementation, like training, certification, machinery inspection, etc.
- Incentives of the existing solutions for risk reduction and scientific research seems necessary to set up appropriate innovative technologies and equipments ensuring higher safety standards for all subjects involved.

The complete document ‘OPERA’s reflections on the outcome of the informal expert group on SUD’ and the presentations can be downloaded <http://www.opera-indicators.eu/eng/info/news/140.html>

During the meeting the participants were requested to answer an electronic questionnaire on issues related to the implementation of the directive. There were proposed 8 multiple-choice questions covering three different subjects:

- A) The transposition of SUD into the national legislation (4 questions)
- B) The development of National Action Plans in the member states (2 questions)
- C) The public consultation of national stakeholders (2 questions)

The interesting outcome can also be downloaded at <http://www.opera-indicators.eu/eng/info/news/140.html>



UPCOMING EVENTS

3RD EUROPEAN BIOBED WORKSHOP



The European Biobed Workshop is a worth event of the technical and scientific EU network ***developing and using biobeds as infrastructure for decontaminating waste water.***

The workshop is takink place from **31st August—01st September** and is mainly for researchers working with biobeds and other biopurification systems and intends to update the level of dissemination and field validation of these tools in Europe.

The workshop will focus also on the opportunity offered by the new Pesticide Regulation in developing Good Agriculture Practice.

This edition is organised by University of Ghent, Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore - OPERA and BAYER Crop Science. If you think you or other colleagues of your team are interested have a look at the invitation and contact the organisers may be a seat is still available!

Invitation can be downloaded at <http://www.opera-indicators.eu/assets/files/News/Invitation.pdf>



Source: Presentation by A. Merli

COLLOQUIUM ON "SUSTAINABLE USE OF PESTICIDE DIRECTIVE: IMPACT, OPPORTUNITY & PROBLEMS"

The Sustainable Use of Pesticides Directive requires Member States to develop a national legislative framework throughout national action plans to reach the objectives set by the Directive. Therefore regional, national and international authorities will need instruments for the evaluation of domestic policies and international obligations. Sustainability of pesticide use is the context we have to refer to, regulation provides that reducing the risk associated with pesticide use is one of the most important elements of sustainability and this could, in some context lead to a misinterpretation of the sustainability philosophy.



This colloquium is taking place during the 6th European Conference on Pesticides and related organic pollutants and the 12th Symposium on Chemistry and fate of modern pesticides (05th – 10th September 2010). The GRIFA colloquium intends to be a provocative arena where student, scientist and public officers will participate with their own knowledge and feelings on the subject of the implementation of the Sustainable Use Directive. For this reason the colloquium has been organised in between a Summer school for PhD student and an international conference on environmental chemistry. OPERA will organise and will survey the context for a meaningful outcome to the entire community. To read more please visit: http://www.pesticides2010.org/programme_ss.php

CALL FOR PHD STUDIES IN THE OPERA NETWORK

3-years PhD studies call for recruitment available in the School Agrisystem (see http://scuoleididottorato.unicatt.it/agrisystem_2173.html).

Participants should sign up for this call by mid September. The PhD will be carried out in the framework of EU projects. A broad description of the PhD studies planned can be downloaded at <http://www.opera-indicators.eu/eng/info/news/149.html>

For any request please contact ettore.capri@unicatt.it.



SOME NOTES ON THE SIDE

In case you are thrilled about our logo please visit the webpage of the designer Daniel Will and you will find more beautiful illustrations.

<http://www.willdesign.ch/>

