

Collapse After Years Backing Flawed CAP



The European People's Party has branded the EU's draft budget a disaster for agriculture, even though it backed earlier CAP reforms that raised costs for farmers.

A sign reading "Farmers for Europe" is seen on a tractor during a demonstration in Brussels called by the Farmers Defence Force to protest against European regulations on June 4, 2024.

Brussels is facing fresh anger from farmers after the European Commission unveiled its draft budget for 2028–2034, with the EU's main centre-right party warning that proposed cuts to agriculture would devastate the sector.

The European People's Party (EPP) agriculture policy chief, Herbert Dorfmann, described the proposal as a "disaster" for agriculture and warned that he will not support a cut that threatens the viability of Europe's countryside.

"For two years, I have heard prime ministers, and the Commission president say how important and strategic agriculture is, and then this proposal comes along? It is neither coherent nor acceptable. I will never vote in favor of it," Dorfmann declared in an interview, stressing that agriculture cannot be the only sector paying the debt contracted under the EU's Next Generation framework.

The MEP's remarks come at a time of growing discontent in the agricultural sector, especially after protests in countries such as France, Poland, and Germany, where farmers denounce the suffocation of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) due to a combination of budget cuts and an overload of environmental rules.

Dorfmann warned that with reduced funds, "Member States will have to decide between supporting green practices, aid for young farmers or maintaining basic payments," which could leave producers with barely "100 or 130 euros per hectare per year," a figure that would make it impossible for many farms to survive.

The South Tyrolean MEP also criticized the superficiality of the CAP regulation proposal, hastily drafted by the Commission: "It was all presented at once with the MFF, and that turned it into a text without depth. I don't know if it is even worth debating."

Yet the EPP has for years supported reforms that shaped the current CAP framework, including "external convergence" measures that shifted payments between Member States and climate criteria that increased costs for producers without guaranteeing compensation.

Farmer organisations blame these earlier reforms for undermining profitability, the very pressures now cited by the EPP in its opposition to the new budget.

Brussels' budget proposal for 2028-2034 still requires approval by the European Parliament, opening the door to a showdown between the Commission and MEPs. But even if the EPP decides to vote against it, Europe's

farmers will hardly forget that the policies now suffocating the countryside were adopted with the decisive support of the very party now presenting itself as their defender.

Author:

Javier Villamor is a Spanish journalist and analyst. Based in Brussels, he covers NATO and EU affairs at europeanconservative.com. Javier has over 17 years of experience in international politics, defence, and security. He also works as a consultant providing strategic insights into global affairs and geopolitical dynamics.

Photo: Public domain

Sources: The European Conservative (europeanconservative.com)