

STRENGTHENING PLANT PRODUCTION AND PROTEIN DIVERSIFICATION IN THE CAP 2028-2034

Policy Brief

PURPOSE

This brief summarizes EVU's key priorities for the negotiation and implementation of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) 2028–2034, with a focus on protein diversification, increased plant-based production and resilient value chains.

CONTEXT

The European Commission's CAP-related proposals, published in July 2025, contain several promising elements with clear potential to advance agricultural diversification and strengthen plant and protein crop production in Europe, as well as several blind spots and potentially negative factors which need to be addressed. The CAP 2028–2034 should send a clear signal that diversification and increased plant-based production are central pillars of a resilient, competitive and future-proof European food system.

KEY MESSAGES

Diversification must become systemic: Support for crop and protein diversification should extend beyond nitrate-surplus areas and be embedded across CAP objectives, instruments, and monitoring.

- **Diversification needs time and certainty:** Multi-annual transition support, predictable investment aid, and strong advisory services are essential to de-risk shifts towards more plant production.
- **Rebalance financial incentives:** Coupled income support, investment aid, and redistribution mechanisms should clearly prioritise protein crops and sustainable plant production.
- **Build value chains, not just production:** The creation of a protein sector under the CMO is key to developing processing, marketing, and promotion structures for protein crops for human consumption.
- **Safeguard ambition and commonality:** Environmental ambition, ringfenced funding, and EU-level common rules are necessary to avoid renationalisation and uneven competition.
- **Ensure long-term governance:** Clear objectives, targets, monitoring, and mid-term review mechanisms must explicitly include protein diversification.

MAPPING OF PRIORITIES FOR CAP NEGOTIATIONS

Below is a mapping of EVU's key recommendations for amending the CAP 2028-2034 related proposals to maximise their potential for protein diversification, increased plant-based production and a more resilient European food system.

CAP Instrument / Area	Key EVU Recommendations
1. Agri-environmental & climate actions (Article 10 - CAP)	Introduction of diversification support beyond nitrate-surplus areas; multi-annual transition support with dedicated funding; free diversification advisory services.
2. Environmental spending (Article 35 - NRP)	Ringfence environmental spending; maintain 100% EU funding for agri-environmental and climate schemes.
3. Farm stewardship (Article 3 & Annex I - CAP)	No environmental backsliding compared to current CAP; ensure strong common rules for a level playing field for farmers; reintroduce crop rotation as a mandatory practice.
4. Farm advisory services & AKIS (Article 20 - CAP)	Provide feasibility, cost, timeline, and market assessments to farmers for diversification and transition initiatives; support young farmers and new entrants on protein crops.
5. Investment support (Article 13 - CAP & Article 71 NRP)	Recognise diversification and plant food production investments as a priority; apply sustainability safeguards.
6. Coupled income support (Article 11 - CAP & Art. 35 - NRP)	Rebalance CIS towards protein crops and plant production; allow Member State downward flexibility; introduce minimum sustainability criteria linked to land capacity.
7. Support for young farmers (Articles 14, 15 & 16 - CAP)	Prioritise plant-based and protein-crop enterprises; include sustainability criteria; strengthen advisory and educational support.

CAP Instrument / Area	Key EVU Recommendations
8. Capping & redistribution of payments (Article 6 - CAP)	Support introduction of EU-level degressivity and capping rules; prioritise diversified farms; integrate sustainability and diversification criteria into redistribution.
9. CAP objectives & steering (Article 3 - NRP)	Integrate protein diversification into CAP/NRPF objectives, Commission recommendations to Member States, and performance monitoring.
10. NRP Plans & mid-term review (Articles 24 & 25 - NRP)	Set clear diversification targets; define review criteria including protein diversification; ensure robust monitoring; prevent environmental backsliding.
11. Creation of protein sector (Article 159 - CMO)	Endorse creation of dedicated protein sector; recognise and support producer organisations; introduce origin labelling; facilitate access to promotion policy.
12. CAP structure & governance (NRP & CAP)	Maintain the two-pillar structure; ensure EU-level common rules; allow sufficient time for negotiation, implementation, and revision.
13. Budgetary framework (MFF & NRP)	Reduce uncertainty through clearer agricultural budget guarantees; ringfence rural development funding within NRPF at least at current EAFRD levels.

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