Generational renewal in farming and the reform of the CAP

A view from
the Basque peasant movement
for food sovereignty

Coordination:

Bizi lur
Lankidetzarako eta Herrien Garapenerako Erakundea
Asociación para la Cooperación y el Desarrollo de los Pueblos

etxalde
NEKAZARITZA IRAUNKORRA

With the support of:

GARAPENERAKO LANKIDETZAREN EUSKAL AGENTZIA
AGENCIA VASCA DE COOPERACIÓN PARA EL DESARROLLO

EUSKO JAURLARITZA
GOBIERNO VASCO

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Introduction

This text is the result of a collaborative research process between the author, Bizilur and Etxalde-Nekazaritza Iraunkorra, the objective of which is to provide a snapshot of generational renewal in the Basque farm sector and explore the possible opportunities that the reform of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) may create for change in this landscape.

When we began this research, our initial objective was to provide insights into the construction of local public policies that contribute to food sovereignty. This implies thinking about how we can cultivate food production in our own cities and towns. But if only 1% of our active population is engaged in agriculture, how can we promote a prosperous and viable agricultural sector for future generations? In our region, many initiatives are already underway in this regard, such as Food Policy Councils, extension and training services, community supported agriculture networks….etc.

But we saw that all the initiatives that are promoted, especially those related to public policies, are directly undermined by higher level policies and agreements that, through subsidies, tariffs, flexibilisations and prohibitions, overwhelmingly favour a large scale and global model of production. Frameworks such as the Common Agricultural Policy of the European Union (CAP), free trade agreements such as CETA or TISA and large infrastructure projects favour a productive model that concentrates land and resources in fewer and fewer hands, fuelling rural depopulation and precariousness in the countryside. And the right to healthy and sustainable food remains far from being guaranteed. By contrast, we see food sovereignty[1] as a frame-

1 Food sovereignty is a proposal developed by La Vía Campesina that advocates for, "the right of peoples to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods, and their right to define their own food and agriculture systems. It puts those who produce, distribute and consume food at the heart of food systems and policies rather than the demands of markets and corporations. It defends the interests and inclusion of the next generation." Vía Campesina, Nyeleni Declaration (2007) 9. https://nyeleni.org/DOWNLOADS/Nyelni_EN.pdf

work for developing a socially and environmentally sustainable model of agricultural production that can enable just territorial development and ensure the dignity of producers.

One of the key concerns in this contested policy terrain is the issue of generational renewal in the agricultural sector. Therefore, with this research we aim to provide, first, a snapshot of the situation and then some reflections about different future scenarios from the perspective of food sovereignty. At this time, the current reform of the Common Agricultural Policy represents an historic opportunity for us to influence its content, process and implementation in the future, and for this reason it is a central theme in this document.

To carry out this research, forty interviews were conducted during 2018 with baserritarras[2], local authorities and activists who are part of the movement for food sovereignty in the Basque Country and other regions of the Spanish State and Europe. A large part of the ideas we share in this document come from these interviews, and are highlighted in square brackets throughout the text[3]. Their perspectives help us see how public policies are understood and lived at the local level, from an agrarian perspective. Understanding how people have navigated "hostile" policy spaces while maintaining their autonomy and building a sustainable productive model, teaches us important lessons about how to construct different types of policies. We thank all of the interviewees for their availability, their insights and their support. They are leading the struggle for system change that allows us to live the life we want.

An advisory group was also formed to guide the investigation and has provided comments and feedback throughout. This group is made up of baserritarras, members of the farmers' union EHNE-Bizkaia, Etxalde and Bizilur.

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2 Baserritarra: Basque peasant farmer, residing in a typical Basque farmhouse (baserri).

3 These quotes are drawn from semi-structured interviews with people working in the agricultural sector, producing vegetables, dairy and grapes in Bizkaia and Araba. This is complemented by the perspectives shared in semi-structured interviews by local authorities and other individuals working on the issue of generational renewal in farming. The names of the interviewees are kept anonymous.

As mentioned before, we begin describing the current situation of generational renewal in the Basque Country and describe some different types of new farmers that make up the next generation. In section 2, we will go into what the CAP is and its impacts on the Basque agricultural sector. Section 3 provides a mapping of the key issues and opportunities presented by the CAP reform with special focus on the new 'strategic plans'. Section 4 broadens the focus to consider other important issues for generational renewal beyond the CAP. Finally, section 5 presents some conclusions and proposals to continue improving the ways we can support the coming generation of baserritarras.

We hope that this document encourages the participation of a broader range of actors in ongoing efforts to influence and make decisions about the form that the new CAP will take and how it will be implemented in each region. Only in this way will we be able to develop public policies that promote a different agri-food model—one that guarantees the right to food and the rights of the people who produce food.

SECTION 1

A snapshot of generational renewal in the Basque Country

Lack of generational turnover in the farm sector: no one wants to farm anymore?

•••

The number of people who work in the Basque agricultural sector is decreasing, which has serious consequences for the future of rural Basque life and for society in general. Therefore, one of the main challenges for farmers' unions, rural populations and public institutions is how to ensure generational renewal.

> ***"In 10 years, there will be no one left in this sector" dairy farmer man***
> *Dairy farmer man*

This concern has given rise to many academic publications[4] and articles in the media about the crisis facing the future of Basque agriculture. Many of these publications highlight the exodus of the sons and daughters of farmers, moving away from rural areas to cities, leaving

4 Etxezarreta, Miren (1977) El caserío vasco, Bilbao: Fundación C. de Iturriaga y M. Dañobeitia; Mauleón Gómez, José Ramón (1998), *Estrategias familiares y cambios productivos del caserío vasco*,Vitoria-Gasteiz: Servicio central de publicaciones del Gobierno Vasco; Cruz Alberdi Collantes, Juan (2002), "El caserío agrícola vasco en proceso de desaparición," *Ería. Revista Cuatrimestral de Geografía*., no. 57: 5–17; De Salinas y Ocio, Lorenzo MZ (2016), "Juventud agraria en el País Vasco", in *Impulso global a la agricultura familiar*, Foro Rural Mundial, Arkaute: Foro Rural Mundial, https://www.uaga.eus/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/INFORME-juventud_agraria_en_el_pais_vasco.pdf

the family farm without an heir[5]. And not only in the Basque Country, half of the towns in the Spanish State are in danger of disappearing[6]. In the Basque Country, only 12% of the population lives in rural areas, compared to 26% on average in the European Union as a whole[7]. The villages are abandoned and people under 35 only represent 8.5% of total farm owners in the Autonomous Community of Euskadi (CAE). One article titled, *"The uncertain future of the family farm"* reflects a broader concern in the media and offers three explanations for this lack of generational renewal: "a lack of interest among new generations, the difficulties of farming, and urbanization driving up rural land prices." [8]

> ***"Becoming a farmer is tough. The prices we are paid for our produce are really low. It's very hard to make it"***
> *Vegetable farmer man*

Although partly true, this explanation runs the risk of hiding the political factors that have contributed to the lack of generational renewal. These factors are not coincidences, but a consequence of specific public policies, of a model of production and of patterns of relationship between the farmers and public institutions that have shaped who and in what way it is feasible to farm today and in the future. In other words, the problem is not only the personal interest (or lack of) among young people, the problem is political, and the solution is too.

5 See for example: http://www.ikusle.com/un-centenar-de-municipios-vascos-se-encuentran-en-grave-peligro-de-extincion-por-la-despoblacion/

6 Conde, Raúl (2018), "La mitad de los pueblos de España está en riesgo de desaparición | España," El Mundo, January, 2018, Spain edition, sec. Demografía,

7 Gaindegia (2016), "Euskal Herriko geografia demografikoa: bilakaera eta joerak," Gaindegiak Udalbiltzarentzat egindako azterlana, 13.

8 http://www.euskalkultura.com/espanol/noticias/futuro-incierto-de-los-baserriak-en-eibar-de-220-caserios-apenas-quedan-poco-mas-de-dos-decenas-los-motivos

Who are the farmers of the future?

The next generation of farmers and ranchers in the Basque Country is less and less made up of the daughters and sons of multi-generational Basque farming families. And that has profound implications when it comes to finding solutions to the challenge of generational renewal.

More and more urban roots

Historically, one of the most important forms of entry into the farm sector was within the family. In this context agricultural knowledge was passed down from generation to generation. Today, although the exodus of young people from rural areas is the focus of much debate and concern, we are also seeing people from urban areas moving to the countryside. That is, the new entrants into the primary sector come, increasingly, from non-agrarian families. This implies that it is necessary to look for other means of training and knowledge transfer. According to EUSTAT data, the vast majority of farm owners have learned the trade exclusively through agricultural experience (98.4% in 1989 and 85.4% in 2016)[9], but there has also been an increase in the number of farm managers who have gone through a course, have university or professional studies or other agricultural training (1.6% in 1989 vs. 14.6% in 2016). In the three agricultural schools of the Basque Country, of the 225 students who graduated between 2003 and 2005, the majority came from urban areas. But of the 10-20% of the total that ends up actually working in agriculture after graduating, the majority are those who continue with a family farm[10]. In other words, in spite of the great interest in the agrarian world among young people from urban families, the majority do not manage to establish themselves in the farm sector.

> ***"When I began, I really lacked training"***
> *Dairy farmer woman*

9 Statistics taken from EUSTAT Database, series: Nº de explotaciones por estudios realizados de la C.A. de Euskadi por el jefe de explotación y comarca. Accessed 1 November, 2018

10 Cruz Alberdi Collantes, Juan (2005), "Jóvenes agricultores: perspectivas, planes de dinamización y dificultades de instalación en el País Vasco", *Papeles de Geografía* 41–42: 10, http://revistas.um.es/geografia/article/view/44221

How do we curb the loss of this potential generational renewal? The capital investment necessary to start a farm can be prohibitive—especially starting a farm based on a model of industrial agricultural production. Beyond the ecological problems and the food insecurity that this model of production generates[11], it also creates barriers to entry for new farmers who do not have access to land or infrastructure through inheritance.

In contrast, small-scale agroecological production, which encourages decreasing dependence on external inputs, offers a much more viable option for new entrants, especially for newcomers to the agrarian world. In this sense, changes can also be seen in agrarian training programs, from a more agro-industrial approach to the incorporation of more coursework that focuses on agroecology and food sovereignty. At the same time, agricultural unions like EHNE Bizkaia have developed their own agroecological training programs. In 2018, EHNE Bizkaia offered 31 courses and workshops to more than 400 participants.

> ***"The people who go to the agrarian schools have changed. More and more it's people who grew up on asphalt, and they are asking for different things. The schools have changed a bit, but they still lack a clear commitment to a specific model. They don't position themselves"***
> *Dairy farmer woman*

Finally, knowledge exchange between farmers is a fundamental way to support new entrants, as well as a means of building social muscle in rural areas. Organizing visits, seminars, collective work days (*Auzolanes*), collaborative projects or informal spaces for socialising are some of the ways in which such exchanges are being promoted.

11 De Schutter, Olivier (2019), "Towards a common food policy for the European Union; the policy reform and realignment that is required to build sustainable food systems in Europe", Brussels: IPES Food, International Panel of Experts on Sustainable Food Systems, http://www.ipes-food.org/_img/upload/files/CFP_FullReport.pdf; Patel, Raj (2009) "Food Sovereignty," *Journal of Peasant Studies* 36, no. 3 (1 de julio de 2009): 663–706, https://doi.org/10.1080/03066150903143079; Mattheissen, Emily y Sofía Monsalve Suárez, (2016) "Peoples' monitoring for the right to food and nutrition," in *Keeping seeds in peoples' hands*, Right to Food and Nutrition Watch, Issue 08 (Heidelberg: Right to Food and Nutrition Watch Consortium of 26 civil society organizations), 16–17.

Women baserritarras

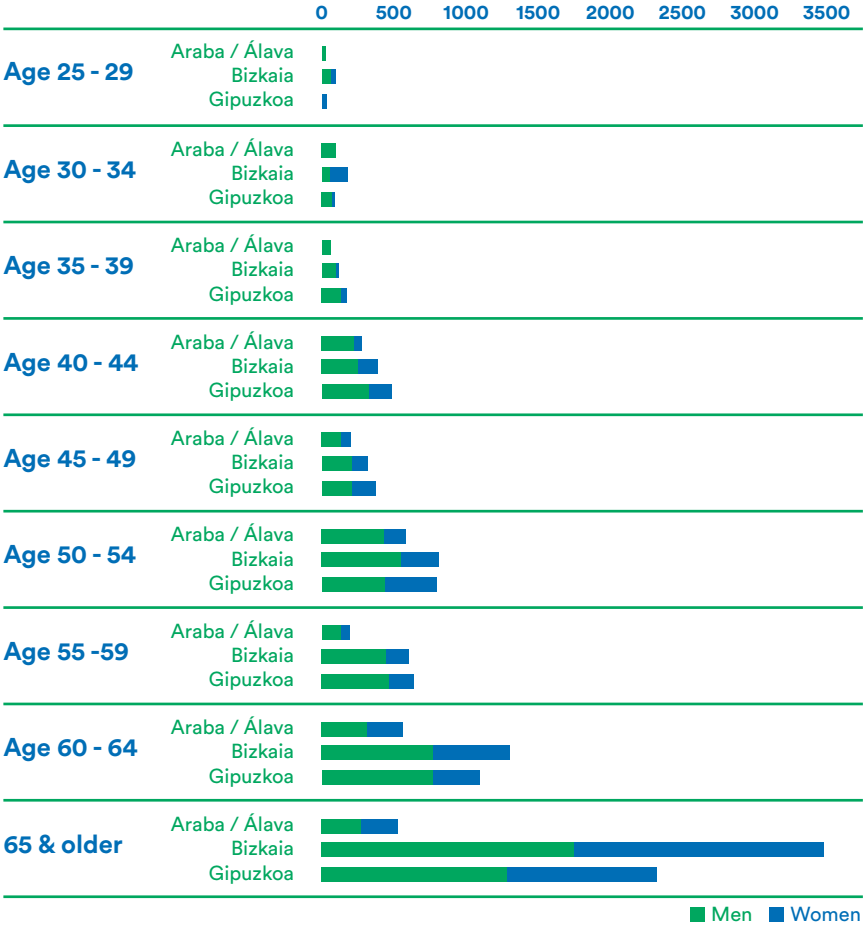
Women's role in agriculture has been invisiblised and undervalued throughout history. To promote generational turnover, it is important to reverse this trend. According to the 2011 Diagnosis of Gender Equality in the Rural Environment by the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Environment, rural areas are losing female population. This emigration is due to:

> [T]he shortage of job opportunities for them as well as the influence of other factors such as: stereotypes that continue to attribute care work to women, long work hours, social pressure, domestic responsibilities not shared in most cases and the lack of economic, professional and social recognition of women's work as well as a lack of openness from male partners[12].

Even so, the current presence of some 5,568 women baserritarras as owners of farms (according to the latest data of 2016) is remarkable.

12 Cited in EMAKUNDE (2012), "La evaluación de impacto en función del género en el desarrollo rural y la agricultura" Instituto Vasco de la Mujer, 21, http://www.emakunde.euskadi.eus/contenidos/informacion/politicas_evaluaciones_2/es_def/adjuntos/Desarrollo_rural.pdf

Figure 1. Basque farm owners 2016 by sex, age, and province

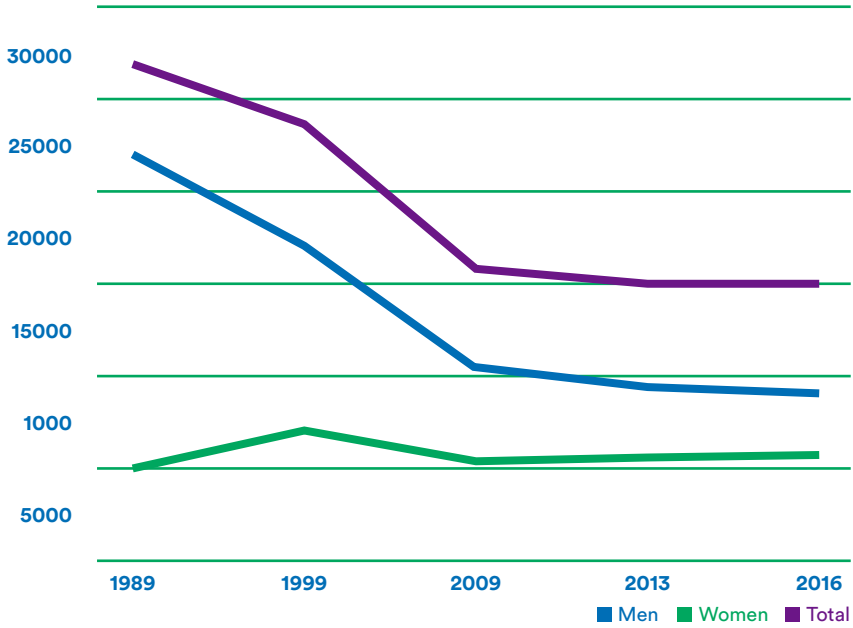


Source: EUSTAT data, Family labour: title holders and operating farm managers in the Autonomous Community of Euskadi, by owners of the exploitation, sex, age bracket, time period and province

Despite tensions and difficulties faced by rural women in the Basque Country, as farms have disappeared in recent decades, the number of women in the sector has remained much more stable than that of men. In 1989, women represented 19.4% of the total owners of agricultural holdings in the CAE and, in 2016, that figure had increased to 38.2%. In Bizkaia, this figure is even higher with 41% of titleholders being women. In Gipuzkoa, women represent 37% and in Araba 32%

of the owners of farms. While the sector lost more than half of its male titleholders, between 1989 and 2016, the number of women has remained almost the same, even increasing slightly over the same period.

Figure 2. Owners of agricultural holdings in the C.A.E



Source: EUSTAT Agricultural Census of the Autonomous Community of Euskadi. INE: Agricultural Census. Author's own elaboration.

Why hasn't the number of women in farming declined with the same intensity as that of men in the Basque Country? In part, it is due to older women who may hold the formal title to the farm because their husbands receive off-farm income, or because they have been widowed due to longer life expectancy among women in general. However, this does not explain the persistence of young women. The number of farmers under 40 has fallen since 2003, but at a different rate for women (who have decreased by 22%), compared to men (who have fallen by 44%).

Another change that has occurred in recent years is that women do not necessarily have to choose between studying or becoming farm-

ers. Today, rural families often encourage their daughters to finish their studies before deciding what to do with their future[13]. "All these factors make some women reaffirm their identity as 'new rural women."[14]

When women do enter the agricultural sector, they face a gendered division of labour: leadership positions in organizations, maintenance of machinery and being the public face of the farm, are tasks more commonly carried out by men; on the other hand, administrative management, making cheese, preserving or canning and care work are jobs more frequently done by women. In addition to limiting women's involvement in political processes, a lack of time due to the burden of care work, may also mean that there is less data about their experiences and perspectives. For instance, a quarter of the women interviewed for this study had to cut the conversation short to in order to attend to children or other care work, while no man did the same. The average time for conversations with women was 86 minutes compared to 119 minutes for men.

> ***"In interactions with the municipal government, they always address my [male] partner. In all the meetings, I was the only woman. And there were some very tense moments. But in the end I tried to be very careful in that process because we are part of this community. And it's important that we are respected by our neighbours and that our children don't have to hear people in town saying bad things about us"***
> *Peasant woman*

In sum, most women who are new to the agrarian world have the triple burden of joining a highly masculinized sector, often in a place where they did not grow up and facing political processes that exclude them.[15]

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13 Ramos Truchero, Guadalupe (2010), "En el ángulo muerto de la ganadería familiar vasca: las mujeres ante el relevo generacional del ovino de leche", *Lurralde: investigación y espacio*, nº 3:103.

14 *Ibíd*, 103.

15 De Gonzalo Aranoa, Isabel y Leticia Urretabizkaia (2012), L*as mujeres baserritarras; análisis y perspectivas de futuro desde la soberanía alimentaria*, Funded by Emakunde-Instituto Vasco de la Mujer, País Vasco: Baserripress, 35..

In this context, the women's collective of the Basque movement for food sovereignty, Etxaldeko Emakumeak, has already offered some proposals on how to move forward in building what they call *agroecofeminism.*

ETXALDEKO EMAKUMEAK'S AGROECOFEMINISM[16]

We would like to apply a gender perspective to agricultural organizations in all evaluation, execution and planning processes. We are developing the concept of agroecofeminism. It is not a closed definition, rather an ongoing process. Some elements of what we understand by it, are:

- Agroecology puts food at the centre of our priorities, which means we must analyse how we produce and what kinds of relationships we sustain in our agricultural projects.
- What kinds of gender relations occur within the family?
- We strive for collective leadership rather than overly individualised protagonism.
- We believe that men and women are co-responsible for the care work of daily life.
- In agroecological projects, it is necessary to value the organizational and emotional aspects of the work as much as the technical and productive dimensions.

Migrant farmers

Another group that merits our attention is the migrant population in the rural world, both people who have arrived from outside the Spanish State, as well as those racialized individuals who were born in Euskadi but whose parents or grandparents were migrants. With the rise of asylum applications in Europe since 2015, the issue of migration has received a lot of media attention. In recent years, horrific journeys to cross the Mediterranean have been documented, resulting in the loss of thousands of lives of people fleeing direct and structural

16 Etxaldeko Emakumeak (2018), "Uzta jasoz; crónica de un encuentro de mujeres baserritarras", Bilbao: Etxalde, 23.

violence in their home countries. The response of the Government of Spain is summarized by CEAR:

> In 2017, Spain registered the largest number of applicants for international protection since the approval of the first Asylum Law in 1984: 31,120. However, the percentage of people who finally received a positive response was reduced by almost half compared to 2016. And the international protection system, both in terms of processing applications and social inclusion programs, has collapsed. As of the end of February 2018, 42,025 people were still waiting for the final the resolution of their application[17].

Although the media has focused on the sudden upsurge in arrivals, the reality is that the increase in the immigrant population in Euskadi has taken place gradually over the past 20 years, both in urban and rural areas. In 1998, the population of foreign origin represented 1.3% of the Basque population. In 2018, that figure had increased to 9.4%, more or less on par with the state average of 10%. Key sectors of employment for this population are agriculture, construction and domestic work[18]. Interviews suggest that the foreign born population represents an important part of the labour force that is hired on farms, but official data is scarce. The figures for registered residents in a given municipality include information on country of origin, but the agricultural census is not disaggregated in the same way and this makes it difficult to have a clear idea of the dynamics of nationality and ethnicity in the Basque farm sector. What we do know is that in many rural towns, one of the only populations that is growing is the immigrant population.

> ***"Being self-employed, half of my earnings go to social security. Other people have the luxury of not paying this for the first few years, but I don't since people are suspicious of me wherever I go."***
> *Immigrant peasant man*

17 CEAR (2018), "Refugees in Spain and Europe," Executive report (Comisión Española de Ayuda al Refugiado), 5, https://www.cear.es/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/EXECUTIVE-REPORT_2018.pdf

18 Eguía, Begoña et al. (2013), "La población inmigrante en las zonas rurales del País Vasco," *Información técnica económica agraria* 109, no. 2: 218.

Unlike the US or British model, which includes questions about race and ethnicity, the Spanish census uses categories like country of origin and nationality. This way of making visible the different ethnic origins becomes irrelevant once there is a generation of daughters and sons of immigrants born in the Spanish State, which, in fact, is already emerging. However, in 2011, a new question appeared in the census about the country of origin of the respondent's parents, creating a second-generation immigrant category[19].

Although the primary sector is still made up of mostly of white, males, from agrarian families, it is essential to have a snapshot of the current trends and potential directions of generational renewal, which recognizes other populations of agroecological and first generation farmers, women and/or migrants.

19 Estévez Hernández, Pablo (2015), "Censo y etnicidad en España. Historia de una ausencia," *Papeles del CEIC. International journal on collective identity research*, no. 2: 24.

SECTION 2

A food sovereignty-based perspective

on the CAP and its effects on Basque farming

The CAP: the biggest factor shaping generational renewal

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As mentioned in the previous section, recognizing and encouraging potential new entrants to farming is not enough to ensure generational renewal. There are political barriers that must be dealt with. After World War II Europe set itself apart from other regions by establishing high levels of public support for farmers (Etxezarreta, 2006, 51). This means that agricultural policy has had a big influence on who farms and under what conditions. This report focuses on one of the policies that has had the biggest impact on generational turnover: the European Common Agricultural Policy (CAP).

The CAP has shaped—and contributed to the near disappearance of—the next generation of farmers in Europe. This is because the model of production that it has promoted, as a general framework for the entire European Union, has failed:

- In terms of production, it has promoted a model based on the overproduction of food and high levels of food waste. In the EU, 88 million tons of food are wasted every year and, in the Spanish State, an average of 135 kg per person per year is thrown away[20].

20 Parlamento Europeo (2017), "Infografía: las cifras del desperdicio de alimentos en la Unión Europea | Noticias | Parlamento Europeo," Noticias Parlamento Europeo, 5 December, 2017, http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/es/headlines/society/20170505STO73528/infografia-las-cifras-del-desperdicio-de-alimentos-en-la-union-europea

- In ecological terms, instead of offering solutions to climate change, it has facilitated an overdose of agro-chemicals and antibiotics in agriculture and ranching activities, which in turn pollutes soils, rivers, seas, and the food we eat[21]. In addition, it has promoted an agricultural system based on monoculture for export, which contributes to the loss of biodiversity[22].

- Socially, it has contributed to the depopulation of rural areas[23] and the decrease in the number of people producing food. It has enabled a growing distance between the origin of our food and consumers[24].

- In turn urban school children are losing contact with and knowledge about the rural world. On an economic level, the scale of production and capital invested in farms has increased. It has encouraged the concentration of resources[25] and corporate power throughout the food chain[26].

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21 European Commission (2018). *Report from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament on the implementation of Council Directive 91/676/EEC concerning the protection of waters against pollution caused by nitrates from agricultural sources based on member state reports for the period 2012–2015*. Brussels: European Commission; Silva, Vera, Hans G.J. Mol, Paul Zomer, Marc Tienstra, Coen J. Ritsema y Violette Geissena (2019). Pesticide residues in European agricultural soils – A hidden reality unfolded. Science of the total environment, 653, pp. 1532-1545.

22 Intergovernmental science-policy platform on biodiversity and ecosystem services (2018). *The regional assessment report on biodiversity and ecosystem services for Europe and Central Asia: summary for policymakers*. Bonn: IPBES; CNRS (2018). "Where have all the farmland birds gone?" [Online]. Available: https://news.cnrs.fr/articles/where-have-all-the-farmland-birds-gone [accessed 28 January, 2019].

23 Kasimis, Charalambos (2010), "Demographic trends in rural Europe and international migration to rural areas | Agriregionieuropa," *Agriregionieuropa* 6, no. 21 https://agriregionieuropa.univpm.it/it/content/article/31/21/demographic-trends-rural-europe-and-international-migration-rural-areas; Collantes, Fernando y Vicente Pinilla (2010), "El impacto demográfico de la inmigración en la España rural despoblada," Working paper, Área: Demografía y población (Madrid: Real Instituto Elcano).

24 Clapp, Jennifer (2013), "Financialization, distance and global food politics", documento presentado en la conferencia Food sovereignty: a critical dialogue, Yale, 14-15 September, http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.405.193&rep=rep1&type=pdf

25 TNI (2013). Land concentration, land grabbing and people's struggles in Europe. Amsterdam: TNI.

26 Wesseler, Justus, Alessandro Bonanno, Dušan Drabik, Valentina C. Materia, Luca Malaguti, Marcel Meyer y Thomas J. Venus (2015). *Overview of the agricultural inputs sector in the EU.* Brussels: European Parliament; Mammana, Ivan. (2014). *Concentration of market power in the EU seed market*. [Online]. Available: https://www.greens-efa.eu/files/doc/docs/056cb230ebaf0357706c3996a7c68d1d.pdf [accessed 1 February, 2019].

- In terms of labour, changes in labour structures have created precarious and unstable economic conditions for many workers in the farm sector. Worker protections are deteriorating and in some cases slave-like conditions have been reported[27]. Women and other already marginalized groups are the most vulnerable in the face of this precariousness[28].

- Culturally, the agrarian world is increasingly seen as a museum of rural folklore for tourists to visit, rather than a living, productive landscape.

- In terms of public health, the agro-industrial model has promoted an processed, sugary and genetically modified diet. The increase in food allergies, cardiovascular diseases and diabetes are indicators that our diet is making us sick. Some 51.6% of the population of the European Union now suffers from overweight or obesity[29].

In the face of such failures, social movements have reiterated the need to make changes in agricultural policies again and again. Policy makers have even managed to add some measures and amendments to make the CAP more sustainable, fairer and healthier. But, the fundamental agro-industrial model that the CAP promotes and prioritizes has not been challenged. Even so, despite this lack of a clear commitment to changing the logic of agricultural production, the CAP continues to be a lifeline for millions of European farmers, many of whom simply would not manage to make ends meet without the subsidies it provides.

Even though support for the agro-industrial model is deeply entrenched, there are also real alternatives and examples of initiatives emerging from the cracks in the dominant model. The struggle for

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27 Hervey, Ginger (2018). "'Modern-day slavery' on the rise in Europe: report" [Online]. Available: https://www.politico.eu/article/labor-trafficking-exploitation-modern-day-slavery-on-the-rise-in-europe-report/ [accessed 6, February, 2019].

28 Directorate General for Internal Policies (2017). *The vulnerability to exploitation of women migrant workers in agriculture in the EU: the need for a human rights and gender based approach*. Brussels: European Parliament.

29 Eurostat (2018). *Statistics explained: overweight and obesity - BMI statistics*. [Online]. Available: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Overweight_and_obesity_-_BMI_statistics#Main_statistical_findings [accessed 29 January, 2019].

food sovereignty brings together many of these alternatives, which are growing in the face of political barriers. In this document, we analyse the CAP from the perspective of food sovereignty. In so doing we find that engaging with the contradictions and taking advantage of the political opportunities in the CAP reform is key to transforming (or at least overcoming) these barriers.

But, what is the CAP?

The establishment of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, also known as the Treaty of Rome, signed in 1957, marks the creation of the CAP, arguably the most important policy of the EU to date. The CAP helped consolidate the European Economic Community (EEC), and has consistently represented one of the primary expenses in the European budget since its inception. Therefore, talking about public policies in the agricultural sector in any European Union Member State, necessarily implies talking about the CAP. Although it has evolved over the years, one of the fundamental principles of this policy is that agriculture is a special sector that must be protected. According to the European Commission, the latest reform aims to help farmers guarantee a long-term supply of quality food, make the agricultural sector more sustainable and maintain diversity of production in the European countryside, as well as its traditions and agricultural practices[30].

This special protection that agriculture receives as opposed to other sectors has been justified in different ways, depending on the perspective from which it is analysed:

- From an economistic perspective, agriculture must be protected because it does not have the same opportunities to generate profits as other sectors[31]:

30 http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/cap-for-our-roots/index_es.htm

31 Romero, José J. (2002), *Los efectos de la Política Agraria Europea*; un análisis crítico, ETEA, Bilbao: Oxfam Intermon, 43–45.

  - According to the Turgot Law, productivity initially increases with technological investment but over time agricultural yields tend to decrease.

  - According to Engel's Law, as income increases, food expenditure increases, although not indefinitely, thus food production cannot be based on a logic of infinite growth like other sectors.

  - According to the Law of Cain and Abel, if grain producers are doing well, other farmers will do poorly, and therefore, one sector or another will always need protection so that the system as a whole is maintained.

- From a political point of view, European leaders had two priorities after the Second World War:

  - They were interested in winning the rural vote. However, over the years, the influence of the rural vote has fallen, due to the decrease in the size of the population dedicated to farming and the proportion of GDP represented by agriculture.

  - Hunger and devastation in the European countryside made the protection of agriculture top priority in post war reconstruction efforts.

- According to the movement for food sovereignty:

  - Food production is a common good, which has social and environmental relevance for society as a whole. Supporting farmers who produce healthy and local food is a way of taking care of the environment and ensuring the health of all people.

Despite the differences that exist between the different perspectives as to why the primary sector must be protected and supported, there is general consensus that agriculture is a unique and important sector. Exactly how to protect agricultural production and the rural world, however has been the source of deep debates within the negotiations and various reforms that the CAP has undergone since its inception in 1957, as we will see in the following sections.

How is CAP aid distributed?

The CAP has historically used three types of protection mechanisms to provide aid to farmers: 1) Price supports; 2) External protection measures; and 3) Direct subsidies and payments. Over the years, CAP expenditure has been losing its relative importance in the European budget. And the initial emphasis on market regulations like price supports and external protection measures like export subsidies has been shifting towards a focus on direct payments to farmers and funds for rural development.

Thus, today, the CAP is mainly structured in two pillars of financing. Broadly speaking, the first pillar consists of direct aid to producers through a series of voluntary and mandatory measures, together with measures designed to coordinate and foster the common market. The second pillar consists of funds for rural development, with the intention of ensuring competitiveness and sustainable management in rural areas. Pillar 2 is co-financed by the Member States through national or sub-national public institutions.

The special protection that has been given to European farmers has not come cheaply. In 1979, the CAP represented 72% of the EU budget[32], although its relative weight in the budget has decreased: in 2018 it constituted 37.6% of the Union budget (58.1 billion euros)[33]. Not all Member States receive the same amount of money from the CAP, nor the same distribution of funds for of each support mechanism. Of all EU member states, Spain is the second largest recipient of European funds, after France. In 2017, Spain received some €5,063,917,000 in direct aid, distributed among 729,603 beneficiaries. The distribution of these subsidies is extremely uneven. The smallest 71.37% of beneficiaries share 14.94% of the total funds in amounts of less than €5,000/year. In contrast, the largest 1.88% of beneficiaries share

32 Data from the European Commission in Romero (2002), 42.

33 http://www.europarl.europa.eu/factsheets/es/sheet/106/la-financiacion-de-la-pac

26.18% of the total subsidies in amounts of more than €50,000/year[34].

In the Basque Country, according to the 2009 agricultural census, young people (up to 40 years old) represented 4.6% of those employed in the primary sector and received 4.3% of total direct aid from the CAP[35]. However, for years EHNE Bizkaia has been warning that these statistics obscure what's really going on. In 2013, they revealed that 66% of subsidies end up in the hands of beneficiaries who are not professional farmers. In that year, "in Araba, Bizkaia and Gipuzkoa, 11,161 people received subsidies, but there were only 3,400 full time farmers. In Nafarroa, full time farmers totalled 6,500 people and 15,446 received subsidies."[36] Worse still, "at least 60 of the wealthiest 200 families in Spain received around 1.1 million each since 2008, while each of the 900,000 Spanish farmers who received CAP funds has taken home an average of 44,000 euros."[37]

If we look at the distribution of aid by gender, we see that aid targeted specifically at women is shaping their role in the sector. In cooperative or family farms where women are present, they are often named as titleholders in order to access gender specific funds. Even so, women represent only 32% of CAP beneficiaries, and access only 23% of the total amount of aid disbursed[38].

34 European Agricultural Guarantee Fund (2017), "Indicative figures on the distribution of aid, by size-class of aid, received in the context of direct aid paid to the producers according to council regulation (EC) No 1307/2013" (Brussels: European Commission, financial year 2017), https://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/sites/agriculture/files/cap-funding/beneficiaries/direct-aid/pdf/direct-aid-indicative-figures-2017_en.pdf

35 De Salinas y Ocio (2016), 8.

36 Basterra, Juanjo (2018), "Dos de cada tres perceptores de ayudas de la PAC no son agricultores," *naiz*:, 28 March, 2013, sec. Economía, https://www.naiz.eus/es/actualidad/noticia/20130328/dos-de-cada-tres-perceptores-de-ayudas-de-la-pac-no-son-agricultores

37 Sánchez, Raúl (2016) "La UE reparte 250 millones en subvenciones agrícolas entre 60 ricos españoles," *Eldiario.es*, 28 March, 2016, https://www.eldiario.es/economia/espanolas-recibido-millones-subvenciones-agrarias_0_499400610.html

38 Gonzalo Aranoa y Urretabizkaia (2012), 35.

Despite this uneven distribution, the economic support that farmers receive is essential to survival for many. At the Spanish State level, on average, between 25% and 28% of the declared agricultural income comes from the CAP[39]. In the Basque Country, this dependence is a little less, with 18.2% of the agricultural income coming from the CAP[40]. Since agricultural wages are generally lower than other sectors, these subsidies are a lifesaver for many farm families.

> ***"If it weren't for the CAP... without subsidies, all of this would be over. Not even with direct sales. Because, at the end of the day the prices that we get are set by conventional agriculture. And we are not working conventionally. It's not that we earn a lot, but to survive without subsidies is....impossible."***
> *Dairy farmer man*

An overview of CAP reforms

The CAP has undergone periodic reforms since its inception. However, some reforms have been especially notable and have contributed to major shifts in the CAP's orientation. We highlight three important policy shifts fuelled by reforms:

1. FROM MARKET REGULATION TO LIBERALIZATION: THE CAP MERGES WITH THE FREE TRADE AGENDA

At the start, after years of war, the main concern of the CAP was to increase food production in Europe. The vision at this stage, reinforced by the so-called "Mansholf Plan", was to increase yields and modernise agriculture (encouraging farmers who were not pre-

39 Maté, Vidal (2017) "Nueva guerra por el fondo agrario," *El País*, 23 April, 2017, sec. Economía, https://elpais.com/economia/2017/041/actualidad/1492772790_483413.html

40 De Salinas y Ocio (2016), 22.

pared to make the jump to abandon their farms)[41] The CAP was very effective at reaching these goals, so much so that it began to create new problems. In the 70s and early 80s, the cost of the CAP skyrocketed and overproduction generated the now famous butter mountains and milk lakes. This was a turning point at which production control mechanisms like milk quotas were implemented in 1984[42]. The 1992 MacSharry Reform began a process of embracing market liberalization, introducing direct aid mechanisms, and shifting away from market regulation. It is no coincidence that this turn coincides with the negotiations of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), which later resulted in the World Trade Organization (WTO). In a context in which Europe received a lot of pressure because of its protectionist measures, the MacSharry reform can be seen as a response to this pressure to liberalize markets, which ultimately made the GATT agreement possible[43].

"They took us to France to see some very large farms, all expenses paid trips and everything. They encouraged us to build a barn, a paddock, a milking parlour. So I decided to go for it, with the support they offered. But I regret everything. For the barn, at that point they were no longer giving grants, only loans. It was really easy to get loans though, because there was this agreement between the Provincial Government and the bank. What really sunk us was the crisis 10 years ago. It destroyed me. Then 4 or 5 years ago, they started saying that we should pasture the animals more and adapt to the constraints of the land that we have. But the investment was already done and the bank breathing down my neck."
Dairy farmer man

41 Sanz Pérez, Rubén (2017), "La Política Agrícola Común (PAC)", Undergraduate thesis, Universidad de Valladolid, Facultad de Ciencias Sociales, Jurídicas y de la Comunicación, 9, https://uvadoc.uva.es/bitstream/10324/27971/1/TFG-N.806.pdf.

42 Milk quotas establish a maximum production threshold for cow's milk (in kilograms) that producers are allowed to sell to milk distributors or sell directly, without paying a fine. Quotas are transferable goods that can be bought and sold.

43 Swinbank, Alan (2005) "The evolving CAP, pressures for reform, and implications for trade policy," T*rade policy reform and agriculture: prospects, strategies, implications*, Australian Agricultural and Resource Economics Society, Coffs Harbour, 5.

The WTO consistently pushed for the liberalization of European agriculture. At the same time internal factors also contributed to this push. The enlargement of the EU introduced the possibility that the European market would not be able to absorb all the agricultural production of its new members. The EU's interest in tapping new markets in other parts of the world which would be able to absorb European overproduction, further motivated policy makers to reduce the market regulation mechanisms that were seen as distorting the terms of trade[44] and thus began the liberation of the markets.

The Fischler reform of 2003 represents one of the most significant changes in the history of the CAP. With so-called decoupling, aid was no longer based on what was produced, instead a 'Single Farm Payment' (SFP) was introduced which corresponds to entitlements that are associated with hectares of land. There are different ways of accessing entitlements (pre-2003 receipts, from a national reserve, etc.) and calculations for each payment amount vary[45]. Most agricultural land is sold with those entitlements included, but entitlements are also bought and sold between individuals. Although there are many nuances and it is a complex system, the general effect of this reform is that the aid no longer depends on how much is produced, but on how much land one has.

In the Basque Country, the years of liberalization and decoupling (from 2003 onwards) have enabled, on the one hand, a process of land concentration in the primary sector, so that fewer people control more land, and, on the other hand, a scaling up of the model of production, as we have witnessed in many other parts of Europe. As the number of people farming decreases, the average size of agricultural land holdings has increased. In the decade between the agricultural censuses of 1999 and 2009, for example, the average farm size increased by 18%[46]. This phenomenon has been especially pronounced

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44 Josling, Tim (2008), "External influences on CAP reforms: an historical perspective," en *The perfect storm: the political economy of the Fischler reforms of the Common Agricultural Policy*, ed. Johan F. M. Swinnen, Brussels: Centre for European Policy Studies, 69.

45 http://www.euskadi.eus/informacion/preguntas-mas-frecuentes//web01-a3nekaor/es/#3

46 EUSTAT (2010), "Disminuye el número de explotaciones agrarias en la CA de Euskadi pero estas son de mayor tamaño", Press release, Instituto Vasco de Estadística, 29 September, 2010, http://www.eustat.eus/elementos/ele0006200/Disminuye_el_numero_de_explotaciones_agrarias_en_la_CA/not0006289_c.html

in livestock production, where, over the same period, "the number of farms with milk cows has fallen by 68.5%; however, the average number of milk cows per farm has increased from 13 in 1999 to 26 in 2009 (+ 100%)[47].

Linking aid to number of hectares encourages owners to hold onto their land (even as they age) in order to keep receiving CAP subsidies (especially those who may have incurred high levels of debt from the investments promoted by modernization policies). This makes the land available for new entrants especially scarce. Informality and subletting is common, particularly in livestock production, since lots of land is needed to pasture animals and to dump slurry. It is typical to have a mix of tenure agreements that make up the strategy of access to land for each farm: some based on private titles, others via public forestland and also by way of verbal agreements with neighbours (sometimes, the owner allows the renter free use of their land for agriculture or livestock, but keeps CAP payments as a form of rent; other times, a fee is charged but the user can collect the subsidy; or other combinations of these factors). CAP subsidies for those who have land create a range of ways to take advantage of these funds through informal, sometimes a-legal and complex arrangements.

> ***"The dairy farming sector is completely divided. It's because of tensions over land. And there are people earning money from rent, just sitting there."***
> *Dairy farmer man*

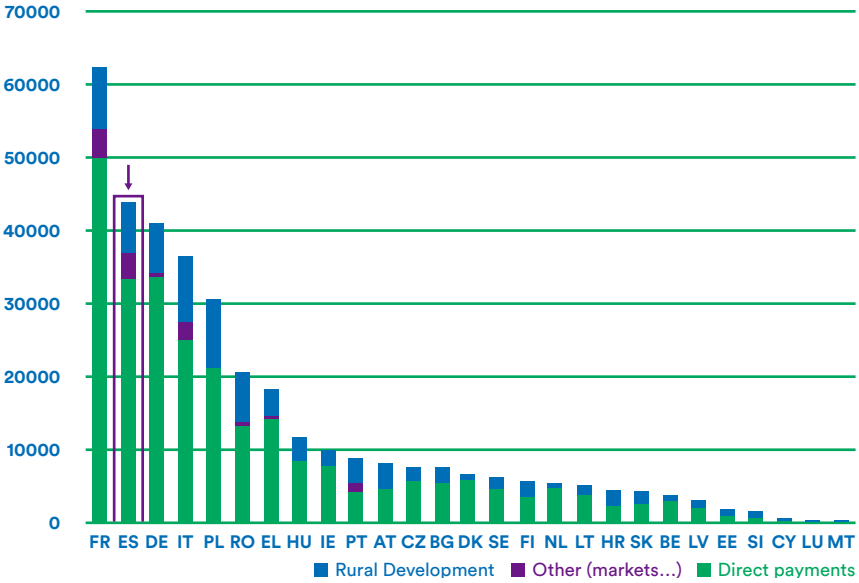
2. FROM AGRICULTURE TO RURAL DEVELOPMENT

In 1992, the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, placed the issue of the environment at the centre of public debate. After years of modernization policies, farmers leaving the sector and migrating to cities was leaving a mark on the rural population. At that time, the MacSharry reform introduced the so-called rural development focus to diversify rural economies, and avoid overproduction. But, for critics like Etxezarreta (1994), the idea of rural development comes from an urban perspective, which seeks to resolve social tensions due to worsening unemployment in urban areas by curbing migration to

47 *Ibíd*

cities[48]. Then, the Berlin agreement in 1999 put forward the Agenda 2000 and the second pillar of the CAP was established to channel funds towards rural development. The amount of money dedicated to the second pillar (see rural development in figure 3 below) is different in each Member State, but, in general, the majority of aid still flows through pillar 1.

Figure 3. Proposal of CAP funds by Member State for the period 2021-2027 in nominal terms (in thousands of euros)



Source: Ramon i Sumoy 2018[49]

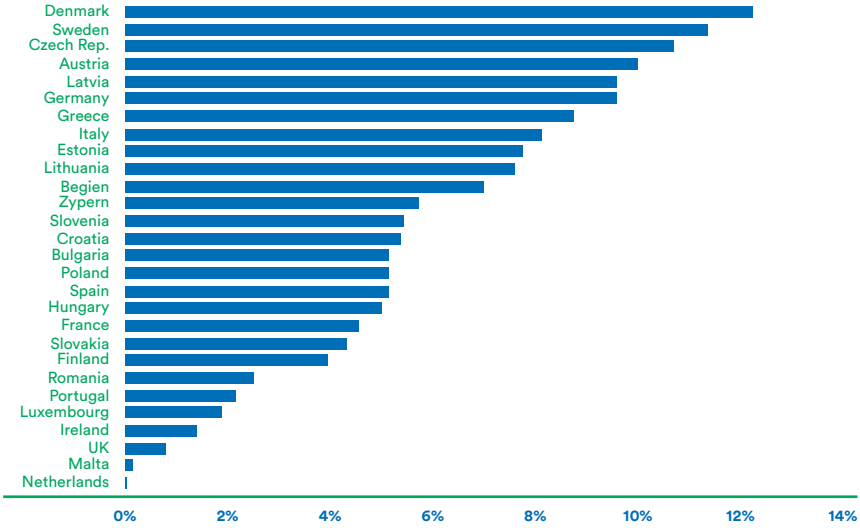
Pillar 2 of the CAP provides an institutional home for the socio-environmental concerns that arose in the post-Rio era. To a large extent, the issue of organic farming has been treated as one of these concerns and relegated to pillar 2. "From the point of view of agriculture, Rural Development is a new mechanism whereby agricultural policy partially disregards a certain group of farmers, and then suggests that other institutions (Structural

48 Cited in Mauleón Gómez (1998), 70

49 Ramon i Sumoy, Richard (2018) "PAC Post-2020" (Power Point, 4 de junio de 2018) https://www.slideshare.net/RicardRamoniSumoy/pac-post2020presentacin-madrid?from_action=save

Funds, for example) seek a solution to this neglect."[50] The CAP reforms have increasingly favoured modernization and investment in scaling up towards an agro-industrial ideal. So for those small-scale producers using ecological methods who are "disregarded" by the central institutions of the CAP (which manage the first pillar), one of the main sources of support for the expansion of organic production has been funding from pillar 2 for rural development programs (RDPs).

Figure 4. Percentage of spending in Rural Development Programs (RDPs) dedicated to organic farming by Member State



Source: Pe'er 2017[51]

Despite this support, when we look at all the funding priorities within rural development (such as tourism or conservation), we see that organic farming is not necessarily prioritised in RDPs. Debate remains as to whether, on the one hand, an emphasis on diversifying farmer incomes helps alleviate the difficulties faced by farm families, offering job opportunities in other sectors to complement agricultural production; or if, on the contrary, promoting diversification has

50 Cited in Mauleón Gómez (1998), 70.

51 Pe'er, Guy et al. (2017), "An evidence-based fitness-check assessment", commissioned by Stichting BirdLife Europe and European Environmental Bureau (EEB), Leipzig: German Centre for Integrative Biodiversity Research (iDiv), 133, https://www.greens-efa.eu/files/doc/docs/f9a6e-0b649a9a238d21f6620886dd014.pdf

> ***"I feel that those of us who are producing organic food are not valued. The public institutions don't help us"***
> *Peasant man*

created incentives to devote less and less time to farming. Whatever the case may be, according to INE data, in 2003, the number of people working full time on farms in the Basque Country was 6,604, while in 2016, that number had fallen to 2,629.

3. FROM CENTRALIZATION TO RENATIONALIZATION

One of the principles of the CAP since its inception has been the importance of the common market, with the same rules for all Member States. This meant that agricultural policy was not a nationally determined issue[52]. However, the introduction of the second pillar to channel rural development funds relies on co-financing by each Member State, which implies that its implementation depends on equal economic contributions from Europe and each Nation State. For states with fewer resources, the introduction of such co-financing deepens the inequalities that the common market principle of the CAP sought to overcome.

The proposal for the reform of the post-2020 CAP introduces the figure of the strategic plans. This mechanism requires each State to develop its own strategic plan to meet the 9 common objectives of the CAP. For many, the idea of letting each State choose how it wants to implement and structure the CAP is a selective and further nationalised version of the common policy: CAP "à la carte"[53]. And this would go against one of the core tenets of the CAP, the unity of management and redistribution through a centralized policy and financed by a common fund.

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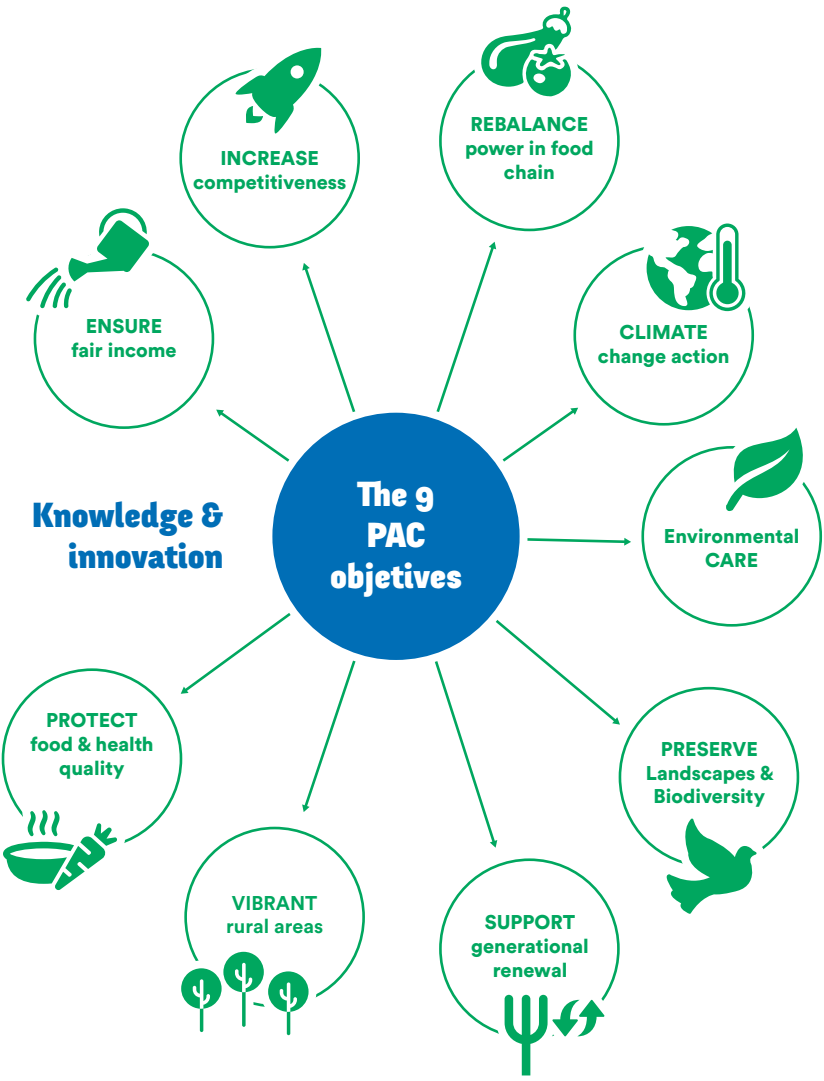
52 Romero (2002), 48.

53 Calleja, Marisol (2017), "Una PAC a la carta a partir de 2020," *Diario de Valladolid*, 30 November, 2017, http://www.diariodevalladolid.es/noticias/castillayleon/pac-carta-partir-2020_105252.html; Jaramillo, Jorge (2018), "Tras medio siglo de historia, llega la primera PAC a la carta," *Agricultura*, 5 March, 2018, sec. Economía, http://www.revistaagricultura.com/economia/economia/tras-medio-siglo-de-historia--llega-la-primera-pac-a-la-carta_9618_39_11976_0_1_in.html

The nine objectives of the future CAP are:

1. **To ensure a fair income to farmers**
2. **To increase competitiveness**
3. **To rebalance the power in the food chain**
4. **Climate change action**
5. **Environmental care**
6. **Preserve landscapes and biodiversity**
7. **To support generational renewal**
8. **Vibrant rural areas**
9. **To protect food and health quality**

Figure 5. The 9 objectives of the new CAP



Source: https://twitter.com/euagri/status/1051744629173948416

SECTION 3

The new CAP strategic plans

An opportunity for generational renewal

Strategic Plans

The European Coordination of La Via Campesina (ECVC[54]) states that, given the likely divergences between the at least 27 different state level strategic plans, the role of the European Commission in establishing a common framework will be key[55]. Without denying the risks, this move towards decentralization also opens the possibility of greater local and regional control over agricultural policy. A figure to take into account in this new scenario is the one named in the proposal as the 'management authority' responsible for the management and implementation of the strategic plan[56]. The European Commission proposal includes "the option to delegate a part of the execution of the strategic plan of the CAP to the regional level in accordance with a national framework," and to facilitate the process it

54 ECVC, the regional member of la Vía Campesina in Europa, "gathers 31 national and regional farmers, farm workers and rural organizations based in 21 European countries." https://www.eurovia.org/about/

55 ECVC (2018), "The CAP: communication, financial framework, markets directive and European Commission draft legislative proposal; ECVC position", European Coordination of la Vía Campesina, May, 2018, 2.

56 European Commission (2018), "Propuesta de Reglamento del Parlamento Europeo y del Consejo por el que se establecen normas en relación con la ayuda a los Planes Estratégicos que deben elaborar los Estados miembros en el marco de la Política Agrícola Común (Planes Estratégicos de la PAC), financiada con cargo al Fondo Europeo Agrícola de Garantía (FEAGA) y al Fondo Europeo Agrícola de Desarrollo Rural (Feader), y por el que se derogan el Reglamento (UE) n. 1305/2013 del Parlamento Europeo y del Consejo", 33.

is recommended that "the CAP strategic plans describe what kind of interrelationship should be established between national and regional institutions. " [57] The Spanish State has decided that the development of the measures for the first pillar will be managed by the Ministry of Agriculture at the national level and the measures of the second pillar will be defined at the regional level. All of them will feed into a single strategic plan.

The strategic plan must outline the specific measures necessary to meet the nine CAP objectives. Regarding the objective of supporting generational renewal, for example, article 43 of the proposal says: "Member States should provide for a strategic approach and identify a clear and coherent set of interventions for generational renewal under the specific objective dedicated to this issue. To this aim, Member States may set in their CAP Strategic Plans preferential conditions for financial instruments for young farmers and new entrants."[58]

The strategic plans reflect a deep tension in the European Union between centralization, which offers greater capacity to redistribute resources between countries and regions of the block, and renationalisation, which presents the opportunity for more autonomy, as well as of the definition of policy that responds better to the particular needs of each local context. In either case, to be able to really take advantage of this political opportunity requires a collective process to design proposals for how to support a model of production, which ensures generational renewal, to develop an advocacy strategy and to identify alliances. At the state level, a consultation process has already begun where farmers' unions, via COAG, have been participating in discussions about the measures that will enter the strategic plan. However, at the time of writing this document, the Basque Government had not initiated a similar process at the autonomic level to work on the second pillar.

As we have explained above, the CAP has promoted an agricultural model that has failed and in many ways goes against the 9 objectives that have been set for this reform of the CAP. But the strategic plans represent an opportunity to influence the direction the CAP takes in

57 *Ibíd, 32.*

58 *Ibíd*, 29.

the future, to change it and secure support for the farmers who are building the agroecological model we need. This section tries to lay the groundwork for a wider debate, offering some insights to keep in mind when moving forward with this collective task. Since the central concern of this research is generational renewal, we focus on the key issues needed in order to achieve objective 7: to support generational renewal. However, the nine objectives are interrelated and all of them condition the future of the agrarian world and its future generations. With this overview, we try to offer some ideas about how local needs relate to the 9 objectives of the CAP in order to contribute to a strategic plan that actually supports generational renewal in Basque farming.

At the same time, it is clear that promoting agricultural transformation through the CAP has many limitations and there are powerful interests that limit the changes that can be expected from this reform. So it is essential to complement the work on strategic plans with a political vision that goes far beyond the CAP. Therefore, in section 4, some ideas for shaping that vision based on food sovereignty are included.

Insights from the field about how to ensure generational renewal

• • •

Stop the precarisation of agriculture

(objectives 1, 6, 7, 8)

More and better agricultural employment

Ensuring a fair income for farmers is one of the 9 CAP objectives and directly impacts generational turnover. However, historically, the CAP has not succeeded in securing this objective. In fact, a European Parliament study admits that the direct payments from pillar 1 have had the opposite effect, because they have contributed to the intensification of the model of production, which gradually encourages a loss of rural employment. At the same time, the funding for rural devel-

opment from pillar 2 has helped create employment in sectors other than agriculture, such as tourism[59]. And, in the sectors where more money has been spent, more jobs have been lost[60].

The CAP has also had an impact on labour relations in Basque agriculture. Although the Basque Country is historically known for its family farming-based production, drawing little on hired labour, the latest data suggests that even this is changing. It is true that the number of farms and people working in the sector are in general decline, but the amount of non-family labour has increased by 4%, from 2,678 individuals in 2003 to 2,786 in 2016. In the same period, the number of non-title holding family members working in the sector fell dramatically, from 24,999 in 2003 to 9,050 in 2016[61]. Among working family members, young people who may be able to carry on the family activity are few. In 2005, people under 40 represented only 27% of all family labour. And of those people, only 2% (641 people, a third of whom were women) had worked more than 100 days per year[62].

This change in agricultural labour relations has had impacts throughout Europe. Recent research has revealed highly exploitative labour conditions for hired non-family workers and day labourers in European

59 Schuh, Bernd (2016) "Research for AGRI Committee - The role of the EU's Common Agricultural Policy in creating rural jobs," Policy Department B: structural and cohesion policies, agriculture and rural development, Brussels: European Parliament, http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2016/573418/IPOL_STU(2016)573418_EN.pdf

60 Berlinschi, Ruxanda, Kristine Van Herck y Johan F.M. Swinnen (2011), "Farm Subsidies and Agricultural Employment: The Education Channel," in *Evidence-Based Agricultural and Rural Policy Making: Methodological and Empirical Challenges of Policy Evaluation* (122nd EAAE Seminar, Ancona, 2011), 3–4, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/254386798_Farm_Subsidies_and_Agricultural_Employment_The_Education_Channel

61 Author's own calculations based on data from the *Instituto Nacional de Estadistica (INE): Encuesta sobre la estructura de las explotaciones agrícolas* (2003, 2005, 2007, 2013, y 2016).

62 Cruz Alberdi Collantes (2005), 10

fields, even conditions of near slavery[63]. Women and migrants are especially vulnerable to this kind of exploitation in the primary sector[64].

The total number of people hired on farms in the Basque Country is still much smaller than in other European agricultural areas. Even so, it is crucial to curb the trend towards the precarisation of agricultural work and to direct funds towards an agricultural model that generates decent employment and guarantees a fair income. Small and agroecological farms tend to create more employment due to their lower degree of mechanization. In addition, they have greater biodiversity, which contributes to objective 6[65]. They can generate even more profitable jobs[66] and offer decent employment, which ensures satisfaction and pride about one's work[67]. They can generate even more profitable jobs and offer decent employment, which ensures satisfaction and pride about one's work . ECVC proposes that the CAP must "recognize the value of agricultural work and respect the rights and dignity of workers, regardless of their status (farmer, employee, seasonal or permanent). All subsidies paid to farmers, agribusiness companies or producer organizations must be in compliance with a common set of requirements regarding the rights of workers (upholding interna-

> ***"It's tough to be self-employed. You have to deal with all the problems. But I like it. I wouldn't change it."***
> *Peasant man*

63 Gangmasters & Labour Abuse Authority (2018). *The nature and scale of labour exploitation across all sectors within the United Kingdom*. [Online]. Available: http://www.gla.gov.uk/media/3537/external-nature-and-scale-of-labour-exploitation-report-final-version-may-2018.pdf [accessed 6 February, 2019]; Clark, Nick (2013). Detecting and tackling forced labour in Europe. [Online]. Available: https://www.jrf.org.uk/report/detecting-and-tackling-forced-labour-europe [accessed 6 February 2019]; The Local (2016). Spain's salad growers demand end to exploitation. [Online]. Available: https://www.thelocal.es/20160217/spains-salad-growers-exploitation [accessed 6 February, 2019]; Hervey, Ginger (2018). 'Modern-day slavery' on the rise in Europe: report. [Online]. Available: https://www.politico.eu/article/labor-trafficking-exploitation-modern-day-slavery-on-the-rise-in-europe-report/ [accessed 6 February, 2019].

64 Directorate General for Internal Policies (2017). T*he vulnerability to exploitation of women migrant workers in agriculture in the EU: the need for a Human Rights and Gender based approach*. Brussels: European Parliament.

65 Matthews, Alan (2017),"The CAP and agricultural employment | CAP reform," CAP *Reform.Eu* (blog), 18 March, 2017, http://capreform.eu/the-cap-and-agricultural-employment/

66 FAO (2018), "FAO's work on agroecology; a pathway to achieving the SDGs", Rome: Food and Agriculture Organization, http://www.fao.org/3/I9021EN/i9021en.pdf

67 IPES-Food (2018), "Breaking away from industrial food and farming systems: seven case studies of agroecological transition"

tional labour standards)."[68] In this way, respect for workers' rights not only contributes to objective 1 of guaranteeing a fair income, but also helps to maintain vibrant rural areas (objective 8), free from exploitation and human rights violations.

As the first section showed us, in that snapshot of generational renewal, the white, male, heir to the family farm continues to appear as the central subject. However, the new energy coming from people with urban backgrounds, and also women and migrants, is an especially dynamic part of the next generation of farmers. In the case of women, we have seen the triple burden they face on a daily basis. It is essential that public policies that attempt to promote generational renewal respond to their specific needs in order to channel the energy that they are bring to the future of farming.

As an alternative, food sovereignty and agroecology prioritize autonomy, but this also carries a lot of responsibility. Having a work life that requires attention almost 100% of the time becomes unfeasible for many if we also visibilise care work.

From the Basque farm sector, collective and cooperative models of organizing agricultural activity are emerging, which attempt to make farming more compatible with other needs (i.e. family, leisure, managing group dynamics) and, thus, offer a way to maintain autonomy, share responsibilities, have vacations and balance agricultural work with care work.

> ***"When I became a mother we decided that we had to change and reorganise the workday so it was more like a normal job. You have to take care of the kids [...] At first I felt guilty, but then people began to understand the importance of care work"***
> *Dairy farmer woman*

And finally, people who work in the primary sector, like any other group, deserve to have cultural and social opportunities and to spend their leisure time in the place where they live and work, if they so desire. In the context of rural depopulation, the initiatives that try to recover the agrarian culture

68 ECVC (2018), "ECVC analysis of the proposed regulation for the CAP 2012-2027 reform and the strategic plans", 5.

in small towns will be key to ensuring generational renewal (objective 7) and maintaining vibrant rural areas (objective 8).

> *"Networks, mutual support, collective labour, care work, teamwork and the synergies that are created in this process are essential to move towards Food Sovereignty.*
>
> *But to walk together we have to train ourselves, learn to communicate in different ways, inquire about how emotions influence us, know how social status and power operate in the spaces in which we participate. How do we make decisions at our meetings and assemblies? Why do conflicts occur and how do we treat them as an opportunity for growth?"*[69]

Decent Retirement

One of the measures introduced in the 1992 CAP reform was an early retirement plan. During the implementation of the plan at the national and regional level it was called an abandonment plan. The logic of these plans was to create a way for older and small-scale farmers to exit the sector with compensation, and in turn increase the average farm size[70]. Basque institutions co-financed these abandonment plans for farmers who were not seen as fit for modernizing according to government criteria. In the dairy sector, farmers producing less than 30,000 kg of milk per year or facing serious barriers to continuing their farm activity (animal health, old age, lack of a heir, etc.) were eligible to participate. Through these abandonment plans, farmers sold their milk quota to the Government, which was then put into a national reserve. In 1994, 18% of the rights to dairy production were sold and, by 1996, 29% of the milk quota had been transferred to the national reserve of the Spanish State[71]. From the national reserve, remaining farmers were given milk quota at no cost in order to increase their production. In other words, public institutions paid small farmers to stop farming and gave their production quota for free to larger

69 Etxaldeko Emakumeak (2018), 25.

70 Baltas, Nicholas C. (1997), "The restructured CAP and the periphery of the EU," *Food Policy* 22, no. 4 (1 August, 1997): 342, https://doi.org/10.1016/S0306-9192(97)00018-3

71 Mauleón Gómez (1998), 73.

farms[72]. Farmers who had taken out credit (made available by private banks, with government subsidized low interest rates) to invest in scaling up their operations were given priority access to milk quota from the national reserve. For actively intensifying farm operations accumulating more quota was used as a strategy to pay off high levels of debt from investment in machinery and infrastructure. At the same time the milk quota became a kind of retirement plan for older or small-scale farmers in order to complement low agrarian pensions. "The poverty line in Spain in 2016 was 8,209 euros per person, that is, 684 euros per month, only 4% below that of an agricultural pension."[73]. In 2015, after 30 years, the European Commission decided to eliminate milk quotas and liberalize the market. Without this measure to regulate production, the sector was even more exposed to market volatility and farmers looking to retire lost the value of their quota that many had been saving as a buffer against the precariousness of retirement with such low agrarian pension rates.

> ***"It was bad when they got rid of the [milk] quotas. Really bad. Too much milk, falling prices. The quotas were a security blanket for retirement. When you wanted to retire you could sell and have a bit of money to retire with. When they got rid of them, all of that disappeared"***
> *Dairy farmer man*

The signing of the Toledo Pact in 1995 initiated a process of Spanish pension reforms. With pressure from the European Commission, the heart of the reform was a "drastic" cut to pensions. "The cut in pensions as the only element of financial adjustment in the system is not only questionable because of its impacts, but also because it is based on the assumption that, regardless of what they have contributed, workers are not entitled to a basic level of pension. They will cut whatever is necessary to balance the current system without recognizing any rights workers have acquired for the years they have paid into the system"[74].

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72 *Ibíd*, 74.

73 "¿Los jubilados agrarios cobran menos que el resto de jubilados en España?" *La Vanguardia*, 19 January, 2018, https://www.lavanguardia.com/local/valencia/20180119/44117127655/la-union-denuncia-que-los-jubilados-agrarios-cobran-un-59-menos-que-el-resto.html

74 Zubiri, Ignacio (2016), "Las pensiones en España: situación y alternativas de reforma" *Papeles de Economía Española,* no. 147: 167.

The implications of these cuts are already evident. After a year of mobilising by pensioners, "this movement, which extended from Bilbao to the rest of Spain to protests the cuts in Social Security benefits, has shown its power this Saturday [January 19, 2019] in the afternoon in the capital of Bizkaia, where a year ago 30,000 people [including retired farmers], according to official sources, filled the streets, despite the cold winter rain, from the Gran Vía to the City Hall, demanding "decent pensions"[75]

> ***"We will not be defeated by fatigue. This is a struggle for our dignity. They have been making fools of us"***
> *Andrea Uña, spokeswoman for the pensioners movement*

In order to achieve objective 7, to support generational renewal in farming, it is essential to ensure that, upon reaching the retirement age, outgoing farmers have access to decent pensions. This is also related to objective 1 of the CAP; on the one hand, because the right to dignified income must also apply to retired people and, on the other, because future pension funds will depend on the contributions of the current generation of workers.

Finance for agroecological farmers

The Young Farmer Plan (GAZTENEK) and CAP subsidies (objectives 4, 5, 6, 7)

Faced with the crisis of the generational renewal in farming, the Basque Government has developed a series of initiatives to try to turn the situation around. The Young Farmer Plan was established in 2004, offering several lines of credit and finance (low interest loans, co-financing for investments and grants) for people between 18 and 40 years old, during the first 5 years of farming. In its first 8 years, Gaztenek has provided almost 7.5 million euros for investment in new agricultural projects and has supported 450 new entrants[76]. Financ-

75 Rioja Andueza, Iker (2019), "La llama de los pensionistas sigue viva: 30.000 personas en las calles de Bilbao un año después" *Eldiario.es*, 19 January, 2019, online edition https://www.eldiario.es/norte/euskadi/pensiones_0_858814416.html

76 http://irekia.eus/es/news/15480

ing can be a key way to contribute to objective 7, but, in order for it to also contribute to objectives 5 (protect the environment) and 6 (preserve landscapes and biodiversity), it is important that funds be put towards agroecological production that respects and takes care of the environment. Plus, from La Via Campesina to the United Nations FAO, there is a consensus that agroecology is one of the most important forms of action against climate change (objective 4) to cool the planet[77].

> ***"Then, when you start receiving the payments, it comes in maybe 20 instalments, like a slow drip. There is one [subsidy], I think it is for organic production, that comes in one payment, but the rest come in little pieces. One year I went with all the paperwork to the OCA and I asked her to explain it to me. But she didn't understand it either. It feels like its set up so that you don't understand. So that you don't know how much money you should expect, and you just have to live with it. Or from one year to the next they tell you this money that you got before is no longer available, period. It's maddening"***
> *Dairy farmer woman*

The Young Farmer Plan runs the risk of repeating past mistakes if there is no clear commitment to another model of agricultural production. For example Elena Unzueta, spokeswoman for the provincial government of Bizkaia claims that the priorities for co-financing in 2019 are "to contribute to the structural modernization of the farms and the introduction of new technologies in productive processes," and to "promote generational renewal and pathways of entry for new farmers"[78]. Yet, of the 3.5 million euros awarded, 2.6 million go to modernization and 875,000 euros are for supporting generational renewal. In other words, the budget priorities reflect a deepening commitment to industrial agriculture via modernization, rather than supporting generational renewal by way of agroecological farming.

77 See: http://www.fao.org/agroecology/overview/en/ o https://tv.viacampesina.org/Agroecology-cools-down-the-earth?lang=es

78 Europa Press (2018), "Diputación de Bizkaia destina 3,5 millones en 2019 a incorporar jóvenes al sector primario y financiar inversiones," *Europa press*, 18 December, 2018, https://www.europapress.es/euskadi/noticia-diputacion-bizkaia-destina-35-millones-2019-incorporar-jovenes-sector-primario-financiar-inversiones-20181218141451.html

The role of the Agrarian County Offices (OCAs), which is the key point of contact for farmers when requesting CAP subsidies, is also central. But there is a need to include more information about the CAP itself into the materials provided by these offices. Many farmers experience a lack of clarity about the CAP even among OCA staff, which creates doubts and insecurities when planning production. Plus, the model of production that is promoted by OCA staff has a huge impact on the way new entrants plan their farm operations.

> ***"The staff of the OCA encouraged us to go big, but we didn't. We went step by step. You have to learn how to manage it. And it was a good decision to go slowly"***
> *Peasant man*

Subsidies for young farmers pay a percentage of the general expenses of the first installation, and the rest is covered with farmers' own funds and/or debt. Faced with the lack of commitment to a specific model of production model and, after a history of policies that have encouraged farmers to take on high levels of debt, a key recommendation from existing farmers to new entrants is: when taking advantage of subsidies and credit, use them in moderation. And use them as a way to support a shift towards another model where you can live on what is sold and not on subsidies.

Access to land for new entrants

(objectives 6, 7, 8)

One of the main challenges for new farmers who are not positioned to inherit a family farm, is access to land.

Culturally, the popular Basque saying *saldua galdua* (to sell is to lose) can help explain the attachment to the family house that is often maintained by Basque families over the years even when no one is farming anymore. The logic of *saldua galdua* can in fact limit the possibility for new families to settle in rural areas, since renting someone else's family farm, surrounded by abandoned farms or second homes may prevent them from feeling like they can put down roots. This sense of a hollowed out countryside is accentuated by the tenden-

> ***"If you don't know someone, it is very unlikely that anyone will rent you land."***
> *Peasant woman*

> ***"These days, people come temporarily, renting. Families don't settle here. The farmhouses are deteriorating and people just live off of pine plantations."***
> *Rural town councilman*

cy of some families to plant pine trees or grapes on the farm, but live in a nearby city.

On the one hand, handshake agreements to agree on the terms of the rent reflect a very localized agricultural context in which everyone knows who produces what and there is a dialogue between the neighbours. But, on the other hand, with the aging of the agricultural sector and the arrival of new people trying to access the land, this trust-based system becomes one of exclusion. As owners change and decisions about how to manage family lands are transferred to people, perhaps in the same family, but who are not familiar with farm work, the priorities about how to use the land, and/or who to rent to may shift. At the same time, as tenants change and the faces and surnames are no longer familiar, trust disappears, and it can become difficult to continue the same type of handshake agreements about land between strangers.

> ***"The world has changed. The land we use isn't ours. Before everything was based on verbal agreements, but people have passed away or gotten out of farming and the new generation doesn't think the same way."***
> *Dairy farmer man*

Faced with this informality, to ensure that there are still vibrant rural areas (objective 8), the role of public institutions is key. The proliferation of land banks, the use of public lands for agriculture and urban gardens represent the range of initiatives that have emerged to mediate the relationship between land owners and land seekers. The Agricultural Land Fund of the Bizkaia provincial government is one of the clearest examples of such a project. Launched in 2010, this land bank is made up of plots of public or private land, available for rent in 5-year contracts to young farmers, in an attempt to facilitate gen-

erational renewal[79]. After almost a decade, the management of the program is being transferred to rural development associations and the provincial government is rethinking the way the bank is structured due to lack of land and demand in previous years.

Other models have also been developed at the municipal level, such as the land bank that was part of the Nekazalgune plan in Zeberio, launched in 2014. This initiative attempted to revive the agricultural sector in a town with an aging farmer population while also creating employment. Selection criteria for accessing the land included: project viability, sustainability, agroecology, inclusion of gender perspectives, job creation and community vision. In two years, 4 projects were approved but the plan was suspended when there was a change of political party in the municipal government.

> ***"I was able to get in because they made the selection before looking at the last names. This was important for me. They could have said, 'our own people come first,' but that's not how it went. I prefer that the government deal directly with the land owners, because, at least in my case, when I try to go speak with them directly, I assume that they won't want to rent to me. For someone who isn't from here, it will always be harder."***
> *Immigrant peasant man*

What is clear from these experiences is that, no matter how ideal a project is on paper, when it is brought to life, although it can facilitate access to land, its functioning ends up being conditioned by the political dynamics of the institutions that manage it. The more linked a project is to a specific political party, the more likely it is to lose support if there is a change of government. The processes that seek greater consensus despite partisan dynamics tend to go slower, but sometimes they also go further. These are key factors to consider when thinking about how to sustain initiatives such as land banks.

79 Departamento de Agricultura (2010), "Decreto Foral de la Diputación Foral de Bizkaia 28/2010, de 9 de marzo, por el que se crea el Fondo de Suelo Agrario del Territorio Histórico de Bizkaia," Pub. L. No. 28/2010, BOB núm. 51, 16 March, 2010

"The prices aren't much of an incentive for land owners, however, we do guarantee that the land will be returned in equal or better conditions. The land bank did not receive many applications in the last round, so we are trying to streamline the process, trying to find other ways to match interested people with available land in an ongoing manner rather than reviewing applications annually."
Technical staff woman, Bizkaia Provincial Government

"Clearly the worry is, what happens when there is a change of government? Even if there isn't consensus, it's very difficult to derail things if they have been developed in a truly participatory way."
Technical staff woman for urban planning in a rural municipal government

Since land prices make it almost impossible for many farmers to own all the land required for production, another strategy (which helps ensure generational renewal, objective 7) is to work a variety of parcels under different forms of lease and ownership.

Beyond land for agricultural production, rural housing is also key for new entrants. For today's farmers, the house and the garden or the stable are not necessarily in the same place. The previous multi-generational family home format with the cows and the field just outside the door, no longer applies. For generational renewal to be feasible in the current agrarian context of the Basque Country, in many cases, a housing solution that is separate from the farm must be found.

Although there is no silver bullet, looking for ways to keep land in production in an agroecological way, with people living in the rural areas is the best way to preserve landscapes and biodiversity (objective 6).

Local food markets

(Objectives 3, 7, 9)

In general, the CAP has promoted an orientation towards the export of agricultural goods to international markets, which relies on economies of scale, and creates barriers for small-scale producers. In ad-

dition, this orientation does not ensure local food security nor an understanding of the rural world by urban consumers. Yet in a contradictory way, along with market liberalization mechanisms, the CAP also includes some spaces of possible support for local markets. Normally, these opportunities are framed as rural development measures. Although these measures receive less funding, the Basque Government would have the opportunity to define what they could look like in the future in its strategic plan for pillar 2. Here the key, in the words of COAG, is:

> Promote the development of strong local and regional markets, open to all producers, as well as the adoption of standards adapted to small volumes and low staff. Promote the use of locally grown food in public cafeterias and collective canteens[80].

Public procurement in residences and school cafeterias as well as the development of public infrastructure for small-scale food processing and production can be important ways to support new entrants to the primary sector. However, many initiatives are too small to be able to access CAP funds, or information on support opportunities does not reach them.

"Keep getting land little by little, buying, renting, whatever."
Peasant man

"You basically have to be a millionaire to have a decent house in the countryside"
Peasant woman

"Another important part is for the project to be set up so that you already know where you will sell your production. Even if you don't have money, you have a market; that is almost more important than getting money for infrastructure. I mean, obviously infrastructure is important, but without a market...you can limp along without infrastructure, but without a place to sell your produce...it's really important."
Peasant man

80 http://coag.coag.org/post/los-13-puntos-clave-para-la-pac-post-2020-por-una-politica-agricola-y-alimentari-128052

Therefore, expanding funding mechanisms in pillar 2 specifically aimed at local (small) peasant economies is a concrete measure that can contribute to a more favourable context for the next generation of farmers. Even so, simply "supporting local experimentation, promoting social innovation, and building sustainable food systems at the territorial level are 'a la carte' options instead of obligations for member states.[81] The International Panel of Experts on Sustainable Food Systems (IPES) recommends that, before being able to access the CAP funds, each Member State should develop and implement a food-environmental plan that includes fiscal, social, health, educational and public procurement policies[82].

Measures that facilitate access to local markets for small-scale farmers not only help ensure generational renewal (objective 7), but also help to rebalance power in the food chain (objective 3), which in recent decades has become very concentrated in the hands of large farms and corporations. Plus, being able to feed the community with local and organic produce ensures a shorter value chain with less chance of contamination and more trust between consumers and producers, which contributes to objective 9 (protect food and health quality).

Institutional relations with agrarian awareness
(Objectives 2, 3, 7, 8)

Part of the process of developing strategic plans is to make a "prior analysis of local contexts and an assessment of needs" (article No. 57). Based on this analysis, the indicators and the necessary measures to face the identified challenges should be defined. Since in essence the strategic plan is about establishing new systems to define and make public policies, it represents an opportunity to influence the CAP process. In order for the development of policy measures to really respond to the needs of farmers and support generational renewal (objective 7), a greater awareness between institutions and the agrarian sector, in all of its diversity, is needed.

It is true that the institutional relations that have historically excluded small producers will not change overnight because of the fact that

81 De Schutter (2019), 24.

82 *Ibíd*, 69

there is a new CAP. However, the State is not monolithic—it is at least as diverse as the farm sector. The key is to look for allies. Those who hold political positions, no matter how much they intend to transform from within, do not always come from the rural world and the exchange of perspectives with farmers is essential to deepen understanding and knowledge of the issues. On one hand, those within the institutions can also share information about political barriers and/or opportunities in the face of change, and help farmers understand internal institutional dynamics. On the other hand, farmers' perspectives help foster greater agrarian awareness in bureaucratic spaces. This collaboration can cultivate more vibrant links between local authorities and rural populations (objective 8), and also better serve the needs of small-scale producers, empowering them and making them more competitive against large farms (objectives 2 and 3).

> ***"Since it was our first time governing, and we are not people who come from the rural world...we didn't know how to tackle the issues"***
> *Rural town councilman*

> ***"With the municipal government, both parties, they always address my male partner. In all the meetings with the Rural Development Association and whatnot, I was the only woman."***
> *Peasant woman*

Some attempts to create spaces for these kinds of exchanges already exist. Food policy councils or even sporadic meetings between farmers' unions and public officials are opportunities for such exchange of ideas. However, if institutions are not willing to give farmers a role in decision-making, processes can be weakened as mistrust can emerge.

> ***"In the parliament, it's striking. It's unusual to find a person who has cows in that space."***
> *Rancher woman and parliamentarian in the Basque Parliament*

Another danger that can weaken agrarian-institutional relations can emerge if farmers' ideas and proposals are not fully worked out or clear. Being able to translate proposals from the agrarian world into

> ***"In small towns [institutional relations] depend a lot more on people to people relations"***
> *Farmer and rural town councilman*

> ***"I think they take our language, but then they make other types of policy. Lots of times I have the feeling that they just invite us to meetings to assess where we stand, but not to influence policy"***
> *Staff man at farmers' union*

institutional language is key. Initiatives such as the collaboration between EHNE Bizkaia and Gaindegia, which tries to map farmland and generate alternative proposals for zoning and urban planning, are already helping to translate farmers' needs into policy language.

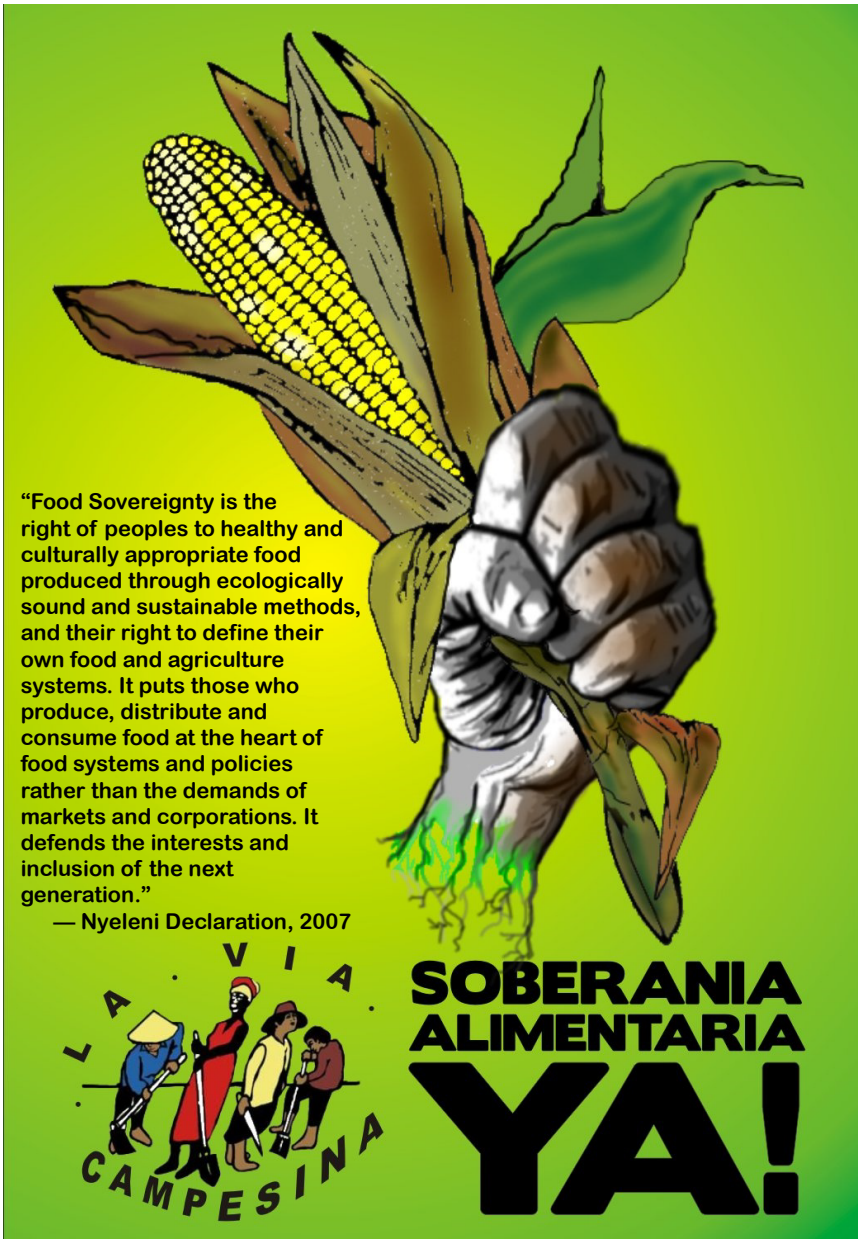

Image: La Vía Campesina 2013[83]

83 https://viacampesina.org/es/16-de-octubre-dia-de-accion-global-por-la-soberania-alimentaria/

SECTION 4

Beyond the CAP

Food sovereignty as the basis of food policy

The CAP reform does not change the system, food sovereignty does

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Since the CAP so deeply shapes the dynamics of generational renewal, it is important to take advantage of the opportunities for change that the new strategic plan process offers. It is also true that the CAP itself is not likely to promote a profound transformation of the dominant model of production. This contradiction is clear when we look at the incorporation of environmental measures in the CAP. The values and objectives of the new CAP, in the words of the European Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development, Phil Hogan, are nourished by "a viable agricultural sector that ensures the food security of our citizens, the sustainable management of natural resources, climate action and care for the environment, and the prosperity of rural people."[84]

To achieve these objectives, greater flexibility and some new mechanisms such as eco-schemes within the first pillar have been proposed. But there are few actual obligations for the Member States if they do not want to implement these environmental measures[85].

84 https://ec.europa.eu/commission/commissioners/2014-2019/hogan/announcements/speech-commissioner-phil-hogan-new-cap-delivery-model-event-enrd-rural-development-managing_en

85 Matthews, Alan (2018), "The greening architecture in the new CAP | CAP reform," *CAP Reform. Eu* (blog), 20 June, 2018, http://capreform.eu/the-greening-architecture-in-the-new-cap/

The eco-schemes, according to ECVC:

> [C]ould be tools that could finance certain farming practices such as: pasture, legumes, organic agriculture, ecological infrastructure, cultivation and high biodiversity, crop rotation, etc. However, would they not be redundant with the provisions of pillar 2, specifically with the environment, climate, etc.? Doesn't the introduction of this instrument in the pillar 1 indicate a lack of definition and commitment, in the proposed CAP reform, for a sustainable model of agriculture and a process towards agroecology? [86]

Indeed, within this proposal, there are many very different interpretations of what sustainability means. For example, corporations such as Yara, the world's largest producer of mineral fertilizers[87], who according to GRAIN, is "the equivalent of the oil companies in the food world: the products they sell to farmers to inject into the soil are the largest source of green house gas emissions from agriculture,"[88], agrees with Commissioner Hogan: "As a leader in the mineral fertilizer sector, Yara offers solutions to balance the environment with the economic needs of agriculture. Therefore, we welcome eco-programs and the introduction of nutrient management plans in the CAP reform proposal."[89]

Seen in this way, eco-programs and environmentalist language end up being false promises that are not capable of actually changing the dominant model of production.

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86 ECVC (2018), "ECVC analysis of the proposed regulation for the CAP 2012-2027 reform and the strategic plans", Brussels, https://www.eurovia.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/2018-08-06-New-CAP-document-EN.pdf

87 Martin, Jena y Karen E. Bravo (2006), *The business and human rights landscape; moving forward, looking back*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 187.

88GRAIN (2015), "Las Exxons de la agricultura," A Contrapelo https://www.grain.org/article/entries/5276-las-exxons-de-la-agricultura

89 https://www.euractiv.com/section/agriculture-food/opinion/cap-reforms-eco-schemes-eco-logic-or-eco-nomic-why-not-both/

As ECVC states:

> This is the essence of our criticisms. The EC does not seem to have realised the seriousness of the challenges facing the planet in terms of the environment, climate change, food, social cohesion and employment, nor that agriculture must play a role and make a transition to sustainable, small-scale agroecological models and processes. To do this, we need to clearly define the model to be targeted, plan the measures that enable and encourage transition, and value the farms that produce in a sustainable way and employ small-scale agriculture practices." [90]

Today, the clearest alternative to the agro-industrial model encouraged by the CAP is food sovereignty. Food sovereignty is a concept that proposes a model of production based on local agroecological and peasant farming. This way of producing food respects natural cycles and provides healthy food. Food sovereignty puts the dignity of those who work the land at the top of our priorities, revaluing rural life as a way to slow depopulation in the countryside. The supposed disinterest of the new generations in agricultural production is, in reality, disinterest in a model of production that has failed; which does not allow for a decent life in the countryside, nor does it guarantee the sustainability of our ecosystems. The movement for food sovereignty is gaining strength in Europe, from the Basque Country[91] to Romania[92], and shows that there is indeed interest, and that generational renewal in farming is possible[93]. But these new farmers face significant political barriers. Therefore, engaging in the CAP reform process is key to turning these barriers into support mechanisms to fuel deeper change. This is important, but it's not enough; to build food sovereignty and ensure generational renewal, transformation beyond the CAP is needed.

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90 https://www.eurovia.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/2018-08-06-New-CAP-document-EN.pdf p. 3

91 http://www.elikaherria.eus/etxalde/?lang=es

92 https://ecoruralis.ro/web/en/

93 Monllor i Rico, Neus y Anthony M. Fuller (2016), "Newcomers to farming: towards a new rurality in Europe", *Documents d'Anàlisi Geogràfica* 62, no. 3 (22 September, 2016): 531, https://doi.org/10.5565/rev/dag.376; Calvário, Rita (2017) "Food sovereignty and new peasantries: on re-peasantization and counter-hegemonic contestations in the Basque territory," *The Journal of Peasant Studies* 44, no. 2 (4 March, 2017): 402–20, https://doi.org/10.1080/03066150.2016.1259219; Van der Ploeg, Jan Douwe (2013) *Peasants and the art of farming; a Chayanovian Manifesto*, Agrarian Change and Peasant Studies 2, Halifax and Winnipeg: Fernwood Publishing

Suspend free trade agreements (FTA)

Food sovereignty is a proposal that emerged in the 1990s as a result of the collective global struggle against the GATT and the WTO to demand that agriculture be kept out of free trade agreements. The CAP reforms since 1992 have been linked to the WTO logic, deepening a process of liberalization and export orientation. The funding focus of pillar 1, which accounts for 70% of the CAP expenditure, has increasingly shifted away from market regulation. This means that the WTO's trade policies that regulate (or not) markets have also become what regulates (or not) the agricultural sector. In Europe, free trade agreements have proliferated in favour of the interests of multinational corporations. In the words of ECVC:

> Promoted as a panacea for the economic crisis hitting many regions of the world, the only growth these corporations instigate through FTAs is that of their own power and wealth, through which they besiege our public institutions, dismantle regulations (labour, environmental, health) and attempt neutralizing civil society and our struggle for social reforms.
>
> For us, farmers, the stakes are even higher: on one hand, the dumping of cheap agro-industrial surplus in our regions is often a fatal blow to our livelihoods, since such low prices do not allow us to cover production costs or have a minimum income. On the other hand, FTAs cripple public policies like the CAP, abandoning regulation and the control of production to adapt it to the global market ambitions of the industrial food chain, where the cheapest provider exports. The lie consists in saying that farmers, consumers and nature have the same interests as big business.[94]

94 ECVC (2019), "CETA & Co.: an assault on the rights of farmers and workers," https://www.eurovia.org/ceta-co-an-assault-on-the-rights-of-farmers-and-workers/

In order to support agroecological production and the construction of food sovereignty, it remains as important as in the 1990s to sustain and support the struggles against free trade agreements. In the words of COAG, "previously signed, supposedly 'free trade' agreements must be revised. And new free trade agreements should be suspended in the ratification and negotiation process."[95]

From agricultural policy to food policies

The food sovereignty vision highlights how deeply interconnected the agrarian world is with the health, culture, economy, and social life of our societies. Food production is the basis of life itself. So the policies that affect the agricultural sector, in fact, impact the entire population. From health policy to waste management, building food sovereignty requires thinking about the food system in an integrated way. To do this, the CAP remains central. But, to understand the CAP as simply relevant to farmers would be to deny the essential link that all people who live and eat in the European Union have with the agrarian world through their food. The changes needed that we have been describing in this report are massive and we can't expect farmers to bring them about alone. In the Basque Country, the agricultural sector represents only 1% of the population. Therefore strengthening alliances to influence the way public policies are developed and implemented, especially in the reform of the CAP, is essential. But it is also crucial to conceptualize the CAP as not only agricultural policy, rather as food policy, which affects the entire society and food system. To treat the CAP this way would require coordination

> ***"The key is in society. Food sovereignty is everyone's responsibility."***
> *Staff man at farmers' union*

95 http://coag.coag.org/post/los-13-puntos-clave-para-la-pac-post-2020-por-una-politica-agricola-y-alimentari-128052

between the various agencies and institutions at different scales of governance.

> ***"Even though we are in the municipal government in a dairy town, I have the feeling that it is a little beyond us and that the sector depends more on higher level policies from other institutions. What we try to do is remain close. When we have had to take some decisions about the primary sector we have sought direct contact."***
> *Rural town mayor (man)*

Without an interconnected vision of the different areas of public policy, "Firstly, in the absence of an umbrella strategy cutting across different policy areas, a series of synergies are missed, and a number of conflicting objectives emerge. [...] Agriculture, environment, health, trade, development cooperation, research and innovation: these policy areas are handled by separate 'DGs' in the European Commission and different committees in the European Parliament – yet they all influence how we produce and consume food, and what the future of our food systems will look like. The absence of a food policy to align these different policies with one another, and to shape food systems for sustainability, comes at a huge cost."[96]

In recent years, in the Basque Country, there has been a proliferation of municipal initiatives aimed at building a more vibrant rural world, facilitating generational renewal and transforming models of local food production[97]. Municipal governments have proven to be an important space for change. The CAP funds go through a dense and complex network of agencies and public offices, but little goes through municipal governments. This means that one of the institutions that is closest to local agricultural realities is left out of the process of developing and implementing the CAP. Greater involvement

96 De Schutter (2019), 6.

97 Brent, Zoe W (2018), "Building social muscle to transform food systems: insights from the European local public policy landscape", Think piece series: food for thought (Bilbao and Amsterdam: Transnational Institute (TNI), 2018), https://www.tni.org/files/publication-downloads/web_buidling_social_muscle.pdf; Sylvia Kay, Sylvia (2016), "Connecting smallholders to markets; an analytical guide", International Civil Society Mechanism, Hands On the Land Alliance for Food Sovereignty

> ***"There are many things that are not shared. And many municipal governments are in the dark. We should all be in contact, because otherwise we end up doing extra work. But in many places people are very territorial about information"***
> *Rural Development consultant woman*

of municipal governments in the development of strategic plans could be a way to bridge the existing energy and initiatives at the local level and the new CAP.

There is also a lack of coordination at the European level between sectors and agencies. The European Parliament itself recognizes that the impact of farming and food production is felt well beyond the agricultural sector. "It is well known that consumption habits influence public health. Agricultural policies are linked to health policies because of the impact of what we eat and also the way food is produced, on our health."[98]

Food is a multidimensional issue. A food policy perspective must be nurtured by knowledge and relationships with the local farmers, but it also implies fostering greater institutional coordination and interconnection between local authorities and with other levels of governance.

98 Comisión Europea (2018), "Propuesta de Reglamento del Parlamento Europeo y del Consejo por el que se establecen normas en relación con la ayuda a los Planes Estratégicos que deben elaborar los Estados miembros en el marco de la Política Agrícola Común (Planes Estratégicos de la PAC), financiada con cargo al Fondo Europeo Agrícola de Garantía (FEAGA) y al Fondo Europeo Agrícola de Desarrollo Rural (Feader), y por el que se derogan el Reglamento (UE) n. 1305/2013 del Parlamento Europeo y del Consejo," 2.

SECTION 5

Conclusions

Next steps for cultivating collective engagement with the CAP and beyond

In this last section, as a way of concluding, we would like to highlight some key overarching ideas for moving forward.

The importance of looking beyond the CAP

Throughout this report we have emphasized that in order to guarantee generational renewal in farming, a change in the dominant model of production is needed. This change, however, cannot be limited to the scope of the CAP, because, as we saw, since 1995, the evolution of the CAP has been dictated by the free market logic of the WTO. Therefore, it is not possible to achieve structural transformation in the context of this EU policy without also addressing free trade agreements. So, even if it is not a short-term objective, we must not lose sight of this broader landscape of transnational corporate interests and the international financial institutions that serve them through trade and investment treaties, provisions, standards and arbitration courts.

Therefore, we must continue to struggle against the neo-liberal policies and FTAs of the WTO by demanding food sovereignty as a means of taking back our political authority to make decisions about agriculture, food and public policies in order to meet peoples needs.

Let's talk about food policies

We have seen that the CAP not only conditions the agrarian world, but also influences the entire food system. For this reason, generational renewal should be understood as a central part of food system balance and change more broadly. This means, to really address the issue of generational renewal, we must talk about food policies. Initiatives like the new European proposal for a Common Food Policy and the creation of a Vice Presidency in the European Commission on

Sustainable Food Systems, put forward by IPES FOOD and more than 400 European organizations (including ECVC) is especially promising.

At the local level, there are already many examples of food sovereignty-based policy making that are forging the path towards a more sustainable future, while generating more employment and supporting the next generation of farmers.

Strategic Plans as an opportunity

The CAP is a double-edged political sword. On the one hand, it has promoted an agro-industrial model, which has limited the possibilities for building a model based on food sovereignty and agro-ecological production. On the other hand, it offers the necessary support (today) for the agricultural sector. The current reform process has opened up the possibility of having a greater political impact and of transforming the CAP into a better support mechanism for future generations of farmers. Despite the limitations, the process of developing the strategic plan is a political opportunity that should be taken advantage of by farmers, food sovereignty movements and allies in each member state.

The need for a broader debate on the CAP

Making the most of this opportunity will depend, to a large extent, on our ability to spark a broader debate on the CAP, not only to ensure the generational renewal, but also to face the ecological, social, economic and cultural challenges that await future generations. Food sovereignty is already under construction demonstrating that there are alternatives. As we have said in this report, peasant organizations cannot do this work alone, and the CAP impacts us all, and not just farmers. Developing clear proposals and identifying institutional openings during the process of preparing the strategic plans will take a lot of engagement. Now is the time.

Title: ***Generational renewal in farming and the reform of the CAP: A view from the Basque peasant movement for food sovereignty***

Author: ***Zoe Brent***

Advisory group: ***Amets Ladislao, Garikoitz Aiesta, Jabier Azpitarte, Helen Groome, Esti Besa, Maite Aristegi, Alberto Llona, Andoni Garcia, Alazne Intxauspe, Imanol Larizgoitia (Txato), Unzalu Salterain, Miren Saiz, Alicia López de Muniain, Maritxu Arroyo and Ixone Llorente.***

Design and layout: ***Higinia Garay***

Translation to Basque: ***Maku Florentino***

Translation to English: ***Zoe Brent***

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Etxalde-Nekazaritza Iraunkorra
The Etxalde-Nekazaritza Iraunkorra food sovereignty movement is led by baserritarras (Basque peasant farmers) but is open to all people and groups connected to agrarian issues in the 7 provinces of Euskal Herria, who are committed to a process of social change towards food sovereignty. This movement emerged out of an intense process of reflection among a group of baserritarras, who then established an organization in alliance with the rest of society to help deal with the difficult situation of dependence they faced. In their first meetings in Elgeta, the group considered it necessary to organize collectively to promote transformative alternatives via sustainable agriculture. This movement is dedicated to collective construction of proposals and debates. It aims to build counterpower to the current system and bring together the tools, mechanisms and networks that enable the construction of food sovereignty.

Bizilur
Bizilur was established in 2002 as an organization of people with deep connections and long trajectories of involvement with activism in the Basque farm sector as well as internationally. It is assembly based and sees the root causes of poverty, global inequality, and the multiple oppressions experienced by people and communities as a consequence of the current neoliberal, imperial and hetero-patriarchal system. As a result of this diagnosis, the objective of all the organizations activities is system transformation and is mainly put into practice by accompanying emancipatory social movements.

Both the origins of the organization, as well as its experiences and goals, have meant that the main focus of its work is on the rural world and peasant struggles—both local and global. In this framework, the proposal from peasant movements, food sovereignty, is central to the construction of new social relations as a theoretical, practical and political agenda that is based on the right of people to make decisions about their own food system.

Therefore, Bizilur works primarily with La Vía Campesina and the Zapatista Movement in the international sphere and EHNE-Bizkaia and the Etxalde-Nekazaritza Iraunkorra movement at the local level, as they are some of the main leaders of change and progress towards food sovereignty.