

*Minutes of the meeting between the Christian-Democrat **Alain Lamassoure MEP** and *Samuel Feret from PAC2013; Isabelle Laudon, head of European policy at the WWF France and Christian Roqueirol, a farmer and general secretary of the Confederation Paysanne.**



Meeting date: 21 February 2013

written by *Pierre Alain Prevost*

After presenting the object of the visit, Mrs Laudon highlighted that the current CAP reform was, according to a recent WWF survey, not what citizens want. An overwhelming amount of citizens across the EU want subsidies to be spent on specific measures that support sustainable agriculture and rural development.

Mr Feret pointed out that since the CAP budget was spared at the recent summit of the EU's heads of state, real greening measures and a better distribution of subsidies would legitimate the CAP in the eyes of the EU citizens.

Mr Lamassoure echoed the meaning of these statements and said that as president of the Budget Committee of the European Parliament; all EU spending should be considered in the interest of efficiency and citizens' legitimacy. He also said that he had recently worked on rules making it possible for citizens to challenge EU Commission reforms. For this to happen 1 million signatures from 7 European countries must be collected. Message received!

There was time to ask just two sets of questions to Mr Lamassoure: The first was asked by Christian Roqueirol, who is concerned more a fairer distribution of payments, including specific support to small farms, as well as about the transparency of the amount and recipients of payments. Mr Lamassoure expressed full support for a capping of subsidies to 100 000 €; for specific support to small farms and for full transparency on the amounts and recipients of CAP subsidies! Contextualizing the historical evolution of the CAP, Lamassoure said that one should go even further and rethink this system of subsidies based on surface sizes; as such type of subsidies are economically and socially unintelligible and illegitimate in the eyes of citizens. According to the MEP this system transformed farmers into agricultural bureaucrats, which he deplors

The second sets of questions were raised by Mrs Laudon and Mr Feret on the issue of greening. This is described by some as a package of "green washing," and ineffective and a source of a substantial administrative burden for farmers. Mr Lamassoure listened and thanked Mrs Laudon and Mr Feret for raising his awareness on these issues which he promised to study before the plenary vote. He added that not being an agronomist by training, it is difficult to make judgments on the matter. In

principle, he said it was common sense to implement a system of subsidies that encourage farmers to farm in an environmentally friendly manner.

Mr Lamassoure closed the meeting by stating that the European system needs more flexibility. Indeed, planning an European budget for 7 years while aligning reforms (including that of the CAP) within it, does not allow for any adjustment of European politics, which according to the MEP is an absurdity in light of the rapid evolution of the world. Everybody agreed to this.

Mr Lamassoure congratulated those present on their initiative; describing the meeting as very constructive. With a good pat on the back of each and we're back out on the streets a few minutes later; pleasantly surprised to have found agreement on almost every point. We are all now waiting to see how Mr Lamassoure will vote on March 13th...

Mr Lamassoure had agreed to make a brief statement to our camera, but unfortunately a technical bug reduced this video to zero ... désolée