



News from Brussels & Member States

23rd of October 2020 - CAP Vote at the European Parliament: How the MEPs gave their consent to a disastrous text for the environment, climate & biodiversity and in total conflict with the objectives of the EU Green Deal!

On the 23rd of October 2020, the European Parliament voted on the reform of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP).

“Today is a sad day for the future of European farmers, for the future of our environment and for our democracy”, commented Paola Migliorini, President of Agroecology Europe.

While the European Parliament begged for a long time for a heavy weight in the European institutional balance of powers, they showed today that they do not wisely use this power but still remain under the pressure of the Member States’ governments. While the European Parliament could have rejected the proposal as it is and send it back to the Commission in order to draft a complete new text which would be in line with the ambitions of the EU Green Deal, the Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) showed today that they are not different from usual politicians who eat in the hands of the powerful and giant agricultural lobbies.

Some say the current CAP reform will bring us “another 7 year of business as usual” or a continuation of the previous reform... We say the current CAP reform will bring us worse than business as usual because every day, week, month or year that passes without the trend being reversed brings us a little closer to the point of no return.

Environmentally, it is a scientifically-proven fact recognised by the EU Commission itself in the European Green Deal that intensive and industrial farming practices lead to a loss of biodiversity and result in air, water and soil pollution, which all together induce major climate changes. Voting in favour of the current CAP reform is an act of schizophrenia and of total denial of the environmental objectives detailed in the Biodiversity and Farm to Fork strategies. This is precisely the reason why the agri-food business groups put so much pressure on accelerating the EP vote on the current CAP: to avoid a re-drafting of the text.

Socially, the current CAP reform continues to maintain the concentration of subsidies (80%) in the hands of the few farmers with the largest land area (20%) while small farmers having much lower incomes than the rest of the society still are absent from the CAP reform. The current reform will only reinforce the downward curve in the number of farms in Europe, leaving room for the giants of the sector to continue their model of intensive agriculture leading to soil degradation and to the desertification of rural areas.

Economically, the current CAP reform further supports the liberalisation of agricultural markets, making farmers more and more dependent on the CAP subsidies, making lands less and less accessible to young farmers and increasing still



Source: EU Commission

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more the power of the giant agricultural businesses (which do not deserve the right to be called ‘farms’ in our perspective).

Some MEPs had the courage to propose an amendment which rejects the Commission proposal as it is, which would force the Commission to revise it or, better, to draft a completely new text, proposing a change of paradigm and which would enable the sectors concerned to deliver the Green Deal objectives. This was the right way forward. After this vote, the three EU institutions have now started negotiating the final version of the reform. In parallel, the European Commission is preparing recommendations for Member States’ CAP Strategic Plans.

On the field, the situation is not yet desperate nor irreversible. Solutions do exist. Agroecology, for example, as defined by the FAO enables to regenerate soils by sequestering carbon, improving soil fertility and increasing microbial, floral and faunal diversity. The agroecological systems approach redesigns the agricultural system based on the principle that the role of external inputs can be replaced by ecological processes, while levels of production can be maintained. Even more, agroecological systems are often more profitable than conventional agriculture, as shown by a panel of European scientists. Agroecology Europe has detailed some major measures that the future CAP should implement to operate a shift in the European agricultural functioning in its position paper which is available on www.agroecology-europe.org

Will the citizens and Civil Society Organisations finally be heard?

EU Projects – AGROMIX: AGROforestry and MIXed farming systems

Agroecology Europe is joining the AGROMIX project which has been launched late November for a 4-year period project (ending in October 2024), thanks to the funding from the European Union’s Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme.



AGROMIX is an ambitious and international research project which aims to deliver participatory research to drive the transition to a resilient and efficient land use in Europe. It focuses on practical agroecological solutions for farm and land management and related value chains.

Within the project, the implementing consortium, by adopting a transdisciplinary multi-actor research approach with 10 universities, 7 research institutes and 11 multi-actor partners (from 13 countries) will explore the opportunities provided by mixed farming (i.e., crops and livestock) and agroforestry (i.e. trees and crops and/or livestock) practices for carbon balance and climate change mitigation and adaptation.

AGROMIX will thus deliver innovative agroecological solutions to farmers and land managers, and related value chains, adopting innovative participative and multi-targeted approaches — such as a co-design process and implementation systems in highly complex contexts. This project will promote synergies not only at farm, local and regional level, but it will also steer collaboration with key stakeholders across Europe and worldwide.

Agroecology Europe will focus its efforts and mainly contribute to the policy development to support national and EU policies to overcome trade-offs and conflicts brought by specialisation scenarios. This will support agroecological transition to mitigate climate change and improve adaptability, and suggest new policies at regional, national and EU level for farmers, advisers, processors, and other stakeholders.

For more information on this project, please visit the dedicated website: <https://agromixproject.eu/>





AEEU and 76 civil society associations, under the lead of PAN Europe, wrote to the EU for the ban of pesticides and related food/agricultural goods produced!

Agroecology Europe together with 76 other European civil society associations, under the lead of PAN Europe (Pesticide Action Network Europe) have written on the 5th of November 2020 to the EU Commission to ask them to prohibit not only the export of hazardous pesticides that are banned in the EU, but also the import of food and agricultural goods produced with such pesticides outside the EU.

Whilst it is recognised that an EU ban on such exports will not by itself achieve a global ban, the 77 civil society associations have called upon the European Commission to take the lead and stop these exports to encourage and support a more global transition away from the use of hazardous pesticides.

Early December 2020, the Commission replied that they were considering the various options to implement to fulfil the objective of preventing the export of hazardous chemicals, including pesticides, banned in the EU-, including a revision of the legislation. Moreover, they will start reflecting about the concerns that import tolerances for pesticide residues create, in relation to the environmental impact these pesticides may have to other parts of the world.

Let's hope that the Farm to Fork Strategy together with future planned actions from the Commission will pave the way for a global phasing-out transition!

EU Projects – AE4EU: Agroecology for Europe

Agroecology Europe together with a consortium of European Universities and Research Centres is launching, under the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation funding programme, a project on Agroecology for Europe (AE4EU).

This project has been launched as the current situation in Europe clearly indicates that major changes are needed to develop sustainable agricultural and food systems. In this respect, agroecology is increasingly seen as an important pathway as it designs, develops and promotes the transition towards sustainable farming and food systems. Although a certain development of agroecology and its different facets in Europe can be stated, it remains so far too limited to allow a successful transition to sustainable agriculture and food systems.

This is why the European Commission decided to launch this project with the support of the scientific community together with technical experts and farmers to contribute to agroecology research and innovation development through different strategic objectives.

Starting on 1st of January 2021 until 31st of December 2023, AE4EU will develop a road map and framework for a European network of agroecological living labs (LL) and research infrastructure (RI), and other relevant actors. Major avenues for this will be the mapping of local, regional and national state of the art and initiatives in different European countries, provide also a more comprehensive and detailed overview of how agroecology is understood. This will lay out the ground to connect relevant actors of identified initiatives, LL, RI, funding schemes and policies. Further, the project will identify and assess past and ongoing agroecological LL and RI initiatives, and how they derive relevant and successful approaches for transition to agroecological production and food systems.

Moreover, AE4EU will identify and analyse policy frameworks that include elements of agroecology and provide recommendations for future reinforcement and adaptation.

The overall goal of AE4EU is through reinforced networks development and connection of a large diversity of relevant actors across Europe accelerate the transition to sustainable agriculture and food systems.





EU Projects – BOND Project: Bringing Organisations & Network Development to higher levels in the Farming sector in EU

As the BOND Project (H2020 EU funded project) nears its conclusion, all 17 partners consider its societal impact in this [new video](#). The project, to bring organisations and network development to higher levels in Europe's farming sector, began with 60 representatives three years ago, but this number has grown to 165. Dissemination outreach is over 360 000 and the BOND website is followed by 123 countries. More than 800 people attended policy roundtables and national workshops leading to 12 signed Memoranda of Understanding.



The project has seen significant positive shifts in regional and national agricultural policy as well as in the lives of individuals and their families. As a direct result of one of these workshops BOND partner, Sindicato Labrego, successfully negotiated with the Spanish government to open Farmers Markets two weeks earlier than originally planned during COVID-19 lockdown.

Over 50 stories of collective action are available in [The Barn](#), 34 young farmers from 34 European countries attended the online [Youth Forum](#), three Lab experiments took place in Moldova and online, utilising partner experts from Norway, France and Romania, to showcase what can be achieved in an enabling environment. "That's the beauty of BOND", says Vojin from Bosnia, "to go, to meet, to see, to experience. It is not 'it can be done', it is something happening already. I witnessed it, tasted it!"

The BOND project produced 10 [publications](#), from [regulatory framework](#) to a [booklet on gaming](#), and trained representatives who have started associations and federations in their own countries.

One thing we have learned - the landscape of European farming is brighter, together. For further information, please visit the BOND project website: www.bondproject.eu

Launch of SEGAE - A SERious Game to learn AgroEcology

One of the main challenges for European agriculture is to produce sufficient quantities of quality food while reducing its environmental impact. Agroecology appears to be one of the promising solutions to achieve these objectives. However, teaching agroecology requires adapted tools to facilitate a systemic approach, multidisciplinary and the management of transitions in agriculture.



To meet this goal, the University of Liège - Gembloux Agro-Bio Tech, the University of Agriculture in Krakow, the University of Bologna, ONIRIS, ESA, and AGROCAMPUS OUEST have joined forces to design an online educational game: SEGAE.

The player manages a virtual farm and implements agroecological practices in order to improve its sustainability. Four European model farms are proposed: French, Italian, Belgian and Polish. The game is aimed at university and agricultural school teachers, as well as agricultural advisers. Learning by playing will train these actors to contribute to the agroecological transition of European agriculture.

Funded by the ERASMUS + program and the AEI Chair, the game is freely accessible online in 6 languages (English, Dutch, French, Italian, Polish and Spanish) and the partners provide the tutorials, teaching guide and online courses.

For any further information on this online educational game SEGAE, please contact: Estelle Faure – estelle.faure@agrocampus-ouest.fr and/or watch an introductory video: <https://youtu.be/LSNwyTYmGR0>



Report on Agroecology Europe (AEEU) activities

'OASIS' - the Original Agroecological Survey and Indicator System

At the request of the FAO Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations), Agroecology Europe has developed a system of indicators to assess the extent to which a farm is agroecological.

A large number of indicator systems that assess the sustainability of farming systems have been developed in the past such as SAFA (FAO 2013 and 2014), MESMIS (Masera et al. 1999, López-Ridaura et al. 2002, Astier et al. 2012), RISE (Grenz 2009) and SAFE systems (Van Cauwenbergh 2007). However, it became necessary to develop a new synthetic indicator system because none of the existing indicator systems sufficiently covered all agro-ecological strategies, principles and practices and none could be used on a large scale with reasonable effort.

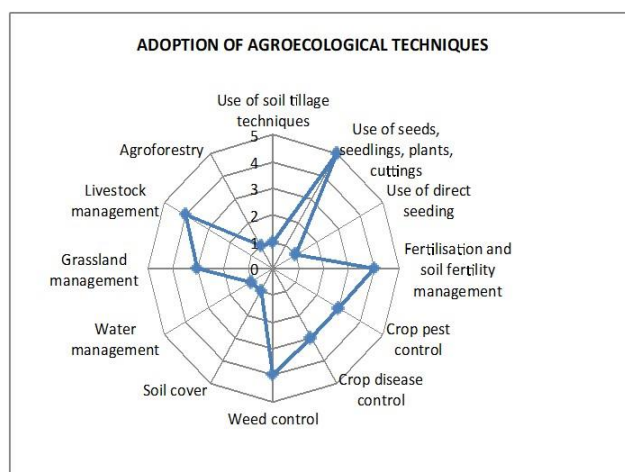
This new agroecological indicator system has been named "OASIS", the Original Agroecological Survey and Indicator System. OASIS is one of the first, if not the first analytical framework specifically designed to assess agro-ecological systems at national level.

This system allows to measure the extent to which a farm is agroecological, in other words, it allows to assess where a farm is on the trajectory of transition to agroecology. The agro-ecological approach differs from that of organic farming in terms of transition. In agro-ecology, the transition is progressive and takes place at the pace chosen by the farmer. In organic agriculture, the conversion leads to the immediate adoption of specifications that describe the practices that are allowed or not. Conversion to organic is therefore a matter of "yes-or-no", one is or is not organic, whereas agro-ecological conversion is a process of progress.

A first version of OASIS was developed by a team from Agroecology Europe (www.agroecology-europe.org), at the request of the FAO, in Kyrgyzstan. A report was published in 2018.

As part of this project, the 'OASIS' indicator system was then tested in Croatia in Autumn 2019 and improved in 2019-2020 through a master thesis supervised by RHEA (www.rhea-environment.org). With a lot of improvement, this second version is now significantly different and more complete and powerful compared to the first version.

Five main themes are addressed in the indicators system which are then split into 14 individual themes.



The second version of OASIS is now ready to perform the following functions:

- map the state of development of agro-ecological systems and practices in a geographical area, with the broader objective of accumulating statistical data on the state of agro-ecology in a country/a federation of countries;
- provide a tool to assess a farm at a given point in time and to evaluate from year to year its progress towards a fully agroecological system;
- develop an agroecological certification system;
- contribute to a clear definition of agroecology.

For any further information, please contact our Secretariat: info@agroecology-europe.org



The Club of Rome in collaboration with Agroecology Europe and IPES-Food organised on the 8th of October 2020 an on-line conference debate: “From Farm to Fork”, Sustainable Food Systems and the EU Green Deal”

On October 8th, the Club of Rome-EU Chapter, Agroecology Europe and IPES-Food organised an on-line conference on **the future of the «Farm to Fork» strategy** announced by the European Commission on May 20th.

The conference was attended by 180 participants. This was a reference event for promoting a prompt and strong implementation of the “Farm to Fork” strategy «for a fair, healthy and environmentally-friendly food system», which the current reform of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) should be aligned with.

Like other consumption and production patterns, the current ‘conventional’ agricultural practices have been destroying our natural capital and most of the ecosystem services that it provides for free. A number of tipping points have already been reached or exceeded. The EU therefore urgently needed a ‘Green Deal’ as a global vision supported by a range of strategies closely aligned with one another, based on key principles: ‘do no harm’, polluter-pays, public money for public goods and services.

We are delighted that the event of October 8th served to **highlight the role of agroecology in supporting the shift to sustainable food systems as intended by the F2F strategy**, and that it allowed to link the changes at the level of production with the evolution of consumption patterns.

As **President von der Leyen** stated it so correctly on December 11, 2019: *«Our goal is to reconcile the economy with our planet, to reconcile the way we produce and consume with our planet and to make it work for our people.... The EU Green Deal is our strategy for growth that gives more back than it takes away. We owe it to our children,... now is time to act ».*

We are confident that **further exchanges** of factual information and **dialogues** between authorities, farmers, scientific actors, agro-industry and civil society contribute to the new participative governance we need to provide EU citizens with the food systems they are asking for. We therefore look forward to **continued interaction** to move forward together to achieve the objectives of the F2F strategy.

Roland Moreau, Oliver De Schutter & Alain Peeters, full Members of the Club of Rome – EU Chapter.

Good Food Good Farming action days 2020: Thanks for your support and actions!

Join now the Footprint action to withdraw the current CAP proposal!

Following our Autumn Newsletter, we would like to thank all of you for joining or following the Good Food Good Farming action days in 2020!

It has been a challenging year, but albeit the circumstances the Good Food Good Farming team and participants organised a loud and colourful action month all together – both online and in offline-events – showing decision makers that a radical U-turn in dominant agriculture policies and practices is needed NOW!

Yet, we should not lean back: While the reform is still in full swing, first decisions in the EU Parliament and Council have shown the will to continue a business as usual policy which will drive us further into ecologic and social crisis.

We are now, all, asking the EU Commission to withdraw their current proposal and start fresh. We want green and fair agriculture policies, which can tackle the climate crisis, reverse the rapid loss of biodiversity and ensure healthy and sustainable consumption and production!

Join now the footprint action on:
www.goodfoodgoodfarming.eu





Agroecology Europe organised on the 18th of November 2020 a virtual Policy Workshop to discuss ‘how to reconcile the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) with the EU Green Deal: possible solutions?’

On the 18th of November 2020, Agroecology Europe hosted a webinar to discuss the possible solutions to reconcile the Common Agriculture Policy (CAP) with the EU Green Deal.

This webinar replaced the policy workshop traditionally organised each Autumn.

The webinar took stock of the new EU Green Deal and assessed how the recently adopted CAP by the European Parliament could be improved to reflect the ambition of the Green Deal, the Farm to Fork Strategy and the Biodiversity Strategy.



This virtual policy workshop gathered experts from the field, academicians, economists, NGOs representatives as well as representatives from the European Commission and from the European Parliament.

Presentations on the CAP and the Green Deal, and their various impacts on the biodiversity, climate change, sustainable agricultural and food systems and the economy were given by the speakers with their own and very interesting perspectives.

After that, exchange sessions were organised to intend replying, together and in a dynamic way, to two key questions:

- Which eco-schemes of those suggested in the draft CAP are really in line with agroecology? Should we drop off those not in line or foresee gradual incentives based on eco-scheme adherence to the agroecological approach?
- Which concrete measures should be included in the CAP/other policy instruments to accompany the Green Deal goals of supporting short supply chains and achieving sustainable diets?



This event was very successful, exchanges were fruitful and concluded that the situation is not yet desperate nor irreversible. Solutions do exist.

Agroecology, as part of one of the 4 flagship eco-schemes defined by the new CAP (together with organic farming, carbon farming and precision farming) enables to regenerate soils by sequestering carbon, improving soil fertility and increasing microbial, floral and faunal diversity. The agroecological systems approach redesigns the agricultural system based on the principle that the role of external inputs can be replaced by ecological processes, while levels of production can be maintained. Even more, agroecological systems are often more profitable than conventional agriculture, as shown by a panel of European scientists.

The outcome of the event will feed ongoing discussions on the improvement of the eco-schemes and how to ensure a greener architecture within the CAP to ensure a truly sustainable agricultural and food systems.

For further information or to rewatch this policy workshop and access all presentation, please visit Agroecology Europe’s website: www.agroecology-europe.org



News from the Youth Network of Agroecology Europe



On Thursday 17th of December 2020 evening, the Agroecology Master's student of the University of Gastronomic Sciences in Pollenzo and our Agroecology Europe Youth Network met up together during a virtual APERITIVO to get to know each other and share about experiences, impressions and new initiatives regarding Agroecology and especially about the role of youth in Agroecology!

- **AGROECOLOGY EUROPE 3rd FORUM, Barcelona – Spain, 9-12 June 2021 – Save the Date!**

Agroecology Europe is organising its 3rd Agroecology Europe Forum to support exchange, reflection and bottom-up contributions, bringing together local farmers, universities, social movement organisations, local administrations and non-governmental organisations.

It will take place on 9-12 June 2021 in Barcelona, Spain, at the premises of the Barcelona City Council, in the building of the Fàbrica de Creació de Barcelona (Centro Fabra i Coats).

Following the 2 first successful editions of the Forum in 2017 in Lyon, France and in 2019 in Heraklion, Crete, the third edition will have the following theme:

“Agroecology for regeneration of our food systems and communities”.

More information on the programme are available on Agroecology Europe website: www.agroecology-europe.org

Save the date & stay tuned for further information coming soon!





Junk Agroecology' Greenwashes the Same Destructive Agribusiness Agenda

A recent report, **“Junk Agroecology: The corporate capture of agroecology for a partial ecological transition without social justice”** examines three major worldwide public-private initiatives driven by Nestle, Pepsico, Cargill, Unilever, and the World Economic Forum: (i) The Sustainable Agriculture Initiative, (ii) The New Vision of Agriculture, and (iii) The New Food and Land Use Economy Coalition.

The report warns that the corporations have selectively integrated some key goals, discourses, and practices of agroecology to greenwash their agenda. They use significant political, financial, media, and public relations resources to advance a narrow vision of agroecology and are driven by similar narratives:

- ‘Productivism’: the idea that (endlessly) increasing food production is the only way to meet the challenge of feeding growing populations with finite resources while ignoring the many forms of inequality, exclusion, marginalisation, and dispossession that are real drivers of global hunger today.
- New business opportunities: Using the language of ‘inclusive business models’, transnational agribusinesses benefit when small farmers, fishers or pastoralists adopt their patented technology or ‘green’ input intensive models of farming, or when they shift from producing for their own consumption and local markets to selling their products to giant global commodity traders.
- A new public-private governance model: Through ‘multistakeholderism’ – where big business has the upper hand – the agribusiness sector influences NGOs, governments, and social organisations, that corporations should play a key role in shaping and governing our collective global future.

This ‘junk agroecology’ undermines agroecology’s transformative potential through either preserving, legitimising or deepening the inequality, exploitation, and power imbalances behind the current agrifood system.

Agroecology aims at redistribution, diversity, and food as a human right rather than a commodity for ever increasing profit. A real agroecological transition must go hand in hand with public policies that: i) grant a central role in their design and implementation to small-scale food producers and rural and urban workers; ii) are consistent with national and international human rights instruments, including the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas, and; iii) favour an agroecology that is true to its vision of ecosystem sustainability and its roots in social and environmental justice. This is the model of agroecology – by and for the working peoples of the planet — that could bring about a real transformation of our agrifood systems, resisting and rolling back their corporate capture.

The full report can be accessed at: <https://www.foei.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Junk-Agroecology-FOEI-TNI-Crocevia-report-ENG.pdf> while the Executive Summary is at: <https://www.foei.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Junk-Agroecology-FOEI-TNI-Crocevia-executive-summary-ENG.pdf>





New book publication: “Reconciling agricultural production with biodiversity conservation”

Burleigh Dodds Science Publishing are delighted to announce the publication of their exciting new title, [*Reconciling agricultural production with biodiversity conservation*](#), edited by Professor Paolo Bàrberi and Dr Anna-Camilla Moonen, Institute of Life Sciences – Scuola Superiore Sant’Anna, Italy.

The book provides an authoritative review of current biodiversity conservation practices, including field margins, agroforestry systems, hedgerows and improved pasture and grassland management. The collection additionally summarises the theoretical framework that underpins biodiversity conservation in agriculture, dedicating chapters to key developments in areas such as landscape approaches, mapping and modelling diversity, as well as ways of assessing the economic value of biodiversity conservation practices.

Find out more [here](#).

SPECIAL OFFER

Benefit from **20%** off the book if purchased via the [Burleigh Dodds website](#). Enter code **AGEC20** at checkout to receive this discount.



“Assessing the agroecological status of a farm: a principle-based assessment tool for farmers.”

Today agroecology has become a popular term to describe an array of farming systems that embrace many production forms: organic, natural farming, zero budget, permaculture, biodynamic, regenerative agriculture, etc. But are these farming methods considered by many practitioners and researchers as agroecological forms of production, indeed agroecologically based?

The methodology described in this article, offers a practical tool for farmers and practitioners involved at the field level in assessing if the target production systems are or not agroecologically based.

More information to be found here: <https://www.agrosur-journal.cl/2020/periodo/2020/>

JOIN US & BECOME A MEMBER!

Why becoming a Member?

The goals and objectives of the association are broken down into activities, where each member can participate and become active. Becoming a member includes to get access to the intranet with resources such as list of members, minutes and reports of meetings and working groups, conference proceedings, papers, etc. Also, members can vote and can get elected in the General Assembly, initiate, and participate in working groups, participate at reduced fees for Agroecology Europe conferences or workshops.

How to become a Member?

The Association is open to all individuals, groups and institutions interested in promoting agroecology, and aims to define its agenda through their participatory engagement. Membership is automatic after payment of an annual subscription (civil year).

The membership of the Association consists of six categories:

- Ordinary Members: 80 Euro
- Supported Members: 30 Euro
- NGO members: 100 Euro
- Private companies: 160 Euro
- Sustaining Members: minimum 160 Euro
- Honorary Members: free

Ordinary Members: Any individual in Europe or elsewhere interested in the objectives of the Association. Ordinary members include for instance professionals and seniors.

Supported Members: Students (including PhD students), low-income and unemployed people.

Honorary Members: Distinguished persons proposed by the Board. Honorary Members are persons who have made an outstanding contribution to the Association.

Sustaining Members: Organizations or individuals willing to provide financial support for the Association.



Please pay the membership fee to the following bank account and inform the Secretariat (info@agroecology-europe.org) and Treasurer (alain.peeters@agroecology-europe.org) about your payment.

We will then acknowledge your membership once the payment received.

Account holder: Agroecology Europe aisbl

Purpose of use: Membership Agroecology Europe – Your name: XXX

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