

Resolutions

**adopted at the 24th EGF General Meeting
held in Lublin (Poland), 3 to 7 June 2012**

The participants in the 24th General Meeting of the European Grassland Federation (EGF) representing 31 EGF Member Countries during the EGF Business Meeting held in Lublin (Poland), on 7 June 2012 adopted the following resolutions.

Regarding the proposals of the European Commission on the Reform of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) of the 12 October 2011 ...

Resolution 1

... the EGF welcomes **the principle of the measures of the greening component especially regarding the maintenance of the European grassland area**. Supporting permanent grasslands is highly justified for the many ecosystem services they provide and for the biodiversity they contain.

Resolution 2

... the EGF expresses its concern about **the definition of permanent grassland in the reform proposal**: 'land used to grow grasses or other herbaceous forage naturally (self-seeded) or through cultivation (sown) and that has not been included in the crop rotation of the holding for five years or longer'.

This definition does not take into account the vast grazed areas that include high proportions of trees and/or shrubs and that have been used for centuries in different areas of Europe from Sweden to the South of Spain and to Greece. Grazed woodlands, *Calluna* heather and other *Ericaceae* communities in the lowlands and in mountains, Mediterranean matorral, the Spanish Dehesa and the Portuguese Montado for instance would be excluded from supports and they are among the most precious and biologically rich, grazed ecosystems of Europe. They are also storing carbon in higher amounts than other grazed ecosystems. These rangelands should be financially supported by 1st pillar payments at least as much as permanent grasslands including herbaceous forage species only.

On the other hand, large areas of grasslands are regularly resown without taking part in rotations with annual crops. The soil cover is always grass but the vegetation is not permanent grassland.

These grasslands provide much lower environmental benefits and are species-poor. The definition should only include grasslands that did not experience a mechanical disturbance of the soil or were chemically destroyed and reseeded for a long period.

The following definition is proposed:

'land used to grow grasses, other forage, including woody species, naturally (self-propagated) or through cultivation (sown) and that did not experience a mechanical disturbance of the soil or were chemically destroyed for ten years or longer'.

Resolution 3

... the EGF requests the European Commission **to modulate the support to grasslands in two levels and to target specifically the conservation of semi-natural grasslands and rangelands in the greening component by a higher support compared to other categories of grasslands.**

Semi-natural grasslands and rangelands should be supported at the highest rate, other grasslands at a basic rate.

Resolution 4

... the EGF considers that the greening component should support as a priority those farming systems that provide the most public goods and ecosystem services like **High Nature Value (HNV) farming systems**. Their persistence is threatened by a low profitability.

Resolution 5

Independently of the previous remarks, the EGF has some **doubts about the efficiency of the present proposals for the greening measures.**

The EGF considers that they could deliver environmental benefits if they would be more targeted, and include training, monitoring and evaluation of the results. Monitoring and evaluation could be done by the development of an indicator system.

With the exception of the support of HNV farming systems, it has been shown that only targeted measures can be efficient for biodiversity restoration and conservation (for instance: Bretagnolle *et al.* 2011). Most agri-environmental measures require long-term adoption for reaching consistent results. The one-year basis of the European Commission proposal does not fit with this criterion. Follow-up, evaluation and control systems are also necessary for achieving good value for money.

If the greening measures fail to deliver environmental benefits, their credibility and the credibility of the whole CAP will be threatened.

Regarding data collection and statistics ...

Resolution 6

... the EGF considers that **statistical data on grassland area, yield and production should be better collected and harmonized in the European Union**. Terms like 'permanent pastures', 'permanent grasslands', 'semi-natural grasslands', 'intensive grasslands', 'temporary grasslands', 'rangelands' should be precisely defined and adequate categories used in the official statistical system of the European Union.

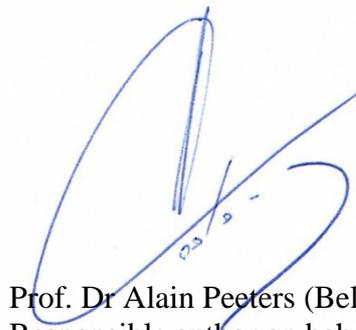
An **adequate indicator system** should be developed for surveying the evolution of the status of public goods and the delivery of ecosystem services from grasslands.

Lublin, 7 June 2012

European Grassland Federation



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