Public money for public goods?
EU budget - then and now

How is taxpayer money being spent in the EU?

EU budget 2007-2013: EUR 976 billion
- EUR 2.1 billion for LIFE environment projects

EU budget 2014-2020: EUR 960 billion
- EUR 3.5 billion for LIFE environment and climate action projects

So much about nature?
Not according to European taxpayers!

FACT
Less than 0.4% of the EU budget for 2014-2020 goes to LIFE environment and climate action projects. Most of the EU budget still supports direct payments to intensive farming and promotes high-carbon, resource intensive solutions.

But "more than 90% of the Europeans believe that the decline of forests, climate change, the endangering and disappearance of animals, the decline of natural habitats and the endangering of some plants are all serious problems"! (Eurobarometer, 2013)
The absolute value of CAP’s Pillar 2 has decreased by 11% in the current MFF compared to 2007-2013, although the National Rural Development Programmes financed through it could potentially benefit biodiversity and enhance sustainable growth in rural areas.

But "6 in 10 Europeans totally agree that the EU should make sure that subsidies to sectors like agriculture and fisheries take account of biodiversity, that the EU should promote research into the impact of biodiversity loss, or that the EU should allocate more financial resources to nature protection in Europe" (Eurobarometer 2013)

How should public money be spent to serve public goods?

EU funds should be sustainability and biodiversity-proofed ensuring that no public funds contribute to detrimental impacts on biodiversity and society

CEEweb recommendations

Greening the EU Infrastructure:
More funds should be earmarked to Green Infrastructure and Natura 2000, which do provide public goods. The actual uptake for these purposes should be also duly monitored. As stated in the Green Infrastructure Strategy, a specific funding source for the so-called TEN-G (an EU-wide green infrastructure) should be launched.

Supporting sustainable farming practices:
30% of the funds in CAP Pillar 1 should be reallocated to Pillar 2 in order to support sustainable rural development and farming de-intensification.

Enhancing employment through sustainable resource use:
Instead of focusing only on efficiency measures, absolute resource use reduction targets should be set to deliver sustainable resource use management as well as to enhance employment.

EU has already committed itself to the three areas in the following documents:

- Green Infrastructure Strategy
- CAP Reform Agreement
- Biodiversity Strategy 2020
- Circular Economy Strategy
- 2050 Low Carbon Economy

CEEweb for Biodiversity is a network of 50 environmental NGOs in Central and Eastern European countries. The mission of CEEweb for Biodiversity is the conservation of biodiversity through the promotion of sustainable development. Visit our website for more information: www.ceeeweb.org

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