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Action Network "Il Biologico Nutrirà il Pianeta"

AGRICULTURE AND CLIMATE CHANGE
THE EU AND INTERNATIONAL POLICY CONTEXT

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THE ROLE OF ORGANIC AGRICULTURE IN FIGHTING CLIMATE CHANGE

AUGUST 24TH, 2015, 2:30 PM

EXPO Milan 2015, Biodiversity Park, Theater of the Earth

- Agriculture is 10% of EU GHG emissions (on average)

- In 2008 the EU agreed a 20% emissions reduction target by 2020

- The EU is preparing the new Climate and Energy Package for 2030 with a 40% emissions reduction target (legislative proposal expected by summer 2016)

- Consultation on how to integrate Land Use, Land Use Change and Forestry (LULUCF) emissions until 17 June 2015

- UNFCCC COP 21 in Paris December 2015

- Agriculture debate more and more framed around climate change and food security

Elements of the 2020 climate framework

The EU Emissions Trading System (ETS):

EU's carbon market covering 11.000 installations (around 40% of EU's GHG emissions) from the power sector and industrial sectors

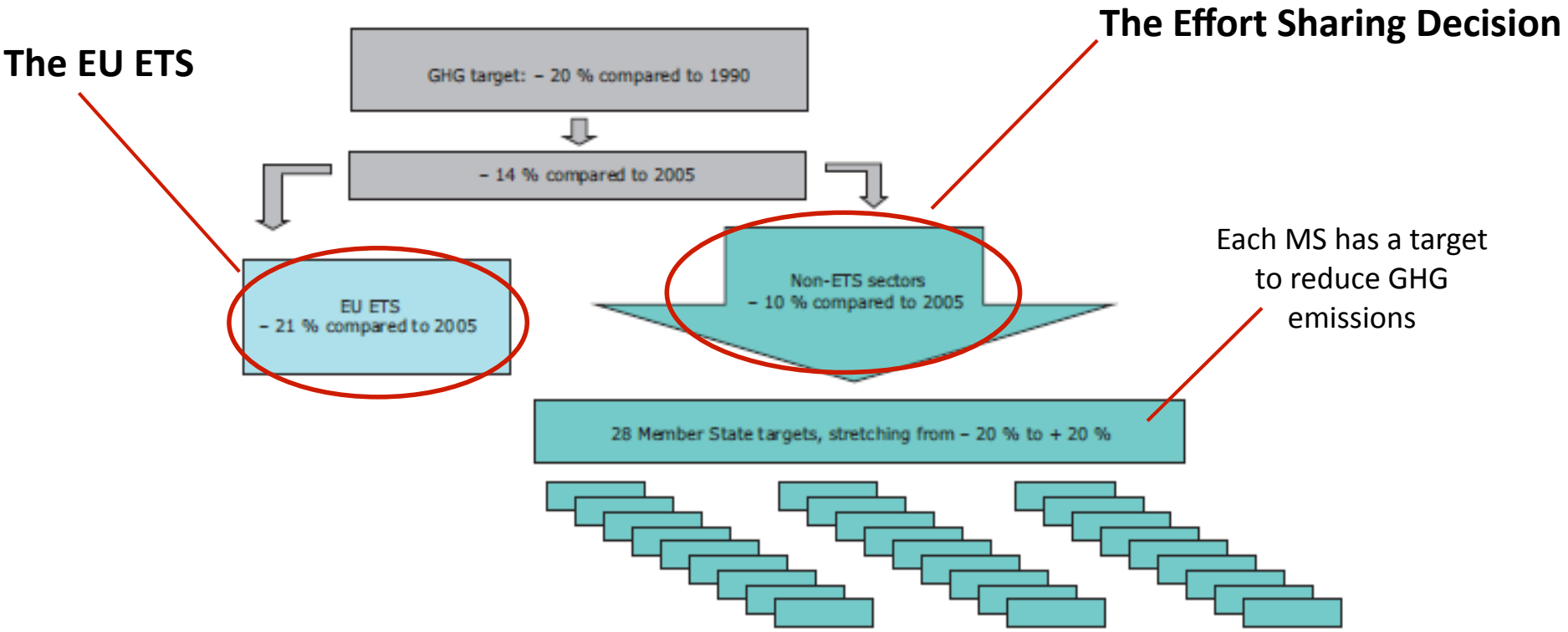
The Effort Sharing Decision (ESD):

EU legislation that sets emissons reductions targets for sectors not covered under the EU ETS (around 60% of EU's climate emissions), including the transport, building and agriculture sector

Land-use, land-use change and forestry (LULUCF):

Excluded from EU's 2020 climate objectives

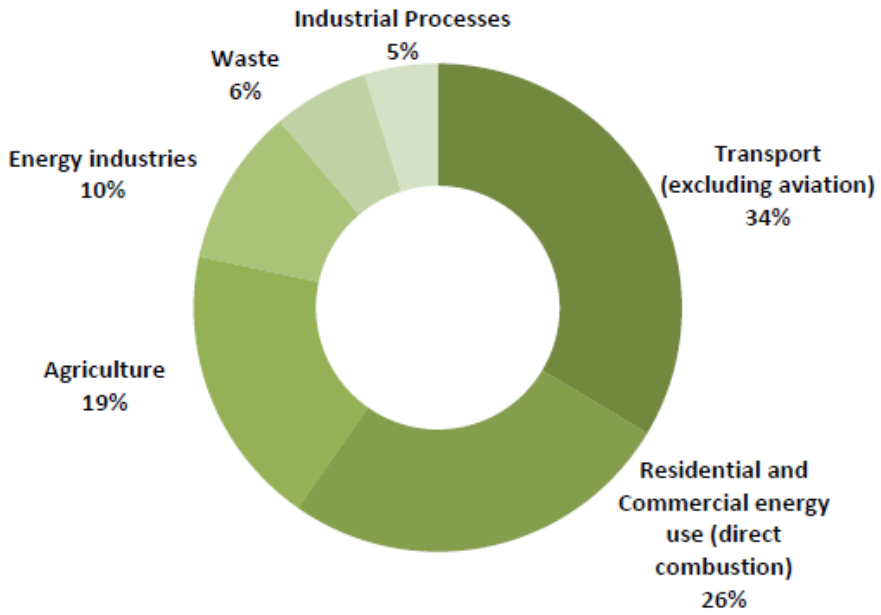
Elements of the 2020 climate framework



Current Effort Sharing Decision – the basics

- Covers all sectors not included in the ETS except LULUCF
- The ESD establishes binding annual GHG emission limits (AEAs: annual emission allocations) and annual compliance checks for all Member States

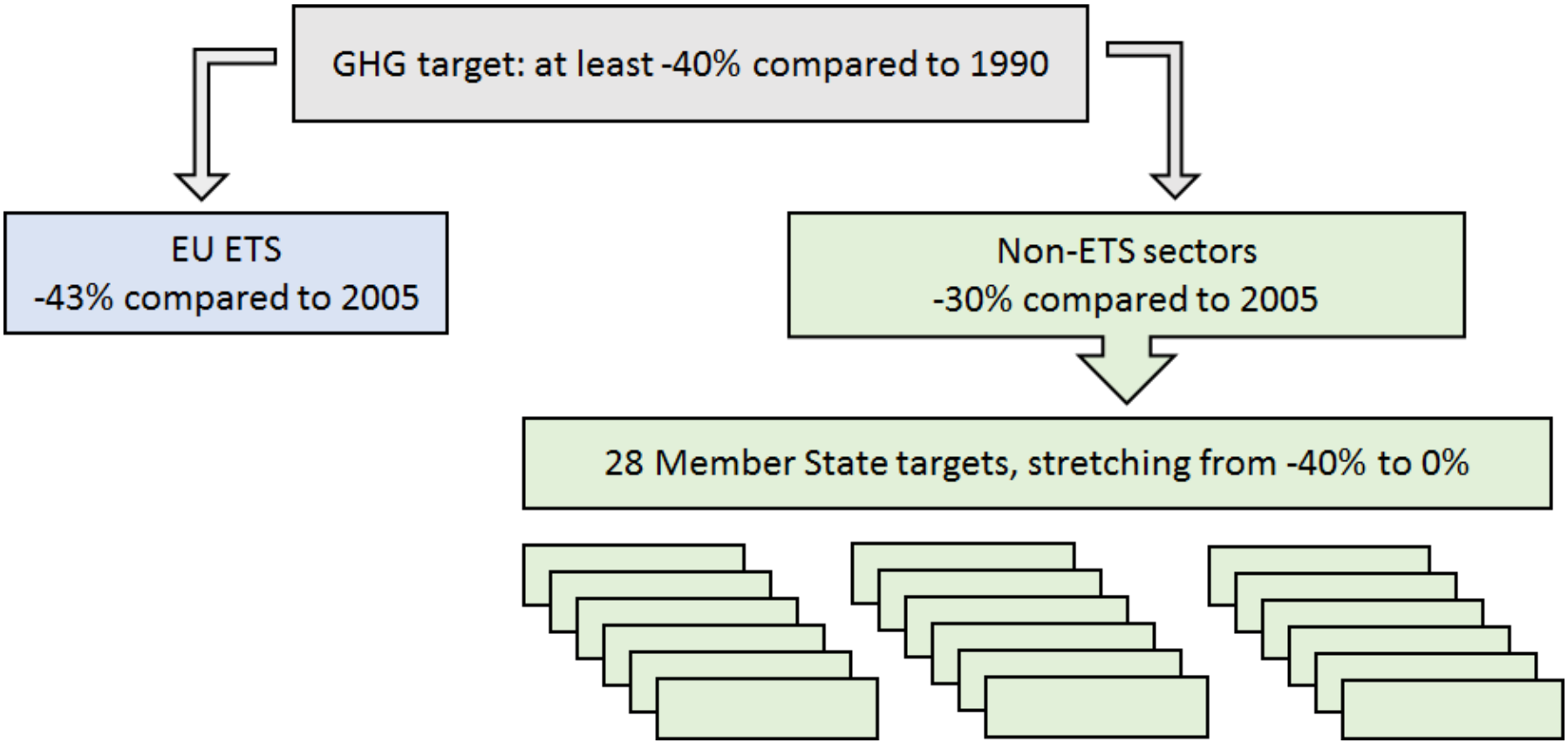
Figure 1. Share of EU-27 non-ETS emissions by sector (2012)



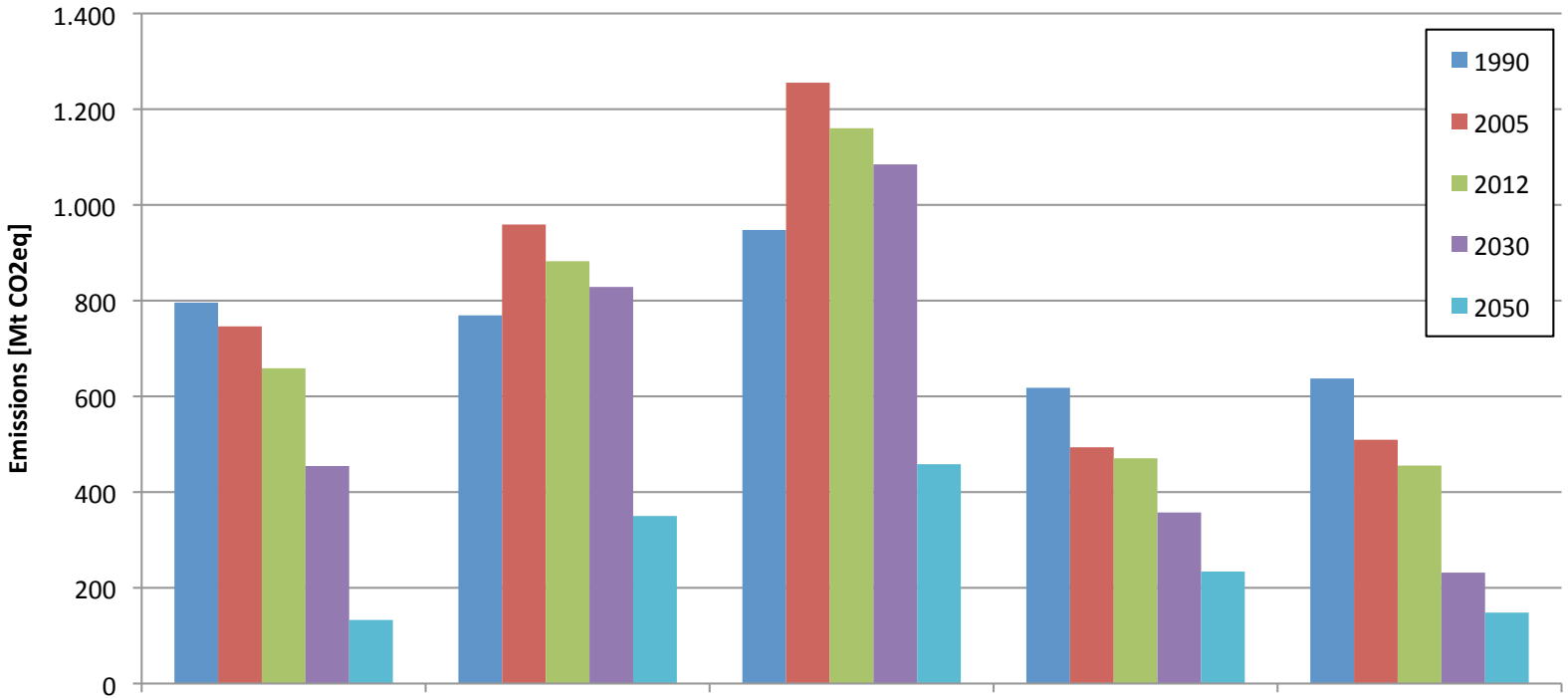
Source: Authors based on data from EEA (2014)

Note: Excludes emissions from LULUCF, which were not included in the 2020 Effort Sharing Decision. LULUCF accounted for -303MtCO2 of net emissions in 2012 in the EU28 (~-12.3% of non-ETS emissions).

Elements of the EU's 2030 climate framework



How much do the non-ETS sectors need to reduce by 2030?



2030 reductions compared to 2005:

Resdential & Tertiary (CO2)	Transport (CO2)	Transport + bunkers (CO2)	Agriculture (non-CO2)	Other non-CO2 sectors
39%	**14%**	**14%**	**28%**	**54%**

Source: Öko-Institut

Elements of the EU's 2030 climate framework

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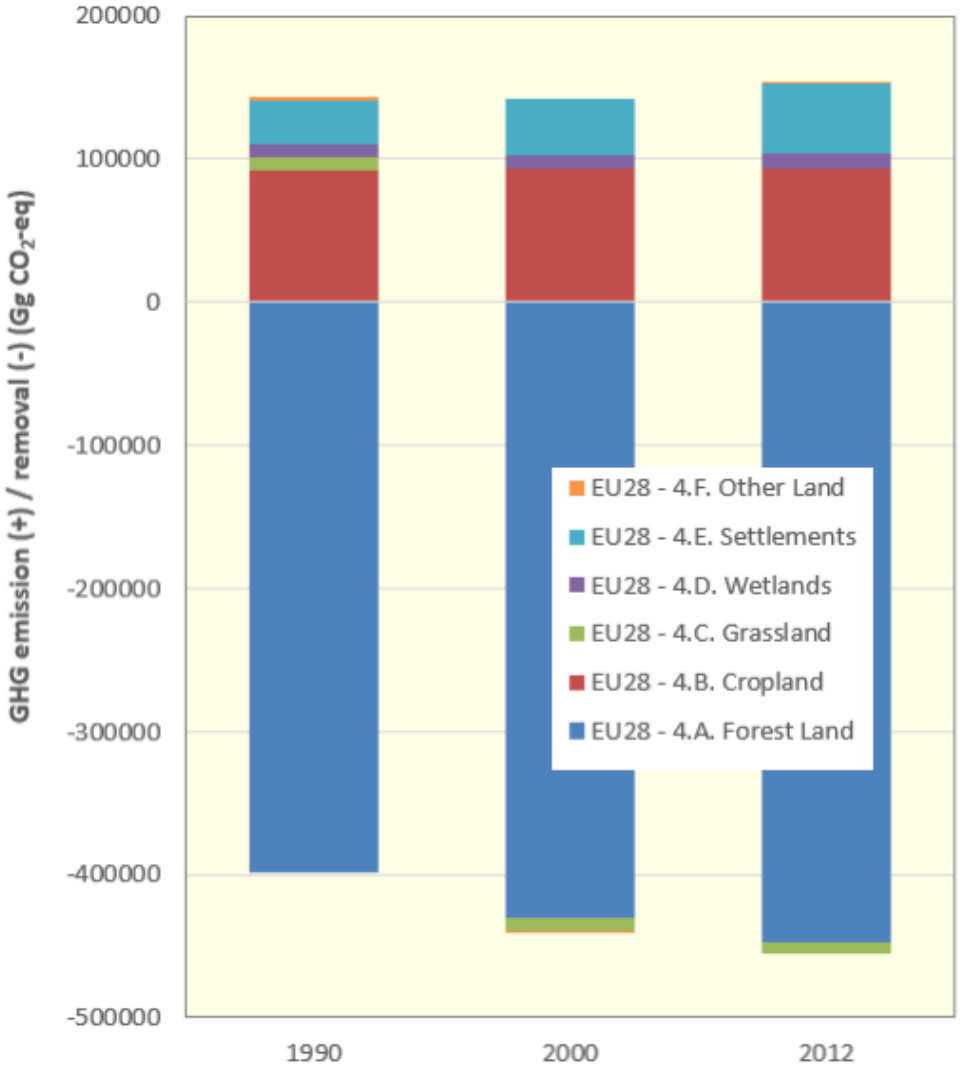
Land-use, land-use change and forestry (LULUCF):

Included in EU's 2030 climate objectives

Agriculture GHG emissions in the EU

- Agriculture is a significant source emissions in the EU, largely due to fertiliser use and livestock
- Agriculture emissions are covered by both :
  - The Effort Sharing Decision (non C02 emissions, namely CH4 and N2O)
  - LULUCF (CO2 emissions and removals from cropland and grasslands)

LULUCF emissions and removals



Commission's options on how to integrate LULUCF emissions

- **Option 1**: separate LULUCF pillar

= status quo (but with a target?)

- **Option 2**: agriculture and land use pillar (AFOLU)

= take agri CH4 and N2O emissions and merge them with LULUCF

= hiding agriculture emissions. According to research commissioned by IFOAM EU and Fern to the Öko Institut, depending on how the forest management reference level will be set, LULUCF negative emissions could appear to offset up to 98% of agriculture emissions.

- **Option 3**: merge LULUCF with the ESD

= reduction of the effort

Problems:

- In the EU LULUCF emissions are a carbon sink (-6%) through forest biomass and carbon stored in the soil
- Including those emissions in the ESD would undermine the « environmental integrity » of the EU targets
- Non permanence of storage, problematic accouting rules, flexibility mechanisms
- Implications at the international level
- Mainstream agriculture groups lobby heavily to exempt agriculture from any significant GHG emissions reduction effort

Council conclusions 23/24 October 2014

- 2.14 "the multiple objectives of the agriculture and land use sector, with their lower mitigation potential, should be acknowledged, as well as the need to ensure coherence between the EU's food security and climate change objectives. The European Council invites the Commission to examine the best means of encouraging the sustainable intensification of food production, while optimising the sector's contribution to greenhouse gas mitigation and sequestration, including through afforestation. Policy on how to include Land Use, Land Use Change and Forestry into the 2030 greenhouse gas mitigation framework will be established as soon as technical conditions allow and in any case before 2020."

From Agrafacts/June 2015:

« **Hogan urged to defend farms in climate talks:** The EU's executive must ensure its climate policy does not force farm production cuts & recognises the role that forests can play in carbon storage & production of biobased products, Baltic & Nordic farm groups urge Farm Commission Phil Hogan in a letter. Drawn up during a meeting of the EU farm lobby group Copa-Cogeca's Praesidium meeting in Riga (June 1-3), the eight Nordic & Baltic farm groups agreed that "*emission reductions generated by production cuts are both environmentally & counterproductive & socially unacceptable*". "*It is critical to promote the sustainable intensification of European agricultural production*", they said, noting the conclusions on the European Council in Oct last year, which recognised agriculture's "limited mitigation potential" […]"

NEC Directive and methane emissions

- The EU is currently reviewing the **National Emissions Ceilings Directive**, which is the main component of its air quality package. The Commission has proposed to fix ceilings for each Member State for both **ammonia** and **methane** emissions. The agricultural sector is the main source of NH3 and CH4 in the EU. Methane is also a powerful greenhouse gas.
- These ceilings are fiercely opposed by the industrial agriculture lobby, the AGRI Committee of the EP voted on 27 May in favor of deleting these ceilings, on its opinion on the revision of the NEC directive.
- The ENVI committee has voted on 15 July to keep these ceilings
- Plenary vote expected in November in the European Climate.

The agriculture sector in crisis

Protests from French farmers against the price of pig meat (July, August 2015)

25 000 French farms on the verge of bankrupcy

Agriculture in the UNFCCC

• Small but contentious issue so far, increasingly prominent in the negotiations

• At COP17 in Durban civil society and Southern countries opposed an agriculture work programme focused on mitigation (CO2 reductionism, risk of linking soil carbon to carbon markets, focus should be on adaptation)

• Since June 2014 the *Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice* (SBSTA) to undertake scientific and technical work on agriculture

• The French government announced its will to talk about agriculture at COP21 (research programme on soil carbon?)

Agriculture in the UNFCCC (2)

• In September 2014 the Climate-Smart Agriculture (CSA) Alliance was launched at the Ban-Ki-Moon Summit in New York (criticised by development NGOs for promoting corporate-led, top-down agricultural intensification, focusing principally on mitigation efforts, rather than on food security and adaptation in developing countries through a bottom up participatory approach).

• The same week, over 70 scientists sent an open letter to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), stating that "*agroecology's broad base in science and society means it is uniquely suited to address today's challenges in food and agricultural systems.*" The letter points out that, according to well-established science, social movements are as crucial as scientific and technical innovation in sustainable implementation the right to food.

In conclusion…

• The need to tackle climate change, to reduce our emissions and to put in place agricultural systems more resilient to extreme weather events, could be a chance to transform our agriculture and to move towards agroecology and organic farming.

• But the agriculture sector could also be exempted from any significant reduction effort, and Member States will have some room for manoeuvre on how to implement the new ESD.

• No CO2 reductionism, highlight the co-benefits of agroecology (biodiversity, adaptation, social, economical). In a context of crisis, the potential of organic farming to improve farmers livelihood could also be a powerful driver.

• 2016 will be an important year for the preparation of the EU Climate and Energy package for 2030. The agroecology movement and the organic farming sector need to be more visible in the European policy debate on Climate Change.