



Brussels, 9 December 2020

**Subject: EU agricultural promotional programme contradicting sustainability goals by financing “Proud of EU Beef” campaign**

Dear Commissioner Stella Kyriakides,  
Dear Commissioner Janusz Wojciechowski,

It came to our attention that the European Commission is co-funding a [campaign](#) named “Proud of EU Beef” (also marketed as “[Become a Beefatarian](#)”) to promote the consumption of bovine meat (fresh, chilled and frozen) in the European Union (EU), targeting Belgium, France, Germany, Portugal, Spain.

The campaign was approved in 2019, activated in October 2020 and will last for three years. The campaign aim is “to incite the consumers not to have a stereotyped idea about red meat and to enable them to be again confident about their consumption decision”.

We are concerned about the falsifying effect that this campaign might have on citizens’ perception of the impact their diets can have on climate change, as the campaign aims to encourage an increase in consumption of meat in the EU at a moment when we have clear scientific recommendations to reduce our daily intake of such protein. According to the [EAT Lancet report](#), *meat consumption in the EU should drop by 71% by 2030, and by 81% by 2050, to tackle farming’s contribution to climate breakdown. This would mean an average of no more than 460 grams of all types of meat leaving the slaughterhouse per person per week by 2030, and 300 grams in 2050, down from the current EU average<sup>1</sup> of 1.58 kilograms per person per week<sup>2</sup>.*

Two of the countries targeted by the campaign are among the biggest consumers of meat in the EU: Spain has the highest per capita meat consumption per year (over 100kg), meaning national consumption of meat would need to drop by 76% by 2030 in order to keep our climate goals within reach; and is followed by Portugal, which would need to reduce consumption by 74%.

The [Farm to Fork Strategy](#), published by the Commission in May 2020, explicitly recognises the EU’s overproduction and overconsumption of meat as a problem and states that *moving to a more plant-based diet with less red and processed meat and with more fruits and vegetables will reduce not only risks of life threatening diseases, but also the environmental impact of the food system.*

It seems to us - and to NGOs, think tanks, the media and wider public - that the Commission is setting ambitious sustainability goals, but then is fearful of letting down the meat (and dairy) industry when it comes to real action, meaning that harmful subsidies or support measures, such as the programme for promotion of agricultural products, which is co-financing the “Proud of EU Beef” campaign, continue to exist.

When deciding not to end marketing subsidies to meat and dairy products, especially those produced by intensive livestock farming systems, the EU is financing, with public money, an incentive for citizens to buy products that are not sustainable. The Commission’s Farm to Fork Strategy has defined the target of reducing the use of antibiotics for farmed animals (including aquaculture) by 50% in ten years. An increase in the consumption of such animal-derived products seems to imply that more antibiotics will be needed.

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<sup>1</sup> Data collected by FAO - [www.fao.org/faostat/en/#data/CL](http://www.fao.org/faostat/en/#data/CL)

<sup>2</sup> [www.greenpeace.org/eu-unit/issues/nature-food/2664/eu-climate-diet-71-less-meat-by-2030/](http://www.greenpeace.org/eu-unit/issues/nature-food/2664/eu-climate-diet-71-less-meat-by-2030/)

1. Could the Commission clarify if it considers that the campaign “Proud of EU Beef” is coherent with the goals set in the Green Deal and the Farm to Fork Strategy?
2. The campaign was approved in 2019, before the Green Deal was presented. We are also aware that the Commission’s Farm to Fork Strategy proposed a review of the selection criteria for agricultural promotional subsidies. Nevertheless, is the current global environmental crisis not a good enough reason to cancel the financial support to the “Proud of EU beef” campaign (which will last until 2023) and other campaigns which are equally inconsistent with the EU’s sustainably goals?
3. Given the implication of a significant amount of public funds and the urgency of ensuring climate mainstreaming and full coherence in all EU policies, it seems that the announced review of the EU promotion programme for agricultural products is a rather urgent matter. We would therefore like to inquire if the Commission could provide us with an indicative timetable for this review.
4. Within the above-mentioned review of the EU promotion programme for agricultural products, is the Commission considering to prioritise the promotion of plant-based proteins, given that their environmental footprint is significantly lower than the one of animal-derived proteins?

Thank you in advance for clarifying the position of the European Commission on these very important matters.

Sincerely,  
The MEPs,  
Francisco Guerreiro  
Alice Bah Kuhnke  
Alviina Alametsä  
Andreas Schieder  
Anja Hazekamp  
Anna Cavazzini  
Caroline Roose  
Clare Daly  
Claudia Gamon  
Delara Burkhardt  
Eleonora Evi  
Helmut Geuking  
Ignazio Corrao  
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Tilly Metz