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Mr. José Manuel Barroso
President of the European Commission
200 rue de la Loi
1049 Brussels
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22 June 2011

Reference: Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) for the 2014-20 period

Dear President Barroso,

WWF is writing to you ahead of the forthcoming decisions in the European Commission on the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) setting out spending priorities for the European Union for the 2014-20 period. Specifically, we wish to raise concerns about the funding for the Common Agricultural Policy and Rural Development and to urge that funding for rural development measures be maintained and increased.

The European Commission made important reform proposals in November 2010 that held out the prospect that the forthcoming reform of the Common Agriculture Policy can become an important step towards greater sustainability in Europe's agriculture. Beside the greening of the direct payment, - the so-called first pillar - the proposal clearly set out that innovation, rural vitality and environmental programmes should receive support from the European Agriculture Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD), - the so called the 2nd pillar.

WWF believes that the European Union will not be able to create an agriculture which delivers the requisite environmental services to meet the EU's environmental acquis if the funding of the 2nd pillar would be jeopardised. Any move by the European Commission to put the EAFRD at risk, including diminishing or abolishing agri-environmental measures, would put the very credibility of the Commission, and even the Union itself, at risk. We are sure you are aware of the latest EU-Barometer poll (May 2011) which indicates that 89 % of the European population wants the European budget to be invested in programmes which support the environment.

Only € 13 billion out of € 54 billion of annual agricultural support is currently devoted to rural development objectives. The remainder is targeted largely to general income support which has a questionable relationship to the longer term sustainability of European agriculture. Even if Europe succeeds in making the direct payments more sustainable by binding them to more clearly defined environmental outcomes, it will still be necessary to promote payments of the EAFRD which target specific environmental and social objectives in rural areas.

WWF therefore urges you and your fellow Commissioners to ensure that the MFF proposal which emerges from the Commission later this month is robust in its defence of the second pillar of agricultural support. To do otherwise would be to turn the clock back thirty years and witness once again the unleashing of powerful agricultural intensification forces fuelled by market forces at the expense of fragile social, economic and environmental balances that exist in Europe's rural areas.

Yours sincerely,



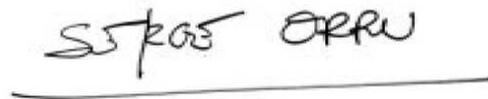
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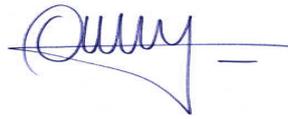


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