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## **ENSURING POLICY COHERENCE IN CAP MODELLING: CONCERNS OVER THE MIXING OF UNRELATED POLICY DOMAINS IN ACT4CAP27**

The €6 million ACT4CAP27 project, a Horizon Europe research initiative aimed at strengthening analytical capacity for the Common Agricultural Policy post-2027, held a workshop today focused on modelling the impacts of sugar tax and biodiversity scenarios. While framed as a contribution to evidence-based policymaking, the discussions raised fundamental questions about policy relevance and coherence and academic perceptions of the EU beet sugar sector.

Representing EU beet sugar manufacturers and sugar beet growers, CIBE and CEFS would like to clarify that taxation is an exclusive Member State competence and that discussions on sugar taxation are currently taking place primarily at Member State level. These debates fall within the remit of health and consumer policy and are completely distinct from the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) post-2027. It is therefore irrelevant to integrate sugar taxation scenarios into CAP-focused modelling exercises.

The workshop further explored potential adjustments in land use and production systems to increase biodiversity.

Underlying the workshop were simplified assumptions linking reduced sugar consumption and improved biodiversity to lower production and reduced sugar beet acreage. This outcome was perversely presented as a desirable scenario, in spite of the fact that lower EU sugar production would invariably be replaced by an increase in imports from less sustainable sugar produced overseas.

Unfortunately the workshop completely ignored the positive impact of sugar beet as a rotational crop. Sugar beet helps to fix nitrogen in the soil and break soil up with its long roots, contributing to oxygen and nutrient circulation. Structurally lower sugar production

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would also have consequences for the 24,000 direct industrial jobs in sugar factories that are located in some of the EU's most vulnerable rural areas.

EU-funded research under Horizon Europe should provide clear added value. In this context, further reflection is needed on the focus of projects that primarily enhance analytical and modelling tools already available within the European Commission, particularly when other research proposals addressing pressing challenges such as crop protection in sugar beet production have not been selected.

## Contact CEFS

Catherine Jaworowska  
Communications & Social Affairs Officer  
[catherine.jaworowska@cefs.org](mailto:catherine.jaworowska@cefs.org)  
+32 2 762 07 60

## Contact CIBE

Elisabeth Lacoste  
Director General  
[elisabeth.lacoste@cibe-europe.eu](mailto:elisabeth.lacoste@cibe-europe.eu)  
+32 2 504 6090