



# BEATLES

BEHAVIOURAL CHANGE TOWARDS  
Climate-Smart Agriculture

## The notion of fairness in the EU policies

*Third EU multi-actor working group workshop  
19 May 2025 - Blanca Casares, AEIDL*



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## Fairness is multidimensional

## Fairness: a driver of behavioural change

**Fairness in policies is a key driver of behavioral change among farmers** because farmers operate in systems deeply influenced by trust, risk perception, economic pressures, and social norms. When agricultural policies are perceived as fair, they not only increase compliance but also make farmers more willing and able to adopt new behaviors—whether related to technology, environmental practices, or market engagement.

*Bijttebier et al. (2018); Gorton et al. (2010); Grothmann & Patt (2005); Kreft, Huber, Wuepper & Finger (2021); Eitzinger, Binder & Meyer, (2018); Barnes et al. (2011); Leeuwis & Aarts (2011); Burton, Rob. (2004); Byfuglien, Hiron, & Milford (2024); Feola (2015) and Thompson et al. (2022)*

## Foundational Legal Frameworks

- **TEU** Article 3 & 5 – Establish fairness, solidarity, and cohesion as core EU objectives. Article 6 European Pillar of Social Rights.
- **TFEU** Articles 38–44 – CAP must ensure a fair standard of living and fair competition.
- **TFEU** Articles 101–107 – Enforce fairness in competition, trading practices, and state aid.

## 2008–2013: First Steps on Transparency & Market Fairness

- 2008–09 – **Food Price Monitoring Tool** launched for transparency in pricing across supply chains
- **Regulation 1308/2013 (CMO)** sets fairness rules for agricultural markets. Antitrust rules.

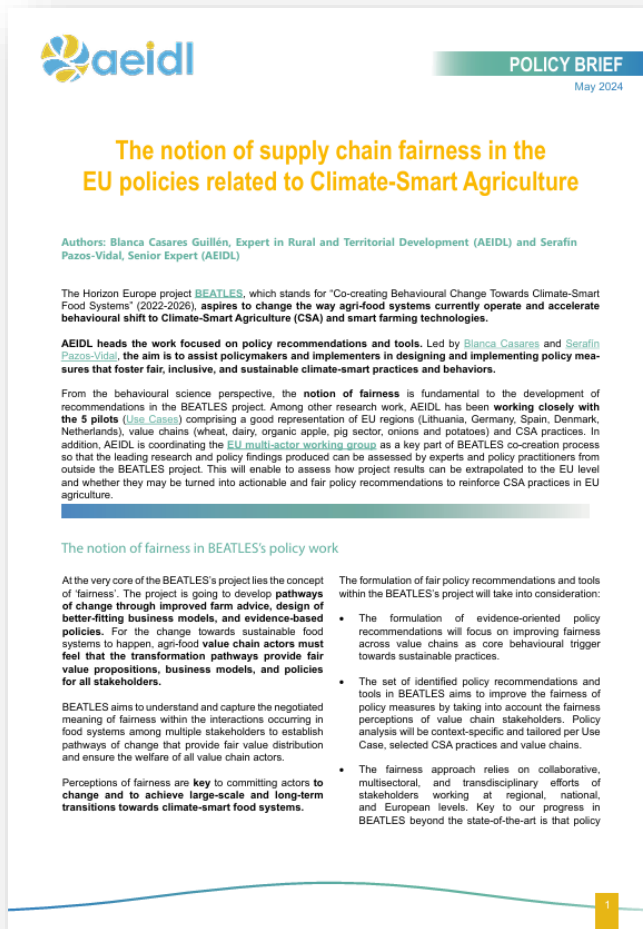
## 2019 - 2023

- **Directive (EU) 2019/633**: Prohibits unfair trading practices (UTPs) in business-to-business relationships in agri-food supply chains.
- **Regulation (EU) 2020/852**: the **EU Taxonomy Regulation** - “don’t do significant harm”.
- **Farm to Fork Strategy within the EGD**: Promotes fairer economic returns across food supply chains and supports sustainability.
- **Better Regulation Guidelines (2021)**: Embed fairness in EU policy formulation via participatory and equity-based principles.
- **Regulation (EU) 2021/2115** (CAP Strategic Plans 2023–2027). Introduces *explicit references to fairness*, e.g., redistributive income support, fair working conditions, fairer payment targeting.
- **New Sustainability Agreements (2023)**. CAP Article 210a Guidelines clarify fair cooperation under EU competition law.

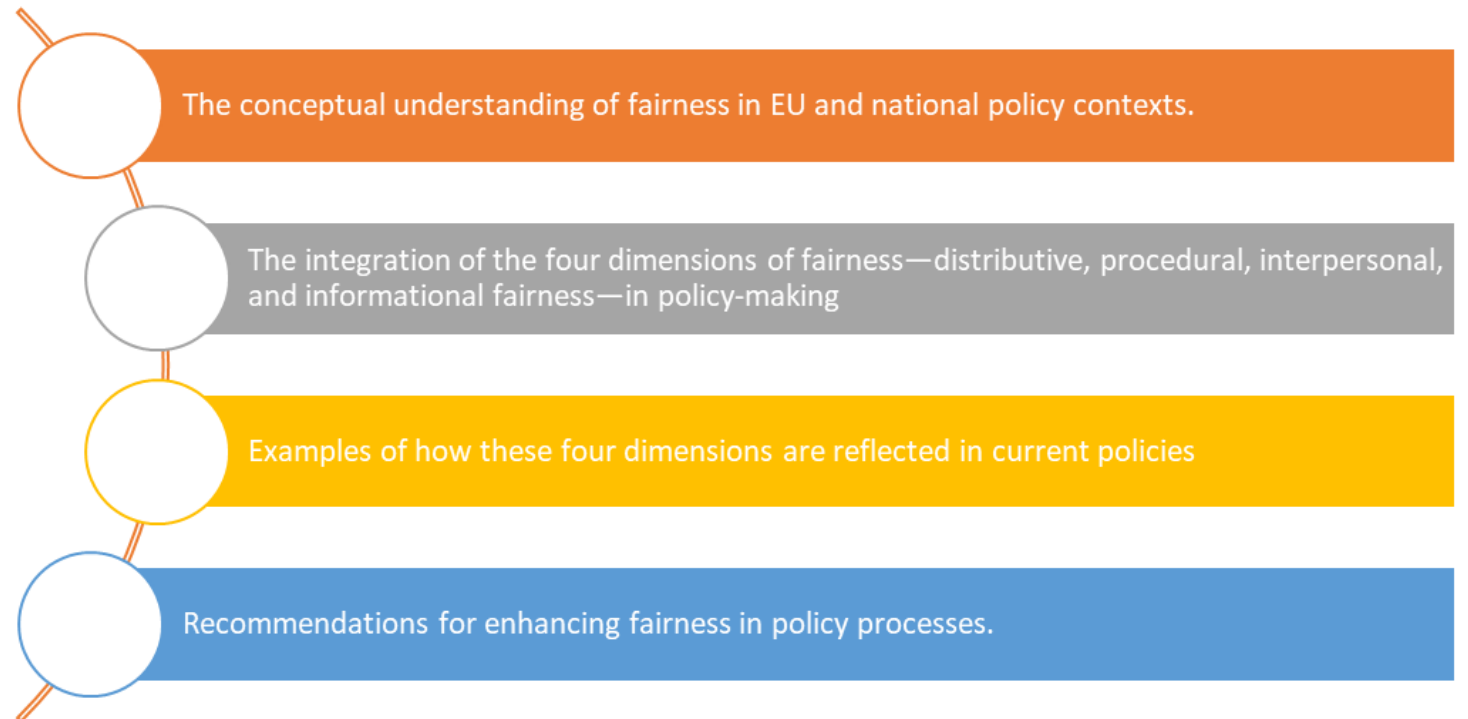
## 2024- 2025 - Deepening Fairness

- Jan 24 – **EESC Opinion** on Promoting autonomous and sustainable food production: strategies for the Common Agricultural Policy post-2027.
- March 24 – **CAP simplification** proposal includes cross-border UTP enforcement.
- Sept 24 – **final report of the Strategic Dialogue** on the Future of EU Agriculture calls for: Intergenerational fairness; Fair food value chain; Agroecology as fairness guide and Critique of EAGF fairness and coherence. The **EESC Opinion on A just transition** to ensure a sustainable future for EU agri-food systems
- Feb 25
  - Communication on **the Road to the Next MFF** stresses: Fair farmer incomes, fair competition, and improved distributional equity.
  - **Vision for Agriculture and Food** calls for: transparency in cost and margin distribution and better-targeted support to restore fairness in CAP perceptions.
- May 25 – **CAP simplification** GAEC 2 - ensuring fair compensation for their efforts.
- Ongoing – **EU Consultation on Strengthening of the position of farmers**: use of "fair", "equitable" or equivalent terms.

# Exploring Fairness as a principle in the EU policies



## Interdisciplinary consultation: insights from agricultural, environmental & EU law experts





- ✎ The consultation highlighted consistent problems across all dimensions, particularly the dominance of powerful interest groups and poor data transparency. This ambiguity complicates both design and evaluation of EU policies, limiting their perceived and actual fairness.
- ✎ Fairness is context-specific and cannot be applied with a "one-size-fits-all" model.
- ✎ Varies by country, stakeholder group, and policy area.
- ✎ Often understood more as a constraint than a goal.
- ✎ **Is Fairness Defined and Understood in EU Policy?**
  - ✎ Fairness in EU and national policy-making lacks a clear, consistent definition, leading to diverse interpretations, unequal outcomes, and challenges in implementing equitable policies—especially in complex, historically shaped sectors like agriculture.
- ✎ **Is Fairness Integrated in EU Policies?**
  - ✎ Experts agree that while the four dimensions of fairness—distributive, procedural, interpersonal, and informational—are recognised in EU policy, they are often applied unevenly, with structural biases, limited inclusivity, declining stakeholder engagement, and unequal access to information undermining their effectiveness

## Recommendations from Experts

- ✧ **Need for multidimensional and systemic shift in how fairness is addressed in EU policy-making.**
  - ✧ **Context matters:** Fairness must be tailored to specific policies, sectors, and stakeholder realities—not applied as a one-size-fits-all principle.
  - ✧ **Evidence-based and participatory evaluation** is key—using scientific methods and involving stakeholders to improve credibility and impact.
  - ✧ **Link with sustainability:** Fairness should be embedded in broader sustainability frameworks, balancing social, economic, and environmental goals.
  - ✧ **Assess winners and losers:** Impact assessments must identify who benefits or is disadvantaged, and reporting requirements should be made more usable.
  - ✧ **Reduce lobby influence:** Fairness requires reducing the influence of vested interests and ensuring more balanced, representative decision-making.
  - ✧ **Inclusive consultations:** Improve inclusion of underrepresented voices, especially vulnerable groups and environmental actors.
  - ✧ **Cultural change:** True fairness needs a shift in societal values and not just rules—toward collective concern for justice, equity, and the common good.

# Questions & Answers

## Contact Details

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# Thank you!

