



Press Release

Luxembourg, 27 August 2019

EU Auditors look at new imaging technologies for monitoring the CAP

The European Court of Auditors is conducting an audit to assess the EU's use of new imaging technologies to monitor the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). In particular, the auditors will examine the support provided by the European Commission, as well as practices in the Member States. They will also consider the challenges hindering more rapid and extensive deployment of these new technologies.

Each year, Member States carry out around 900 000 on-the-spot checks on EU agricultural aid. These, however, cover only about 5% of the aid applicants. As an alternative, new imaging technologies can provide more comprehensive evidence of farmers' actual agricultural activities and their compliance with the CAP.

The auditors have published an Audit Preview on new imaging technologies for agricultural monitoring. Audit Previews provide information on an ongoing audit task. They are designed as a source of information for those interested in the policy or programmes being audited.

The use of new technologies for monitoring should also increase the effectiveness of future CAP environmental and climate measures. They also have the potential to reduce the costs of controls in Member States, while checking more beneficiaries.

For around two years, the EU's Copernicus Sentinel satellite programme has been providing freely available high-resolution images. Its data can facilitate checks on - for instance - the agricultural activity taking place on parcels, crop classification, or certain ecological focus areas. Other projects, involving geo-tagged photography, drones and land monitoring solutions, are also being promoted by the Commission and the Member States. They all offer opportunities to monitor the CAP in a more comprehensive, cost-efficient and effective way.

The purpose of this press release is to convey the main messages of the European Court of Auditors' audit preview. The full preview is available at eca.europa.eu in English.

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The audit will assess whether the European Commission and the Member States have taken steps to unlock the potential of new imaging technologies for CAP monitoring. In particular, the auditors will examine whether:

- o the Commission has encouraged widespread use of those technologies;
- o Member States have taken action to deploy those technologies.

The audit will include information visits to four Member States that have started using satellite imagery for CAP monitoring: Belgium, Denmark, Italy and Spain.

Note to Editors

The audit report is expected to be published at the beginning of 2020.

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