



Press Release
Luxembourg, 7 November 2018

Plans for the next CAP should be greener, rigorously performance-based and more accountable, say EU Auditors

The proposed reform of the Common Agricultural Policy after 2020 falls short of the EU's ambitions for a greener and more robust performance-based approach, according to an Opinion published today by the European Court of Auditors. The auditors identify a number of other issues with the proposal, notably in terms of accountability.

When the European Commission published its proposal for the new CAP after 2020, it stressed that environment and climate objectives would be a high priority. The auditors recognise that the proposed reform includes tools to address these objectives; but these are neither clearly defined nor translated into quantified targets. It therefore remains unclear how a greener CAP could be assessed or measured. In addition, the Commission's estimate of the CAP's contribution to EU climate change objectives appears unrealistic, say the auditors.

The auditors note that many of the proposed policy options are very similar to the current CAP. In particular, the largest part of the budget would continue to be direct payments to farmers, based on a given amount of hectares of land owned or used. However, this instrument is not appropriate for addressing many environmental concerns, nor is it the most efficient way of supporting viable income, note the auditors.

The proposal introduces key changes in the way that policy would be put into practice. There is a shift from an emphasis on compliance towards a focus on performance, which the auditors welcome. However, they consider that the proposal does not contain the necessary elements of an effective performance system. The new CAP would need more incentives for performance and objectives that are clearly linked to outputs, results and impacts.

Another key change is the redefinition of EU eligibility for CAP payments; but given the limitations of the proposed model, this is likely to lead to a weakened assurance framework. There will be fewer and less effective checks and audits, the auditors point out.

"The move towards a performance-based assessment would not remove the need to check legality and regularity", said João Figueiredo, the Member of the European Court of Auditors responsible for the Opinion. "We fear that a legal provision stating that only a very small part of expenditure needs to be effected in accordance with Union rules could make these rules meaningless and might undermine the application of EU law".

The purpose of this press release is to convey the main messages of the Opinion adopted by the European Court of Auditors. The full Opinion is on www.eca.europa.eu

ECA Press

Mark Rogerson – Spokesperson T: (+352) 4398 47063

Damijan Fišer – Press Officer T: (+352) 4398 45410

12, rue Alcide De Gasperi - L-1615 Luxembourg

E: press@eca.europa.eu @EUAuditorsECA eca.europa.eu

M: (+352) 691 55 30 63

M: (+352) 621 55 22 24

The auditors also underline the lack of a robust external system of control. Under the proposal, the Commission would receive neither control statistics from paying agencies, nor assurance on payments to individual farmers from certification bodies. This would result in weakening Commission accountability, warn the auditors. It will also make it harder to apply a single audit approach, notably because of the reduced role for certification bodies.

Note to Editors

The European Court of Auditors contributes to improving EU financial governance by publishing opinions on proposals for new or revised legislation with a financial impact. The opinions are used by the legislative authorities — the European Parliament and the Council — in their work.

ECA Opinion No 7/2018 on the Commission's proposals for regulations relating to the Common Agricultural Policy for the post 2020 period is currently available in English on the ECA website eca.europa.eu; other languages will be added in due course.