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RESOLUTION OF THE 9TH STANDING COMMITTEE

(Agriculture and Agri-Food Production)
(*Rapporteur* ALBANO)
adopted at the sitting of 31 January 2017

ON THE

**PROPOSAL FOR A REGULATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND
OF THE COUNCIL ON INTEGRATED
FARM STATISTICS AND REPEALING REGULATIONS
(EC) NO 1166/2008 AND (EU) NO 1337/2011 (COM (2016) 786 final)**
pursuant to Article 144(1) and (6) of the Rules of Procedure

Sent to the President's Office on 2 February 2017

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The Committee,

having examined the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on integrated farm statistics and repealing regulations (EC) No 1166/2008 and (EU) No 1337/2011 in accordance with Article 144(1) and (6) of the Rules of Procedure,

having noted the comments expressed by Standing Committee 14 on 24 January 2017;

whereas:

the proposal for a regulation aims to establish a common reference framework for European farm statistics, providing for the integration of information on structures with other information such as production methods, rural development measures and agro-environmental aspects;

complete, reliable information on enterprises, SMEs and micro-enterprises operating in the agricultural sector is indispensable for framing, implementing and monitoring agricultural policy and rural development measures;

the consistency and comparability of data and identical data reporting formats are essential requirements for the production of European agricultural statistics, particularly for the efficiency of the collection, processing and dissemination processes and for the quality of the results obtained;

the proposal for a regulation appears to comply with the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality,

expresses a favourable opinion with the following observations:

the importance of an adequate European contribution towards covering the direct costs necessary to adapt to new statistical and technical systems is to be emphasised;

the need to reduce the administrative burden on micro-enterprises, which may not have the material and organisational resources necessary to deal with frequent excessively detailed surveys, is also evident;

the content of statistical surveys needs to be chosen in a functional manner with the aim of taking more targeted, incisive action in agricultural policy matters, while prioritising the needs of producers and consumers in the European Union;

lastly, the Committee trusts that the European Commission is empowered to adopt delegated acts for a defined period of time, e.g. five years, and also for an indeterminate period of time.

**OPINION
OF THE 14TH STANDING COMMITTEE**

(EUROPEAN UNION POLICIES)
(Rapporteur: Liuzzi)

24 January 2017

The Committee, having examined the proposal,

notes that this is the first step taken in the Strategy for Agricultural Statistics up to 2020 and beyond (drawn up in 2015), consisting of a regulation on integrated farm statistics, which is to be followed in a second stage by a framework regulation on statistics on agricultural *input* and *output*. The objective of the Strategy is to rationalise the European Agricultural Statistics System (EASS) and to make the data collection process more efficient and relevant, to guarantee the comparability and consistency of agricultural data in the long run, and to meet the demand for reliable and exhaustive statistics that satisfy the changing needs of policymakers, businesses and the general public;

the initiative contributes to the European statistical programme 2013-2017 by making for more efficient and relevant collection and production of data on employment, growth, investment, prevention and mitigation policies in agriculture, climate change, bio-energy and environmental action and a deeper understanding of global food flows, developments and risks, while offering a deeper understanding of global food flows, developments and risks;

while drawing on a wide-reaching public consultation, the current system for producing European statistics at farm and agricultural household level based on Regulation (EC) 1166/2008 of the European Parliament and of the Council and Regulation (EU) No 1337/2011 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 December 2011 does not meet the new data needs mainly stemming from new developments in agriculture, revised legislation and changing policy priorities, and the recently reformed CAP in particular, because it is not integrated with other legislative acts and it is not flexible enough to answer to new needs in a timely manner. Furthermore, the ever-increasing demand for data and the continuous reduction of resources together put pressure on the production of statistics, particularly for small and medium-sized enterprises, and therefore require work to simplify the process and reduce the burden on respondents. It is in any case necessary to set up a new series of statistical surveys, given that 2016's is the last one provided for by the aforementioned Regulation (EC) 1166/2008;

whereas, in particular:

Article 4 of the proposal allows and promotes the use of new forms of data collection and alternative data sources, including administrative data and new data sources. The Member States may use information from the integrated administration and control system (IACS) established by Regulation (EU) No 1307/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 establishing rules for direct payments to farmers, the system for the identification and registration of bovine animals established by Regulation (EC) No 1760/2000 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 July 2000, the system for the identification and registration of ovine and caprine animals established by Council Regulation (EC) No 21/2004 of 17 December 2003, the vineyard register implemented in accordance with Article 145 of Regulation (EC) No 1308/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of

17 December 2013 and the organic farming registers set up pursuant to Council Regulation (EC) No 834/2007 of 28 June 2007 and any other data sources provided that the information is of at least equal quality to that obtained from statistical surveys and that the Commission (Eurostat) has been informed in advance;

Article 5 provides for the core structural data relating to agricultural holdings specified in Annex III being collected in census form for 2020, whereas data for 2023 and 2026 may be collected in sample surveys. The European Commission is empowered to adopt implementing measures and delegated acts specifying or integrating data for the purposes of Annex III;

Article 7 provides for the collection of data on the topics listed in Annex IV provided that they exceed specific materiality thresholds concerning 'Labour force and other gainful activities', 'Rural development', 'Animal housing and manure management', 'Irrigation', 'Soil management practices', 'Machinery and equipment', 'Orchard' and 'Vineyard'. The European Commission is also empowered to adopt implementing measures and delegated acts specifying or integrating data for the purposes of Annex IV;

In a departure from the current system, Article 9 empowers the European Commission to adopt implementing acts for the purpose of specifying the occasional (*ad hoc*) provision by the Member States of specific information;

Article 13 sets the maximum EU contribution, which is intended to cover no more than 75% of the eligible costs related to the collection of core data and module data for 2020 and which is set at EUR 4 million for Italy, Poland and Romania and at lower levels for the other Member States, the lowest being EUR 300 000. The contributions for the sample surveys in 2023 and 2026 are reduced by 50%. Those contributions are the same as those provided by Regulation (EC) No 1166/2008, currently in force. The contributions towards covering the cost of collecting the new *ad hoc* data may be as much as 90% of the eligible costs.

comments favourably on the proposal, within its area of responsibility, with the following remarks:

the legal basis has been correctly identified as Article 338 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), which provides within the general provisions of the Treaty for the ordinary legislative procedure for the adoption of the measures for the production of statistics where necessary for the performance of the activities of the Union. The same article sets out the requirements relating to the production of European statistics, stating that they must conform to standards of impartiality, reliability, objectivity, scientific independence, cost-effectiveness and statistical confidentiality;

the proposal complies with the principle of subsidiarity, since its objective is to improve and rationalise the system for collecting farm statistics by integrating the various existing European legislative instruments and guaranteeing the consistency and comparability of the data collected in the different Member States, which can only be achieved by action at European level. The two criteria concerning the need for European action and its added value are therefore fulfilled;

the principle of proportionality also appears to be fully complied with, since the proposed provisions do not go beyond what is necessary to achieve the aforementioned objective. The regulatory interventions, which provide for expansion and updating of the agricultural statistical system by means of rationalisation, do not seem to envisage excessive additional burdens, whether administrative or financial.

In particular, according to the impact assessment accompanying the proposal, direct costs for stakeholders of around EUR 26 million are forecast in the initial adaptation to the new statistical and technical systems, but the proposed measures should reduce the burdens in the mid to long term, given that almost one-fifth fewer agricultural holdings will be surveyed, bringing savings of EUR 56 million on the estimated total cost of EUR 320 million.

It in fact emerged in consultations that the burden of providing data is perceived as being too great and, considering the direct costs for stakeholders deriving from their initial adaptation to the new statistical and technical systems, the proposal aims to reduce the burden on micro-enterprises and SMEs by raising the survey thresholds.

