



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

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Dear Chair,

The Commission would like to thank the Sejm for its Opinion on the legislative proposals for the Common Agricultural Policy after 2020: proposal for a Regulation establishing rules on support for strategic plans to be drawn under the Common Agricultural Policy {COM(2018) 392 final}, proposal for a Regulation on the financing, management and monitoring of the common agricultural policy {COM(2018) 393 final} and proposal for a Regulation establishing a common organization of the markets {COM(2018) 394 final}.

The Commission considers that Europe needs a resilient, sustainable and competitive agricultural sector in order to ensure the production of high-quality, safe and affordable food for its citizens, as well as solid socio-economic conditions in the rural areas. The context of the challenges of globalisation for the agricultural sector and the rural areas of the Union requires the maintenance of a strong, modernised and common agricultural policy, as confirmed in the legislative proposals presented by the Commission on 1 June 2018.

The Commission, like the Sejm, remains committed to securing an adequate level of support and thus to ensuring that farm income remains a key element for the future, in order to safeguard food security, environmental and climate ambition, as well as rural vitality.

For the period from 2021 to 2027, the Commission is proposing an ambitious budget of EUR 365 billion for the Common Agricultural Policy. This means that the policy will account for nearly one-third of the total budget of the European Union, highlighting its continued importance. The budget for the agricultural policy will be divided between its two traditional funds: direct support for farmers/market measures and rural development.

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The proposal on external convergence, more specifically to close, for all Member States with direct payment aid levels below 90% of the EU-27 average, the gap between their average payment per hectare and 90% of the EU average by 50% over 6 years, has to be seen in light of the overall constraints within which the budgetary proposal was made, namely the departure of a key contributor to the European Union budget and the additional financial needs to cover new challenges. All Member States will contribute equally to bridge this gap.

The experience from the implementation of the current Common Agricultural Policy confirmed that a one-size-fits-all approach did not provide the expected results. In the proposal, a shift is made towards more subsidiarity.

Simplification is at the heart of the new Common Agricultural Policy, based on a fundamental reflection on how the rules are conceived and thus on the overall governance of this policy. This resulted in a structural revision of responsibilities in the form of the new delivery model, which offers clear potential for simplification. Member States will enjoy greater responsibility in choosing how and where to invest their funding from the Common Agricultural Policy in order to meet ambitious common goals on environment, climate change and sustainability. The current environmental architecture will be replaced by a more targeted, ambitious and flexible approach.

In the new model, the European Union will provide for the necessary safeguards to ensure both ambition and a level-playing field. In this new framework, based on a switch from compliance to performance-orientation, measurable targets will be needed. A common set of result indicators will be agreed at the level of the European Union to ensure comparable conditions for farmers in all Member States. The new Common Agricultural Policy Strategic Plans will be simpler than current rural development programmes. They will have to follow certain principles and set out a certain level of content, but not to demonstrate compliance with long lists of detailed European rules.

The Commission values the continuous engagement of the Sejm and considers its contribution an important input into the policy-making process.

The proposals are currently being discussed by the European Parliament and the Council. The Commission remains confident that an agreement can be reached before the end of the current term of the European Parliament.

The Commission welcomes the Sejm's views on the Common Agricultural Policy and looks forward to continuing the political dialogue in the future.

Yours faithfully,

*Frans Timmermans
First Vice-President*

*Phil Hogan
Member of the Commission*