



REPUBLIKA SLOVENIJA
DRŽAVNI SVET

The National Council of the Republic of Slovenia

Budget on the Common Agricultural Policy

The European Commission's proposal for Slovenia foresees a decrease in direct payments of 3.9% and in rural development funds of almost 15% compared to the current period. We consider the reduction in funds, for rural development in particular, to be too great for Slovenia and to not reflect the ambitions of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) reform, as this fails to ensure the achievement of agricultural objectives. In the case of Slovenia, it is necessary to take into account its natural features and major obligations primarily in the area of environmental and water protection and to bear in mind the high EU expectations in terms of improving the situation in individual areas of the environment and nature. A great deal of the agricultural land in Slovenia is in areas with unfavourable growing conditions, in water protection areas, and in Natura 2000 sites (37.16% of the territory of Slovenia); Slovenia also has large permanent grassland, overgrown and sensitive areas. Furthermore, the structure of land and agricultural holdings (small farms) is very unfavourable, therefore investment in the modernisation and development of production is necessary.

The National Council is of the opinion that the reduction in funding for Slovenia is too great and fails to mirror the public expectations in Slovenia regarding the CAP reform as it fails to ensure achievement of the objectives regarding agriculture. This would be another major interference with the farmers' expected income and would burden them even more, thus jeopardising the stability of the entire agricultural industry. Slovenia is one of the few EU countries to make provision of 45% of future Rural Development Programme (RDP) funds (together with 25% national co-financing, the percentage reaches 50%) on account of the developmental lag, large less-favoured areas and natural heritage that must be protected in line with the CAP objectives. The EU 28 average reveals a dissimilar fact – the Member States' support for their respective agriculture provided through their RDP stands at 24.3%, even less in some countries; therefore, a very massive RDP envelope reduction is unfair and raises serious doubt as to the firmness of the intention to promote rural development throughout the EU. The proposal does not provide for the development of rural areas and fails to sufficiently support farmers with a view to preserving the settlement of less-favoured rural areas; in particular, it fails to ensure continued support to environmental measures to the current extent, it does not help to preserve diversity, nor does it promote joint commitments regarding the adaptation of these sensitive and financially disadvantaged areas to climate change.

We maintain that the reduction in funds, in particular the reduction in rural development funds, is critical because this policy is the developmental component in the CAP and contributes to addressing environmental and climate issues, as well as to the development/preservation of the vitality of rural areas. In view of the new requirements foreseen in the proposal for regulation (the mandatory implementation of risk management interventions, a higher required percentage of funds for the environment and climate change, etc.) and the developmental component of rural development measures, we firmly believe that such a significant reduction in funds should not be made and that funding should remain at the nominal level of 2014–2020. We expect the European Union to recognise the needs of Slovenia, which advocates joint financing and a strong and stable common agricultural policy for the benefit of all citizens.



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