

'Omnibus regulation' – Agricultural provisions

The proposed 'omnibus regulation' to amend EU financial rules represents the first occasion that changes to the basic regulations of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) have been formally proposed since the 2013 reform. These changes represent policy choices involving a fine-tuning and simplification of the CAP. Parliament is due to vote on the proposal during the December plenary session.

Background

In the context of its mid-term review of the multiannual EU budget (2014-2020), on 14 September 2016, the European Commission adopted a [proposal](#), in the form of an 'omnibus' regulation, to make changes to the financial rules applicable to the EU's general budget. It included amendments to 15 legal instruments concerning multiannual funding programmes in areas such as the structural and investment funds, and infrastructure, as well as the CAP regulations.

European Commission proposal

In the agriculture field, the proposals were aimed at fine-tuning some elements in the current CAP. While many of the measures proposed are of a technical nature, they included proposals for a range of policy-related simplification measures. Applicable to all four of the basic CAP regulations, the proposed changes cover a wide range of pertinent issues such as the concept of 'active farmer', young farmers' payments, greening, risk-management tools and markets policy. In the case of the latter, the bargaining position of farmers in the food supply chain should be significantly improved.

European Parliament position

In October 2016, the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development (AGRI) discussed the omnibus proposal. The majority of Members welcomed the opportunity to simplify the CAP but concerns were expressed about the procedure of placing all sectoral changes in an omnibus legal instrument along with several other policy areas under the MFF. For this reason, the AGRI Committee requested and obtained from the two 'lead committees' on the omnibus proposal (the Committee on Budgets and the Committee on Budgetary Control), the possibility of defining autonomously the position to be submitted to plenary concerning the agricultural provisions, and of conducting subsequent interinstitutional negotiations in trilogue. Within the Council, the specific working method to handle the different parts of the omnibus proposal was [agreed](#) in December 2016. Four trilogue meetings were held between July and October 2017, resulting in agreement on an overall compromise [package](#). On 6 November 2017, the Council's Special Committee on Agriculture (SCA) agreed on the necessary steps to allow the changes to agricultural legislation to apply from 1 January 2018, and that the agricultural provisions should be split from the [remainder](#) of the omnibus proposal. A later entry into force would result in delaying application of some of the simplification measures to 2019. No Member State delegation opposed the split. On 15-16 November 2017, Coreper (on the Council side) and the Conference of Presidents (on the European Parliament side) formally approved the split, allowing the AGRI committee to draw up a separate legislative report for these areas. The AGRI committee approved, by 39 votes in favour to 5 against, the text of the agricultural component of the omnibus regulation on 22 November 2017. The [report](#) is tabled for a first-reading vote during the December plenary session.

First reading: [2016/0282B\(COD\)](#);
Committee responsible: AGRI;
Rapporteur: Albert Deß (EPP, Germany).

