

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003820/18
to the Commission
Sergio Gaetano Cofferati (S&D)
(11 July 2018)

Subject: Delayed or missed payments of farming subsidies under the EAGF and EAFRD

Through the EAGF (European Agricultural Guarantee Fund) and the EAFRD (European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development), the European Union supports agricultural production in its Member States.

Italy has attributed to the AGEA (Agenzia per le Erogazioni in Agricoltura, Italian Agricultural Payments Agency) the tasks of authorising and disbursing payments and the accounting work.

The numerous cases of delayed and missed payments (including delays of up to three years) are already causing enormous difficulties for the productive sector; there is a danger that this will have very grave economic and social consequences, particularly for small and medium-sized enterprises in the sector, which often, particularly in the case of organic farming, expect major investments.

The AGEA has so far attributed most of the anomalies to glitches with the IT systems.

In view of the above, will the Commission:

- Request exhaustive information on cases of delayed or missed payments?
- Verify the actual causes of these delays and make sure that the reasons given are true?
- Ensure that the funds in question have not been transferred to other budget items?
- Request the timely disbursement of all authorised payments?
- Request structural adjustments to improve and make more efficient the payment system for farming subsidies?

Answer given by Mr Hogan on behalf of the European Commission
(24 August 2018)

The Commission is aware of delays in payments by the Agenzia per le Erogazioni in Agricoltura (AGEA) for both the European Agricultural Guarantee Fund (EAGF) and the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD), in particular for 14 Italian Regions for which AGEA is the accredited paying agency.

In this regard, it can be noted that:

- The Commission is monitoring the AGEA situation and receives regular updates on progress in payments. The Commission has been informed by the Italian Authorities of a reorganisation within AGEA to improve its efficiency and the Commission services are following the developments.
- As regards EAGF, the obligation to comply with the payment deadline is laid down in Articles 40 ⁽¹⁾ and 75 ⁽²⁾ of Regulation (EU) No 1306/2013. The Commission controls the respect of the payment deadlines by the Member States and, in accordance with the principle of proportionality and following exchanges where the Member States can present justifications for the delays, applies reductions (up to 100%) for the expenditure made by the Member States after the payment deadline ⁽³⁾. For area and animal-based measures under EAFRD, payment deadlines will apply from claim year 2019. Reductions for late payment are a strong incentive for Member States to pay beneficiaries on time.
- It should be recalled that, in the framework of shared management of both EAFG and EAFRD, the national and regional authorities are responsible for the management of funds, the implementation of the programmes, the payments to beneficiaries and for related controls.

⁽¹⁾ cf. Article 40 of Regulation (EU) No 1306/2013, OJ L 347, 20.12.2013.

⁽²⁾ cf. Article 75 of Regulation (EU) No 1306/2013, OJ L 347, 20.12.2013.

⁽³⁾ cf. Article 5 of Regulation (EU) No 907/2014, OJ L 255, 28.8.2014.