

(English version)

**Priority question for written answer P-000691/21
to the Commission
Clara Aguilera (S&D)
(3 February 2021)**

Subject: Implementation of European Rural Development Funds in Andalusia

For 2020 — once the n+3 rule in respect of the year 2017 has been applied — the Autonomous Community of Andalusia has yet to implement EUR 28 003 839.82 of European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) financing. This significant amount of unspent funds is at risk of being lost under the financial provisions in force.

The Andalusian Government hopes to avoid losing the funds on the basis of a report that it is going to submit to the Commission that justifies its inaction in those three years on the grounds of '*force majeure*'.

If, in the best possible outcome, the more than EUR 28 million that are now at risk are not classified as 'de-committed', does the Commission believe that it is possible to implement the EAFRD funds from the transitional period and the Recovery Instrument programme for Rural Development, expected to be distributed in 2021 and 2022, in addition to the EUR 28 million, or will that support for rural development in Andalusia be lost permanently?

Is there any other financing that has yet to be spent in Andalusia?

**Answer given by Mr Wojciechowski on behalf of the European Commission
(2 March 2021)**

The amount of the European agricultural fund for rural development (EAFRD) allocated to the rural development program in Andalusia is EUR 1 900 205 317.53. Of this amount, EUR 921 724 755.20 were spent on 31 December 2020.

Given that the objective to be reached was at least EUR 949 728 612.03, an automatic decommitment procedure should be considered for the balance of EUR 28 003 856.83, i.e. 1.4% of the current budget.

However, by letter of 29 January 2021, the Andalusian authorities invoked the cause of *force majeure* mentioned in point 4 b) of Article 38, of Regulation (EU) No 1306/2013⁽¹⁾.

The facts exposed are linked to the consequences of the measures taken by the Spanish authorities in response to the health crisis caused by the pandemic due to COVID-19. The request for exemption submitted by the Andalusian authorities is currently being examined.

In addition, extra funds will be injected into the program budget in 2021 and 2022, i.e. EUR 552 546 695 for the transitional period and EUR 1 65 245 666 under the EU Recovery Instrument. The total EAFRD allocation will thus increase to EUR 2 618 000 678.53.

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 347, 20.12.2013.