

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

2004



2009

Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development

2008/2025(BUD)

29.5.2008

OPINION

of the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development

for the Committee on Budgets

on the 2009 budget procedure: First reflections on the 2009 Preliminary Draft
Budget and mandate for the conciliation
(2008/2025(BUD))

Section III – Commission

Draftsman: Kyösti Virrankoski

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SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development calls on the Committee on Budgets, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions in its motion for a resolution:

1. Underlines the fact that, with the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty foreseen for 1 January 2009, the differentiation between "compulsory" and "non-compulsory" payments will cease to exist, with the result that the transfers undertaken in 2009 will fall under the new procedure with the EP fulfilling its obligations;
2. Notes that currently agriculture and rural development spending combined still represent a substantial part of the EU budget; stresses that the predictability for planning purposes and the reliability of the multiannual financial framework, as decided, must be guaranteed; stresses the need to ensure that the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development is represented by the appropriate committee members in the conciliation committee meetings; stresses also the need to ensure coordination between the Committee on Budgets and specialised committees on budgetary aspects of their legislative activities given their impact on the multiannual financial framework and the annual budgetary procedure;
3. Notes that Rural Development is a specific priority provided for in the Multi-annual Financial Framework; notes the modulation and transfer of EUR 1 792 million of direct support and market measures to Rural Development in 2009, which leaves a maximum amount of EUR 44 887 million for direct support and market measures and EUR 13 402 million for Rural Development in 2009; reiterates that the budget should be fully transparent with regard to the amounts modulated from direct aid;
4. Notes that there is still an available margin of EUR 2 113 billion under the ceiling of heading 2, proving the success of the reforms of the common agricultural policy (CAP);
5. Points to the great difficulties regarding the implementation of the EAFRD, regrets that EUR 2 830 million of appropriations remained unspent in 2007, that EUR 1 361 million were carried over to the year 2008 and EUR 1 469 million were reprogrammed to the years 2008-2013 under Point 48 of the Inter-Institutional Agreement of 17 May 2006 between the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission on budgetary discipline and sound financial management¹, despite the fact that Council Regulation (EC) No 1698/2005 of 20 September 2005 on support for rural development by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD)² was adopted early enough to avoid such procedural shortcomings; voices its concern with regard to the reprogramming of such considerable amounts, which will lead to a significant delay in funds available in the rural regions;
6. Calls on the Commission to include a more workable timeframe in the next rural

¹ OJ C 139, 14.6.2006, p. 1. Agreement as last amended by Decision 2008/371/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council (OJ L 128, 16.5.2008, p. 8.).

² OJ L 277, 21.10.2005, p. 1. Agreement as last amended by Regulation (EC) No 146/2008 (OJ L 46, 21.2.2008, p. 1.).

development regulation (and to ensure that the Member States have sufficient time to present their operational programmes;

7. Is concerned about the difference in commitment and payment levels for Rural Development which was 25% for 2007, 30% for 2008 and a proposed 30% for 2009; requests, therefore, from the Commission a forecast for decommitments for 2009 and for the whole financial period for 2007-2013 and a forecast for the problems with clearing the build-up of overstatements still to be settled (currently the level of RAL□ under Rural Development is nearly € 9 billion) at the end of the financial period 2007-2013 since maximum payment levels under annex I of the aforementioned Inter Institutional Agreement fall from 1.06% GNI in 2007 to 0.94% GNI in 2013;
8. Recalls that the primary goal of the CAP is to guarantee market stabilisation, supply security and reasonable prices for consumers and therefore calls on the EC to foresee for budget 2009 the necessary means to face the new needs arising from the current food crisis, especially an improvement of access to food for the most deprived people who are suffering the most from this crisis;
9. Points out that further modulation foreseen in the Health Check of the CAP, which transfers funds from the EAGF to EAFRD, increases the amount needed for national co-financing; calls on the Commission to monitor carefully the programming of this money in the Member States and underlines that increased EU funds pre-empt co-financing by the Members States and warns that it should not lead to a reduction of existing co-financing;
10. Calls on the Commission to take a resolute stance on the implementation of the sugar reform in order to treat Member States equally and in a more transparent way;
11. Considers that the pilot projects and preparatory actions currently running in chapters 5, 6, 7 and 17, which were adopted in the 2008 Budget, are at a very early stage of programming and underlines the need for timely and efficient implementation;
12. Underlines the need for a school fruit programme and emphasises the positive effects of such a programme on public health and nutrition awareness in children; regrets the fact that the Commission has still not tabled a proposal for such a programme; calls on the Commission to present its proposal without any further delay and to introduce a new budget line for that purpose in its amending letter; points out that participation by the Member States in such a programme should be a voluntary basis;
13. Reiterates its position on the creation of a milk restructuring fund, which should be used for adapting the milk sector to the new situation - especially in less favoured and sensitive regions - in view of the possible phasing-out of the quota system;
14. Calls for the elaboration of a pilot project to facilitate an exchange programme between young farmers in developing countries and young farmers in the Union to enable them to gain first-hand understanding of the functioning of their respective markets, of their respective use of technology and their solutions for adapting to climatic conditions;
15. Urges the Council and Commission to increase the budget for young farmers as this group

is facing considerable new challenges (for example combating climate change and maintaining food production in the Union) and has been diminishing for years, for example by strengthening the means for education, training networks and exchange programmes for young farmers or by strengthening the policy tools for young farmers in the Rural Development programme.

RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE

Date adopted	27.5.2008
Result of final vote	+: 37 -: 0 0: 0
Members present for the final vote	Vincenzo Aita, Peter Baco, Bernadette Bourzai, Niels Busk, Luis Manuel Capoulas Santos, Giuseppe Castiglione, Giovanna Corda, Joseph Daul, Albert Deß, Gintaras Didžiokas, Constantin Dumitriu, Michl Ebner, Ioannis Gklavakis, Lutz Goepel, Friedrich-Wilhelm Graefe zu Baringdorf, Esther Herranz García, Lily Jacobs, Elisabeth Jeggle, Heinz Kindermann, Vincenzo Lavarra, Stéphane Le Foll, Mairead McGuinness, Rosa Miguélez Ramos, James Nicholson, María Isabel Salinas García, Agnes Schierhuber, Czesław Adam Siekierski, Alyn Smith, Petya Stavreva, Witold Tomczak, Donato Tommaso Veraldi, Janusz Wojciechowski, Andrzej Tomasz Zapałowski
Substitute(s) present for the final vote	Liam Aylward, Esther De Lange, Brian Simpson, Struan Stevenson, Kyösti Virrankoski
Substitute(s) under Rule 178(2) present for the final vote	