



EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

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*Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development*

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**2012/2092(BUD)**

19.9.2012

# **OPINION**

of the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development

for the Committee on Budgets

on the General budget of the European Union for the financial year 2013 - all sections  
(2012/2092(BUD))

Rapporteur: Esther de Lange

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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. Notes that the Commission's Draft 2013 Budget for agriculture is already fairly restrictive, proposing increases in commitments of 0.4 % and 1.3 % for agriculture and rural development respectively and in payments of 0.5 % and 5.4 %, inferior to the proposed increase of the Draft Budget as a whole;
2. Notes, however, that, given the budgetary difficulties and painful savings made in many Member States, the Union's budget should also show realism and constraint, while respecting existing legal commitments;
3. Believes that savings can for example be made by means of a phased reduction of export refunds to zero euros; takes the view that export refunds must be retained as budget headings, however, as they can be an important crisis and assistance instrument on the agricultural market; notes that the future form and use of export refunds as a crisis and assistance instrument in the context of the WTO should be based on the principle of reciprocity;
4. Asks the Commission to provide both arms of the budgetary authority with prompt, regular and complete information on the implementation - on the basis of performance target indicators - of the various programmes and initiatives under Heading 2, and to weigh them against the EU's political commitments;
5. Strongly criticises the Council for its arbitrary and often unfounded way of proposing cuts to the Draft Budget, which gives the impression of window-dressing, rather than realistic budgeting;
6. Believes that improvements can be made in the clearance of accounts of previous years and calls on the Commission to urge Member States to improve their administrative performance in this area; believes, however, that this involves a long-term effort and therefore considers the Council's estimates of income in 2013 from the clearance of accounts to be highly unrealistic; insists on partly reinstating the Commission's estimates contained in the 2013 Draft Budget; additionally, rejects the Council's proposed cuts in the School Fruit Scheme, coupled direct aid and international agricultural agreements;
7. Notes that the CAP is expected to be reformed in the near future and therefore proposes an increase in the budget line aimed at raising awareness of the CAP and an information campaign which is as structured and organised as possible with target groups in mind; furthermore proposes to increase the budgets available for promotion measures and producer organisations, which is also in line with the current CAP reform;
8. Notes that expenditure on aid to producer groups for preliminary recognition has considerably exceeded the Commission's forecasts in recent years; accepts that the expenditure estimated for 2013 largely results from existing legal commitments and

therefore proposes to reinstate the Commission Draft Budget figures; calls, however, on the Commission to thenceforth adopt measures to bring expenditure on preliminary recognition of producers groups under stricter control;

9. Reinstates the Commission Draft Budget as regards payments for rural development measures, as second-pillar programmes will be drawing to a close in 2013, the last year of the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF), when a higher level of payments is traditionally required; nevertheless calls on the Commission to closely monitor the correct implementation of these programmes. It is also important that flexibility is given to Member States to move unspent funds between axes, axes which have a proven track record of delivering for farmers and rural communities;
10. Calls on the Commission and Member States to monitor the volatility of agricultural markets and to react swiftly and effectively when needed; insists on the necessary flexibility in order to take account of the fact that a generally positive development in agricultural markets never impacts equally on all sectors; strongly urges the Commission to provide effective instruments of action for times of crisis and calls for an urgent study into the level of information among farmers about the use of risk management instruments and the availability of training or courses in this area;
11. Underscores the fact that the agricultural market liberalisation that is being sought must be accompanied by a fairer distribution of profits along the food chain so that farmers can have an appropriate standard of living; welcomes the steps taken towards the establishment of a European Farm Prices and Margins Observatory and calls on the Commission to continue this pilot project, notably with a view to including retail prices within the Observatory's framework and improving the accessibility of data;
12. Calls on the Commission to provide special incentives for the production and marketing of high-quality products at local level and thus promote short supply chains; points out that the issuing of designations of origin and geographical indications can make a major contribution towards this;
13. Notes that consumers are insufficiently aware of the comparatively high production standards for European foodstuffs; calls accordingly for improved information management so as to bring about the necessary public acceptance of European agricultural policy and aids;
14. Calls for the establishment of a pilot project on 'climate-smart agriculture in practice' bringing together operational groups to focus on practical on-farm solutions aimed at adaptation of agricultural practices to climate change;
15. Supports the creation of a preparatory action for a third EU programme aimed at the conservation and sustainable use of plant and animal genetic resources in agriculture.

## RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE

<b>Date adopted</b>	18.9.2012
<b>Result of final vote</b>	+:                37 -:                0 0:                0
<b>Members present for the final vote</b>	John Stuart Agnew, José Bové, Luis Manuel Capoulas Santos, Vasilica Viorica Dăncilă, Michel Dantin, Paolo De Castro, Albert Deß, Diane Dodds, Herbert Dorfmann, Hynek Fajmon, Mariya Gabriel, Iratxe García Pérez, Julie Girling, Béla Glattfelder, Martin Häusling, Esther Herranz García, Elisabeth Jeggle, Elisabeth Köstinger, Agnès Le Brun, George Lyon, Gabriel Mato Adrover, Mairead McGuinness, James Nicholson, Rareş-Lucian Niculescu, Wojciech Michał Olejniczak, Georgios Papastamkos, Marit Paulsen, Britta Reimers, Ulrike Rodust, Alfreds Rubiks, Giancarlo Scottà, Czesław Adam Siekierski, Sergio Paolo Francesco Silvestris, Alyn Smith, Csaba Sándor Tabajdi, Janusz Wojciechowski
<b>Substitute(s) present for the final vote</b>	Maria do Céu Patrão Neves