AMENDMENTS
1 - 49

Draft opinion
Giuseppe Milazzo
(PE660.096v01-00)

2019 discharge: General budget of the EU - European Commission
(2020/2140(DEC))
2. Notes that the level of error was material for the spending areas that the Court had identified as higher risk, including rural development, market measures, environment and climate action; points out, however, that the error rate of 2.7% for rural development represents a considerable improvement on the situation in previous years; observes that high-risk expenditure mainly concerned reimbursement-based payments, for instance in the fields of cohesion and rural development, where Union spending is managed by Member States; understands that high-risk expenditure is often subject to complex rules and eligibility criteria; welcomes the confirmation that the Integrated Administration and Control System, and in particular the system for the identification of agricultural parcels, actively contributes to ensuring that direct aid payments are not affected by material error; observes that high-risk expenditure mainly concerned reimbursement-based payments, for instance in the fields of cohesion and rural development, where Union spending is managed by Member States; understands that high-risk expenditure is often subject to complex rules and eligibility criteria;
points out, however, that the error rate of 2.7% for rural development represents a considerable improvement on the situation in previous years; observes that high-risk expenditure mainly concerned reimbursement-based payments, for instance in the fields of cohesion and rural development, where Union spending is managed by Member States; understands that high-risk expenditure is often subject to complex rules and eligibility criteria; and stresses the need to eliminate undue administrative burdens that hinder the implementation of investments through the CAP;

Or. ro

Amendment 3
Carmen Avram

Draft opinion
Paragraph 2

2. Notes that the level of error was material for the spending areas that the Court had identified as higher risk, including rural development, market measures, environment and climate action; points out, however, that the error rate of 2.7% for rural development represents a considerable improvement on the situation in previous years; observes that high-risk expenditure mainly concerned reimbursement-based payments, for instance in the fields of cohesion and rural development, where Union spending is managed by Member States; understands that high-risk expenditure is often subject to complex rules and eligibility criteria; calls on the Commission and the Member States to further reduce the error rate and financial corrections;

Or. en
Amendment 4
Mazaly Aguilar

Draft opinion
Paragraph 2 a (new)

2a. Acknowledges, in view of the repeated customs duty violations in the case of agricultural imports from Morocco, that the Commission and the Member States need to strengthen control systems and effectively prevent fraud so as not to penalise European producers;

Or. es

Amendment 5
Zbigniew Kuźmiuk

Draft opinion
Paragraph 2 a (new)

2 a. Stresses, in this context, that the extended eligibility and control criteria proposed in the so-called new delivery model of the CAP pose a new challenge for Member States’ administrations and beneficiaries; stresses that every effort should be made to minimise the risk of loss of funds for final beneficiaries;

Or. pl

Amendment 6
Zbigniew Kuźmiuk

Draft opinion
Paragraph 3
3. Is satisfied that the level of expenditure on direct payments, compared to the net ceilings laid down in Regulation (EU) No 1307/2013, have reached 99% since 2017; notes that, for the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD), execution had reached a satisfactory rate at an average of 50% of the total envelope by the end of 2019;

3. Is satisfied that the level of expenditure on direct payments, compared to the net ceilings laid down in Regulation (EU) No 1307/2013, have reached 99% since 2017; notes that, for the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD), execution had reached a satisfactory rate at an average of 50% of the total envelope by the end of 2019; is concerned, at the same time, that the new requirements for sustainable farming, in particular with regard to the 2030 climate and environmental objectives, together with the reduction in the overall CAP budget for 2021-2027, may hamper the implementation of the budget under the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development, especially in the early period of their implementation, and risk damaging the profitability for small farms in particular; stresses that the introduction of new CAP implementation requirements must be followed by adequate funding at EU level;

Amendment 7
Michaela Šojdrová
Draft opinion
Paragraph 3

3. Is satisfied that the level of expenditure on direct payments, compared to the net ceilings laid down in Regulation (EU) No 1307/2013, have reached 99% since 2017; notes that, for the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD), execution had reached a satisfactory rate at an average of 50% of the total envelope by the end of 2019;

Amendment
3. Is satisfied that the level of expenditure on direct payments, compared to the net ceilings laid down in Regulation (EU) No 1307/2013, have reached 99% since 2017; notes that, for the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD), execution had reached a satisfactory rate at an average of 50% of the total envelope by the end of 2019; asks the Commission to publish the expenditure on direct payments and the level of drawing from the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development
(EAFRD) per Member State;

Or. en

Amendment 8
Eric Andrieu

Draft opinion
Paragraph 3 a (new)

Draft opinion
Amendment

3a. Stresses that the very high levels of expenditure in relation to direct payment ceilings are nevertheless not very effective and weaken the efficiency of public funds paid out in the form of decoupled aid per hectare, insofar as this type of aid is granted irrespective of the level of revenue and price and regardless of the production methods; considers it necessary to abandon this approach to revenue and budget consumption as it does not benefit the Community and has numerous adverse implications, such as the capitalisation of the price of farmland and revenue capture based on the sector;

Or. fr

Amendment 9
Paolo De Castro, Clara Aguilera, Eric Andrieu, Carmen Avram, Juozas Olekas, Pina Picierno, Ivo Hristov

Draft opinion
Paragraph 3 a (new)

Draft opinion
Amendment

3a. Highlights that the proper implementation of the CAP interventions is strictly related to the beneficiaries’ compliance with the commitments set out at Union level; stresses that the increased flexibility of Member States in allocating CAP subsidies risks further aggravating
abuses, and urges therefore the Commission to avoid renationalisation of the CAP;

Amendment 10
Mazaly Aguilar

Draft opinion
Paragraph 3 a (new)

3a. Highlights that the disproportional complexity and bureaucracy forced upon CAP beneficiaries is paradoxical given the ongoing digitisation process and one-stop shop. We therefore call on the Commission and the Member States to simplify to the extent possible the obligations resulting from the new green architecture;

Amendment 11
Anne Sander

Draft opinion
Paragraph 3 a (new)

3 a. Stresses that the current CAP controls and audit system has proven very efficient in ensuring the protection of the Union's financial interests, regulatory stability and equal treatment among farmers and other beneficiaries;

Amendment 12
Draft opinion
Paragraph 3 a (new)

Draft opinion

3 a. Recalls that the lack of convergence of external direct payments distorts the conditions of competition in the EU’s common market and runs counter to the objectives of EU cohesion policy;

Or. pl

Amendment 13
Eric Andrieu

Draft opinion
Paragraph 3 b (new)

Draft opinion

3b. Considers that the EAGF should be part of a counter-cyclical approach by increasing the share of budgetary resources not previously allocated to Member States; maintains that having the means to rapidly respond to overproduction crises as well as counter-cyclical coupled aid to restore the CAP’s leadership capacity is essential for increasing its effectiveness and efficiency; recalls that the European Union is the only WTO member that continues to use decoupled aid and that in order to overcome the multilateralism crisis the principle of decoupling, which is broadly considered a form of dumping, must be abandoned;

Or. fr

Amendment 14
Paolo De Castro, Clara Aguilera, Eric Andrieu, Carmen Avram, Juozas Olekas, Pina
Picierno, Ivo Hristov

Draft opinion
Paragraph 3 b (new)

Draft opinion

3 b. Notes that the current compliance system has proven effective as recognised by the ECA and has ensured equal treatment and efficient implementation across the Union; is strongly concerned that a new, hybrid system without Union-wide eligibility rules does not contribute in terms of either simplification or performance of the CAP, and puts at risk the equal treatment of farmers and Member States; stresses that the new control and audit system might increase significantly administrative burden and lead to disproportionate loss of resources, due to its complexity;

Or. en

Amendment 15
Anne Sander

Draft opinion
Paragraph 3 b (new)

Draft opinion

3 b. Is concerned that the increased flexibility proposed under the new delivery model and to be granted to Member States in designing their own national control system and rules could lead to divergence of national practices and aggravate misuse and abuse of Union funds;

Or. en

Amendment 16
Mazaly Aguilar
3b. Considers that, in view of the lack of specific CAP instruments to balance the functioning of the food supply chain, the pressing priority is to continue legislating so that farmers are no longer the weakest link in the chain;

Or. es

3 c. Is equally concerned that a system for eligibility of expenditure at Union level solely based on output indicators would not provide simplification or contribute to enhancing the performance of the CAP; considers, on the contrary, that it would lead to additional complexity and increased reductions of payments related to inadequate budgetary planning, while putting at risk the financial credibility of the policy;

Or. en

3 d. Considers that sufficient safeguards should be introduced to ensure
the robustness of the CAP delivery model in terms of financial management; stresses the need, in accordance with the single audit principle, to increase the efficiency of the certification bodies and the scope of their tasks, as they are key elements for providing independent assurance of the proper financial management of CAP funds;

Or. en

Amendment 19
Michal Wiezik

Draft opinion
Paragraph 4

Draft opinion

4. Considers that simplification for final beneficiaries, in particular for young and new farmers, should be a priority for Member States when carrying out their strategic planning;

Amendment

4. Considers that simplification for final beneficiaries, by reducing the administrative burden, in particular for young and new farmers, should be a priority for Member States when carrying out their strategic planning while ensuring that sound financial management, accountability and transparency remain in place to protect the Union budget against fraud and financial irregularities;

Or. en

Amendment 20
Pär Holmgren
on behalf of the Verts/ALE Group
Bronis Ropé

Draft opinion
Paragraph 4

Draft opinion

4. Considers that simplification for final beneficiaries, in particular for young and new farmers, should be a priority for

Amendment

4. Considers that sufficient and accessible support to young farmers, new entrants and small farmers from the CAP
is essential; stresses that investments to develop short supply chains and direct sales to consumers, particularly via investments made by young farmers, new entrants and small farmers, should be a priority for Member States when carrying out their strategic planning;

Or. en

Amendment 21
Daniel Buda

Draft opinion
Paragraph 4

Draft opinion

4. Considers that simplification for final beneficiaries, in particular for young and new farmers, should be a priority for Member States when carrying out their strategic planning;

Amendment

4. Considers that simplification for final beneficiaries, in particular for young and new farmers, should be a priority for Member States when carrying out their strategic planning; **stresses the need to introduce procedures, at the implementation stage of the national strategic plans, that are as flexible as possible and tailored to specific needs**;

Or. ro

Amendment 22
Zbigniew Kuźmiuk

Draft opinion
Paragraph 4

Draft opinion

4. Considers that simplification for final beneficiaries, in particular for young and new farmers, should be a priority for Member States when carrying out their strategic planning;

Amendment

4. Considers that simplification for final beneficiaries, in particular for **small rural farms as well as** young and new farmers, should be a priority for Member States when carrying out their strategic planning;

Or. pl
Amendment 23
Mazaly Aguilar

Draft opinion
Paragraph 4 a (new)

Draft opinion

Amendment

4a. Warns that public CAP spending risks being misperceived by the European taxpayer if the same environmental and food safety laws in force in the EU do not apply to products imported from third countries; calls on the Commission to review the operation of safeguard clauses in trade agreements to facilitate and extend their application beyond temporary market situations;

Or. es

Amendment 24
Pär Holmgren
on behalf of the Verts/ALE Group
Bronis Ropé

Draft opinion
Paragraph 4 a (new)

Draft opinion

Amendment

4 a. Recalls that one of the main objectives of the CAP is to provide income stability to farmers and support for the maintenance and creation of jobs across the Union territory; finds that in less developed rural areas, contrary to its main objectives, the CAP is primarily supporting big landowners, with less support going to smaller farmers working the land;

Or. en
Amendment 25
Paolo De Castro, Clara Aguilera, Eric Andrieu, Carmen Avram, Juozas Olekas, Pina Picierro, Ivo Hristov

Draft opinion
Paragraph 4 a (new)

Draft opinion

Amendment

4 a. Highlights that CAP support to young farmers has proven to be an essential tool, to be further strengthened; believes that digitalisation and innovation could be decisive instruments for the revitalisation of rural areas making them more attractive to young farmers;

Or. en

Amendment 26
Daniel Buda

Draft opinion
Paragraph 4 a (new)

Draft opinion

Amendment

4a. Highlights the launch in 2019 of the Arachne pilot project, an IT programme for identifying high fraud risk beneficiaries, conflicts of interest and irregularities, and stresses the need for payment agencies to make widespread use of this instrument;

Or. ro

Amendment 27
Pär Holmgren
on behalf of the Verts/ALE Group
Bronis Ropé

Draft opinion
Paragraph 4 b (new)
Draft opinion

4 b. Highlights the Court of Auditors' conclusions in its special report No 10/2018 that the Basic Payment Scheme has had a limited impact on internal convergence in aid levels; recalls the commitment of the Member States to achieve equalisation of payments across the Union by 2013, first noted in the European Council's Presidency Conclusions of 24-25 October 2002, and now overdue by several years;

Or. en

Amendment 28
Paolo De Castro, Clara Aguilera, Eric Andrieu, Carmen Avram, Juozas Olekas, Pina Picierino, Ivo Hristov

Draft opinion
Paragraph 4 b (new)

Draft opinion

4 b. Stresses that investments contributing to a resilient, sustainable and digital economic recovery in line with the agri-environment-climate objectives pursued under the European Green Deal are fundamental for the social and economic development of rural areas;

Or. en

Amendment 29
Michal Wiezik

Draft opinion
Paragraph 5

Draft opinion

5. Recalls that both the Commission and the Member States are responsible for addressing fraud in CAP spending;

5. Recalls that both the Commission and the Member States are responsible for addressing fraud in CAP spending;
encourages them to step up their efforts to prevent and detect fraud, in cooperation with the anti-fraud office (OLAF); stresses the importance of the Commission’s continuous encouragement of the paying agencies to use the Arachne tool to identify potential risks; regrets however the fact that there has not been any update of DG AGRI’s fraud risk analysis since 2016 and that neither OLAF nor DG AGRI assessed Member States’ measures to prevent and fight fraud in CAP spending;

Or. en

Amendment 30
Daniel Buda

Draft opinion
Paragraph 5

Draft opinion

5. Recalls that both the Commission and the Member States are responsible for addressing fraud in CAP spending; encourages them to step up their efforts to prevent and detect fraud, in cooperation with the anti-fraud office (OLAF);

Amendment

5. Recalls that both the Commission and the Member States are responsible for addressing fraud in CAP spending; encourages them to step up their efforts to prevent and detect fraud, in cooperation with the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF), and stresses the need for increased cooperation between the Commission and Member State authorities with a view to disseminating information on the most frequent types of CAP fraud;

Or. ro

Amendment 31
Pär Holmgren
on behalf of the Verts/ALE Group

Draft opinion
Paragraph 5
5. Recalls that both the Commission and the Member States are responsible for addressing fraud in CAP spending; encourages them to step up their efforts to prevent and detect fraud, in cooperation with the anti-fraud office (OLAF);

5. Reiterates the importance of harnessing all possible measures to safeguard the CAP budget against fraud; recalls that both the Commission and the Member States are responsible for addressing fraud in CAP spending; encourages them to step up their efforts to prevent and detect fraud, in cooperation with the anti-fraud office (OLAF);

Amendment 32
Michaela Šojdrová

Draft opinion
Paragraph 5

Draft opinion

5. Recalls that both the Commission and the Member States are responsible for addressing fraud in CAP spending; encourages them to step up their efforts to prevent and detect fraud, in cooperation with the anti-fraud office (OLAF);

Amendment

5. Recalls that both the Commission and the Member States are responsible for addressing fraud in CAP spending; encourages them to step up their efforts to prevent and detect fraud, in cooperation with the anti-fraud office (OLAF); invites them to publish statistics on closed cases of detected fraud in CAP spending per Member State;

Amendment 33
Pär Holmgren
on behalf of the Verts/ALE Group
Bronis Ropé

Draft opinion
Paragraph 5 a (new)

Draft opinion

5 a. Notes, with concern, that some Member States' authorities are
systematically reporting no fraud or irregularities, which casts doubt over the reliability and independence of the controls carried out by those authorities; notes that neither the Commission nor OLAF assessed Member States’ measures to prevent and fight fraud in CAP spending, and encourages them to step up their efforts in doing so;

Amendment 34
Zbigniew Kuźmiuk

Draft opinion
Paragraph 5 a (new)

5 a. Welcomes the Commission’s statements that cutting red tape and simplifying procedures for beneficiaries should be one of the guiding principles for the design of the next Multiannual Financial Framework;

Amendment 35
Paolo De Castro, Clara Aguilera, Eric Andrieu, Carmen Avram, Juozas Olekas, Pina Picierno, Ivo Hristov

Draft opinion
Paragraph 5 a (new)

5 a. Calls on the Commission to update its analysis of CAP fraud risks more frequently; encourages it to assess Member States’ fraud prevention measures, sharing best practices;
Amendment 36
Mazaly Aguilar

Draft opinion
Paragraph 5 a (new)

5a. Highlights how well voluntary coupled payments generally work to support sectors at serious risk of abandonment;

Amendment

Or. es

Amendment 37
Pär Holmgren
on behalf of the Verts/ALE Group

Draft opinion
Paragraph 5 b (new)

5 b. Notes, with concern, that the Commission has not updated its analysis of CAP fraud risk since 2016; encourages the Commission to update its analysis more frequently, particularly in view of the new CAP, as well as recent market measures implemented in response to COVID-19; recalls in that respect that the 2019 Report on the Protection of the EU’s Financial Interests (PIF report) identified market measures as the area presenting highest risk of fraud, including high value fraud;

Amendment

Or. en

Amendment 38
Zbigniew Kuźmiuk

Draft opinion
Paragraph 5 b (new)

Draft opinion

Amendment

5 b. Points out that the agricultural sector was particularly affected by the COVID-19 outbreak last year, increasing the risk of instability in farmers’ basic income; therefore, in the years ahead, particular emphasis should be placed under the new CAP delivery model on ensuring the regularity of payments to final beneficiaries of the CAP;

Or. pl

Amendment 39
Mazaly Aguilar

Draft opinion
Paragraph 5 b (new)

Draft opinion

Amendment

5 b. Points out that promotional funds are essential for opening and consolidating new markets; calls on the Commission to ensure that the ecological model is promoted in the same way as other equally sustainable models, such as integrated production or precision farming;

Or. es

Amendment 40
Paolo De Castro, Clara Aguilera, Eric Andrieu, Carmen Avram, Juozas Olekas, Pina Picierno, Ivo Hristov

Draft opinion
Paragraph 5 b (new)

Draft opinion

Amendment

5 b. Recalls its concern at the alleged cases of conflict of interests and land-
grabbing by oligarchs with possible involvement by governments and public authorities; invites the Commission to further intensify the controls in order to better identify the final destination of CAP funds;

Amendment 41
Pär Holmgren
on behalf of the Verts/ALE Group

Draft opinion
Paragraph 5 c (new)

5c. Welcomes the Commission's launch of the Arachne pilot project to identify risks of fraud; notes that as of March 2020 only 12 paying agencies in nine Member States were participating in the Arachne pilot project; supports the Commission proposal to make the use of that tool mandatory and encourages the Commission to disseminate best practices in the use of Arachne to facilitate its use by paying agencies;

Amendment 42
Mazaly Aguilar

Draft opinion
Paragraph 5 c (new)

5c. Emphasises the role of basic income support in the CAP and its contribution to the maintenance of agricultural and livestock activity, curbing the rural exodus and promoting a vibrant and dynamic rural environment;
Amendment 43
Pär Holmgren
on behalf of the Verts/ALE Group

Draft opinion
Paragraph 5 d (new)

Draft opinion

Amendment

5 d. Stresses that CAP payments must benefit those working the land and also the farming community; stresses that Union agriculture is best served when funding encourages ownership for those active in agricultural production and ecosystem services; calls on the Commission to make use of and combine the systems and databases at its disposal in order to identify and ensure transparency on the ultimate beneficial owners, in case of agricultural holdings which form part of a larger corporate structure, in order to better distinguish the final destination of CAP funds; notes that the artificial creation of conditions for receiving support continues to be a common type of fraud, as highlighted and reiterated respectively in the 2017 and 2019 reports on the Protection of the EU’s Financial Interests;

Amendment 44
Pär Holmgren
on behalf of the Verts/ALE Group

Draft opinion
Paragraph 5 e (new)

Draft opinion

Amendment

5 e. Recalls that one of the main objectives of the CAP is sustainable
management of natural resources, climate action and biodiversity; is concerned that the current CAP regime is not supporting the Union in achieving the targets of Paris Agreement, the European Green Deal and its strategies; calls on the Commission to propose amendments to the CAP proposals currently under negotiation to bring the next reform in line with the European Green Deal and to spell out the achievement of the relevant European Green Deal targets as one the CAP's objectives;

Or. en

Amendment 45
Pär Holmgren
on behalf of the Verts/ALE Group

Draft opinion
Paragraph 5 f (new)

Draft opinion

Amendment

5 f. Notes that a greener CAP, in line with the Paris Agreement and the European Green Deal, would not only support the Union in achieving its targets, but also increase efficiency in the use of public money, by limiting the negative externalities linked to agricultural practices and shifting focus to prevention rather than cure;

Or. en

Amendment 46
Pär Holmgren
on behalf of the Verts/ALE Group

Draft opinion
Paragraph 5 g (new)

Draft opinion

Amendment
5 g. Regrets that there have been, as yet, no reliable indicators measuring the results and impacts of direct payment schemes and rural development programmes in relation to biodiversity in the Commission's tracking of CAP spending; highlights that, in tracking climate expenditure under the CAP, the margin of approximation is very high and tends to overestimate the likely significance of the contribution of the CAP instrument or measure to climate mitigation and adaptation objectives; emphasises that the Commission must develop reliable biodiversity and climate indicators to assess the impacts of the CAP, in order to develop more effective CAP payment schemes and instruments; stresses that, if the proposed shift to a performance-based CAP is to be achieved, it will require the development of a comprehensive set of common result indicators and the thorough application of those indicators;

Or. en

Amendment 47
Pär Holmgren
on behalf of the Verts/ALE Group

Draft opinion
Paragraph 5 h (new)

Draft opinion

5 h. Regrets the fact that the Commission and the Member States have not yet introduced the full scope of the Performance Principle that includes the Economy, Efficiency, Effectiveness but recently also Ecology, Equality and Ethics to the policy-making of CAP; finds this to be necessary in order to better address problems such as pollution, payment inequalities to smaller farms and challenges such as gender mainstreaming; calls on the Commission
to widen the scope of the Union goals that the CAP should be achieving;

Amendment 48
Pär Holmgren
on behalf of the Verts/ALE Group
Bronis Ropé

Draft opinion
Paragraph 5 i (new)

5 i. Calls on the Commission to continue to closely monitor ongoing and future trade agreements with third countries with respect to food safety and environmental and animal welfare standards; urges the Commission to make sure that there is a strong sustainability chapter in all trade agreements and that trade partners comply fully with requirements provided for therein; notes the need for a level playing field also in terms of environmental standards and animal welfare, and calls on the Commission to further develop legislation on due diligence in the supply chain to ensure that standards in Union agriculture are not undermined or compromised;

Amendment 49
Pär Holmgren
on behalf of the Verts/ALE Group

Draft opinion
Paragraph 5 j (new)

5 j. Urges the Commission to be extra
vigilant on rule of law matters as regards CAP funds; reiterates the call for a special report by the Court of Auditors on land-grabbing and its potential impact on the CAP.