

**Question for written answer E-003914/2016
to the Commission**

Rule 130

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Subject: Enhancing the competitiveness of agriculture in the Rural Development Programme of the Czech Republic

One of the main objectives of the second pillar of the common agricultural policy (CAP) 2014-2020 is competitive and ecologically sustainable agriculture. The EU has recognised that in order to achieve this objective it is essential to support small farms. Under the Rural Development Programme (RDP) in the Czech Republic, however, support is primarily given to large farms for projects up to CZK 150 million.

The preference for large-scale projects which only large farms can undertake has a negative impact on competitiveness in agriculture, employment in rural areas and the environment. Precisely these problems could, however, be avoided through targeted support for small farmers.

The current set-up of the RDP poses a major problem for small farms in the Czech Republic. I would therefore like to ask the following questions:

1. Preliminary information from the first round of calls under the RDP indicates that the projects submitted are well below the ceilings which the Czech Republic has set. Is it desirable for the Czech Republic to direct RDP funds primarily to supporting large-scale projects with a value of up to CZK 150 million?
2. It is clear that projects costing tens of millions of CZK can only be carried out by large farms. Does the Commission not consider that the competitiveness of small agricultural holdings is reduced due to this?
3. Large-scale projects have been shown to have a negative impact on rural development, which the CAP sought to avoid. Does the Commission intend to present legislation to reduce the priority given to large projects and with them to large enterprises in agriculture?