

WRITTEN QUESTION P-3527/03  
by Rijk van Dam (EDD)  
to the Commission

Subject: Court of Auditors Special Report No 4/2003 on rural development: support for less-favoured areas

In paragraph 77 of its Special Report 4/2003<sup>1</sup>, the Court of Auditors of the EC states, inter alia, that the Commission should perform an in-depth review of the existing classifications of all the less-favoured areas. In its reply the Commission states, inter alia, that the evaluation of the existing programmes will yield new information for use in a review.

1. On the basis of the new information obtained by means of monitoring and evaluation, has the Commission concluded that the existing classifications of less-favoured areas are no longer valid and that overcompensation therefore needs to be prevented or is inevitable in the existing programmes?
2. If the Commission can confirm this, what corrective action has it now taken? If the Commission denies that the classifications are invalid, can it provide the requisite information for this and can it explicitly state that the existing classifications are valid and can be applied accurately so that the possibility of overcompensation may reasonably be deemed to be ruled out?
3. Does the Commission now have a clear and workable definition of the phenomenon of overcompensation, as this concept is not defined in Directive 75/268/EEC<sup>2</sup> or Regulation 1257/1999<sup>3</sup> or in ancillary legislation?
4. Is the Commission confident - and can it prove - that expenditure under the LFA scheme is now legal and regular? Can it also provide information to show that the enormous disparities in amounts of compensation per hectare or per farm between regions and Member States are justified?

---

<sup>1</sup> OJ C 151, 27.6.2003, p. 1.

<sup>2</sup> OJ L 128, 19.5.1975, p. 1.

<sup>3</sup> OJ L 160, 26.6.1999, p. 80.