

**Question for written answer P-008485/2011  
to the Commission**  
Rule 117  
**Peter Jahr (PPE)**

Subject: Reform of European agricultural policy - ceilings on direct payments

As part of the current agricultural reform, the Commission is planning to reduce or to cap direct payments to farmers. In implementing this, account is to be taken of a farm's employees and the pay they receive.

How does the Commission imagine that the number of a farm's employees and their wage levels can be offset against the reduced payment so that this new arrangement can be applied equally in all Member States without new red tape being imposed on farmers and administrative authorities?

According to the Commission's information, how many farms will be affected by such an arrangement in the EU, and what sum will result from the cuts applying to these farms?

How does the Commission assess this coupling of the direct payments with the workforce against the background of its own efforts in recent years to reduce coupled direct payments as far as possible?

Does the Commission believe that the coupling of direct payments with the workforce is WTO-compliant, and what grounds does it have for this belief?