

CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE OPTIMIZATION OF THE ECO-CONDITIONALITY SYSTEM IN DIRECT PAYMENTS FOR ROMANIAN FARMERS IN THE PERIOD 2021-2027

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Abstract

The paper proposes to conduct a study on the optimal use of the CAP's "eco-conditionality" instrument in the context of the revision of the normative framework and procedures regarding the schemes and support measures for farmers in the period 2015-2020 and the conditions applicable to them. Were also considered the significance of applying this instrument as well as the issues that may arise from their non-application/improper application.

In terms of eligibility requirements, declared surface, payment rights, and surface control sanctions, the results of the verification of surface payment requests for the years 2015 to 2021 reveal that a total of 7,800,417 payment requests (applicants) were made for a declared area of 9,684,116 ha (annual average), with a total payment request value of approximately €6,018,442.1 thousand. After the farmers' declared territories were verified, SAPS sanctions (unpaid amount) in the amount of €372,122.8 thousand were put into effect. The primary role of agriculture, which accords this industry a particular standing in EU regulations, is that of a supplier of agri-food goods for the general public's use. All strategies for developing, supporting, and funding the CAP are built on this role. We put forth the following suggestions in relation to the optimization of the cross-compliance mechanism within direct payments for farmers. To lessen the obligations for small agricultural holdings where the risk is lower, the eco-conditionality requirements must be designed in a way that takes into consideration the size of the agricultural holding. Farmers and their control bodies must be able to understand the mandatory requirements for farmers and their control elements. It is advisable to eliminate GAEC standards and SMR requirements that are difficult to audit and cannot be quantified. In any scenario, the quantity and nature of cross-compliance requirements must be altered. Mandatory standards for farmers and the aspects of their control must be pertinent and simple for farmers and control organizations to comprehend. It is advisable to eliminate GAEC standards and SMR requirements that are difficult to audit and cannot be quantified. In any scenario, the quantity and nature of cross-compliance requirements must be altered. Inspection quotas should be lowered if particular control bodies have risk analysis systems that adhere to Community legal requirements and information on the extent of compliance. Additionally, risk analysis models can be built for locations vulnerable to cross-compliance in order to decrease the control sample.

Key words: Common Agricultural Policy, direct payments, cross compliance rules.