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THE NEW DELIVERY MODEL OF THE EU CAP AFTER 2020

ABSTRACT

The EU Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) is one of the first common policies of the EU, since its creation has established unified rules for the Member States (MS) in terms of agricultural commodity market organization, farmers' support and later on for the development of rural areas, thus playing an important role in the creation of the EU common market. In time, mainly after expanding the area of implementation of the policy to large parts of the territory of Europe with all its diversity in natural and socio-economic conditions, it became clear that the common policy shall provide more flexibility for the MS in its implementation. The 2014 CAP reform introduced a certain level of subsidiarity, mainly by providing the flexibility in the implementation of common instruments and schemes. The proposal for the CAP after 2020 is a new and bigger step ahead by changing the policy approach "from rules and compliance to results and performance". Having in mind the importance of the CAP, the main challenge is to keep the policy common and at the same time better tailored to the needs of the regions in the EU.

Key words: Agricultural policy, EU, CAP, rural development, market organization, farmers' support.

JEL Classification: Q17, Q18.

1. INTRODUCTION

The Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) is among the very early common policies of the EU. Being the first Commissioner on agriculture and among primary leaders of the European Community, Sicco Mansholt has considered agriculture among the important economic sectors for rebuilding the European continent after the war. The CAP was established to provide stability and profitability to agriculture, at the same time assisting the political process of integration into the EU structures, as well as the economic integration, although there were some doubts about the clear and straightforward role of the policy, especially in the early years of the economic integration (Josling, Anderson, 2007). CAP was considered as an important contributor for the establishment of the Common market.

CAP was defined in 1957 by the Treaty of Rome establishing the European Economic Community. The treaty itself set out the main common objectives of the policy[1]:

a) to increase agricultural productivity by promoting technical progress and by ensuring the rational development of agricultural production and the optimum utilization of the factors of production, in particular labour;

b) to ensure a fair standard of living for the agricultural community, in particular by increasing the individual earnings of persons working in agriculture;

c) to stabilize markets;

d) to assure the availability of supplies;

e) to ensure that supplies reach consumers at reasonable prices.

Being designed as a common policy since its creation and reaching its main objectives, the three main principles of the policy were introduced:

1) *Market unity* with free trade among Member States, common prices and competition rules and harmonized health and veterinary requirements;

2) *Community (European) preference* – preference for European origin products to protect the common market against low-price imports and fluctuations in the world market;

3) *Financial solidarity* – establishment of a common fund for CAP financing, regardless of the type of product or of the member state for which the expenditures are made.

2. COMMON AGRICULTURAL POLICY AND ITS IMPLEMENTATION MODELS THROUGHOUT THE YEARS

With the first regulations for implementing the policy adopted in 1962, common market rules regarding prices, intervention on the market, protection of internal market from import and facilitation of export were established. The process of establishment of uniform product standards started, to continue in the coming years and decades with setting common food safety and quality requirements.

The specific CAP intervention instruments are defined in the framework of Common Market Organizations for the basic agricultural products, which establish rules for management of production and trade on EU level and common regimes in two aspects: internal, by setting common prices, limitation of supply, regulation of prices and production support and external, defining protection from 3rd countries' import (import duties, quotas, safeguard clauses) in combination with export subsidies. The two sides measures establish the so called "Forth Europe".

[1] Currently Article 39 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union – https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv:OJ.C_.2016.202.01.0001.01.ENG&toc=OJ:C:2016:202:TOC#C_2016202EN.01004701

The focused-on market management instruments prevailed in the early years of the CAP implementation in the 60s and the 70s. In the 80s, due to the production surpluses of some basic agricultural products caused by the combination of high level of guaranteed price and overall technological development, the intervention measures were complemented by production quotas as an instrument for limitation of production without decreasing the price. All market measures instruments were fully financed by the EU budget on solidarity principle and implemented uniformly in all Member States.

The first radical reform of the CAP, the ***MacSharry Reform from 1992***, was stirred both by domestic EU reasons and under external pressure for reform. Within the reform, reduction of the guaranteed prices for basic products like cereals (by 29%), beef and sheep meat (15%), tobacco and milk was implemented, replaced by introduction of sectoral direct payments, determined by area, headage of animal or ton. The newly introduced direct payments instrument, similarly to market measures, was implemented at EU level, financed by the EU budget and applied in a uniform manner.

The other novelty in the MacSharry reform is the introduction of rural development type of measures for facilitating changes of generation (retirement and transferring farmland to younger farmers), launching agro-environmental measures and diversification by promoting land use for other purposes (afforestation, tourism). In 2000, with ***Agenda 2000 CAP Reform***, Rural Development was significantly strengthened and recognized as a separate element of the agricultural policy, already divided into two complementary parts: First pillar – Direct payments and market measures and Second pillar – Rural development. For the second pillar of the CAP, funding of around 10% of the policy budget was foreseen for a number of measures:

- strengthening the agricultural and forestry sector;
- promotion of quality products;
- enhancing competitiveness;
- improving the quality of life in rural areas;
- diversification of agricultural holdings;
- early retirement from farming and support for young farmers;
- environmental protection through implementation of agro-environmental measures.

Rural Development measures were implemented with a fully different approach in comparison with direct payments and market measures, which were based on national programming, which took into consideration national needs and specificity.

Even after Agenda 2000 decisions for strengthening rural development based on national programming, still the majority of the CAP was implemented based on uniform measures, decided at EU level, implemented by the MS in accordance with the EU rules, financed with EU funds and under the strict monitoring of the European

Commission. Only about 10 to 15% of the CAP money was spent on the basis of MS programming and subsidiarity principle (Table 1):

Table 1

CAP expenditures by categories, 2000–2006, EUR mil. %

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Total I&II CAP pillar	40 506	41 534	43 521	44 379	43 579	48 466	49 799
Market measures	10 830	9 143	10 335	10 002	8 395	8 454	8 038
Direct payment	25 499	28 027	28 836	29 698	29 827	33 701	34 051
Rural Development	4 176	4 364	4 349	4 680	5 358	6 311	7 710
Rural Development, %	*10,3%*	*10,5%*	*10,0%*	*10,5%*	*12,3%*	*13,0%*	*15,5%*

Source: EC and own calculations.

After Agenda 2000 CAP Reform, the external pressure to reduce domestic support for agricultural production continued as well as the criticisms of the negative impact of the CAP on developing countries. Most importantly, the necessary adjustments in the perspective of the significant enlargement of the EU with the 10 New Member States from Central and Eastern Europe, led to new amendments in the EU agricultural policy.

The major ***2003 Fischler Reform*** introduced decoupled direct payments, based on the support received by producers during the 2000–2002 single reference period. In order to avoid abandonment of some types of production, part of the direct payments remained linked to production (for beef, sheep and goat meat, cereals). An entirely new element, the so called cross-compliance was introduced in the form of requirements for the receivers of direct payments, aimed at protecting the environment, natural resources, rural landscapes, ensuring food safety, health of people, animals and plants, animal welfare.

The Cross Compliance framework was set at EU level with some flexibility for the MS to specify the Good Agricultural and Environmental Conditions based on national specificities. The purpose was to respond to the public concern on the consequences of intensive agricultural production and to ensure the availability of safe and quality agricultural products. Rural development was strengthened by the process of modulation – diminution of support to farms that received more than € 5,000 direct payments and transferring the financial resources to the rural development financial package.

The Fischler Reform is considered by some researchers as the most ambitious reform in the CAP history (Swinnen, 2003). It introduced the long-awaited decoupling of support from production. The new policy approach linked support with publicly acknowledged priorities (public goods) such as environment protection, food safety and animal welfare (Gay, 2005). The rural development support was expanded at the expense of reducing payments to large farms.

In terms of model of implementation and governance, it should be mentioned that the majority of the policy instruments and measures continued to be defined at

EU level. Although the MS had some flexibility in deciding the steps and ambition in transition to the new approach to direct payments implementation (decoupled payments) and the level of keeping coupled payments, the flexibility was minor (2 years of transition) and all decoupled and coupled direct payments were implemented under the same EU defined rules and level of payments, fully financed by the EU budget and with shared management between the MS and the EC. Still, the strengthening of the Rural Development policy and its financing increased the money spend under national programs towards meeting national needs and priorities. In comparison with the year 2000, the rural development finance in 2013 tripled and increased twice as percentage of the CAP financing (Table 2).

It is also worth mentioning the other two new types of national programs which appeared after the mid-term review of the policy, the so called ***"Health Check" of the CAP in 2008*** – the national apiculture programs and national wine and vine programs. These can be considered as the first measures within the common organization of agricultural markets based on national programs and driven by the national needs and priorities, including a set of measures defined in the EU legislation.

Table 2

CAP expenditures by categories, 2007–2013, EUR mil. %

	2007	**2008**	**2009**	**2010**	**2011**	**2012**	**2013**
Total I&II CAP pillar	53 524	53 818	55 089	55 769	56 419	58 120	58 431
Market measures	5 604	5 720	7 235	4 608	3 946	3 979	3 617
Direct payments	37 046	37 569	39 114	39 676	40 178	40 880	41 658
Rural Development	10 874	10 529	8 740	11 486	12 295	13 261	13 156
Rural Development, %	*20.3%*	*19.6%*	*15.9%*	*20.6%*	*21.8%*	*22.8%*	*22.5%*

Source: EC and own calculations.

In terms of financing, the money dedicated for the two types of programs represent an insignificant part of the CAP budget or about 2% in 2013, but it represents an important part of the budget for market measures, with a share of about 35% in 2013 (Table 3).

Table 3

The financial support of the apiculture, wine and vine programs, 2013, EUR mil. %

	2013
Market measures (MM)	3 617
Wine	1 232
Apiculture	32
Wine & apiculture	1 264
Wine & apiculture in % from MM	34,9%
Wine & apiculture in % from CAP	2,2%

Source: EC and own calculations.

The major step in providing flexibility for MS in CAP implementation, including the direct payments measures, was made with the ***CAP Reform of 2014***. The main priority of the reform was the following:

- Convergence of support, externally (among the MS due to the significant differences in the average per hectare payment in the MS) and internally (among farmers in the MSs applying direct payments based on payment entitlements);
- Better targeting of direct payments to real agricultural producers whose main economic activity and source of income is agriculture, by introducing a definition for “active farmer”, with possibilities for the MS to fine tune the notion;
- Better distribution of payments among farmers by capping the direct payments for bigger beneficiaries and possibility for redistributive payment – higher payments for farmers with smaller amount of land, financed by flat-rate diminution of the average per hectare payment. The minimum capping was defined at EU level with the possibilities for further elaboration by the MS;
- Enhanced environmental & climate change requirements by introducing greening in the direct payments via payments for agricultural practices beneficial for the climate and the environment;
- Introduction of voluntary coupled direct payments limited to 15% of the MSs’ financial ceilings for direct payments. Coupled support may only be granted to those sectors or to those regions of a Member State where specific types of farming or specific agricultural sectors that are particularly important for economic, social or environmental reasons undergo certain difficulties;
- Voluntary implementation of simplified direct support scheme for small farmer based on lump sum per holding, as well as possibility of a special Rural development sub-program for small farmers;
- Additional direct support payment for young farmers complementing the basic per hectare payment for a limited number of hectares, combined with preferential access to rural development financing for young farmers;
- Possibility for MS to transfer funds between direct payments and Rural Development Programs so that they can better meet their policy goals and reflect their national needs and specificities;

After 2014, we can see a real flexibility in the implementation of direct payments – 4 out of 8 direct payments schemes are voluntary. For the first time there is a possibility for transferring money between the pillars (within the national ceilings and limits set in the Regulation). The new flexibility in direct payments, which on the basis of the national decisions by the MS could be calculated to approximately 14% of the financing for direct support, is complementing the program based on Rural development support to respond to the national needs and specificities in the implementation of the common EU policy (Table 4).

In conclusion, if we look back at the implementation models of the CAP throughout the years, the major evolution can be observed in direct payments. Due to their specificity to target the common market of the EU, most market measures were implemented uniformly in the EU, being governed centrally by the EC. After the Health Check in 2008, in the framework of the market measure financing, national programs for wine and vine and for apiculture were established, comprising measures and implementation system similar to the Rural development instruments. The real “nationally oriented” part of the CAP is related to rural development measures, which from the very beginning have been implemented on the basis of national programs.

Table 4

Distribution of direct payments after 2014, EUR mil. %

	2014	**2015**	**2016**	**2017**	**Voluntary DP sch.**	**2015**
Total I&II CAP pillar	55478	56733	56455	55808	Redistributive	1285
Market measures	2628	2772	3276	3144	VCS	4200
Direct payment	41660	42168	40809	41551	Young	317
Rural development	11190	11793	12370	11113	Total flexible	5802
Rural development, %	20,2	20,8	21,9	19,9	% from all DP	13.8

Source: EC and own calculations.

With the 2014 CAP reform, flexibility is gradually advancing in direct payments, which currently are still representing approximately 2/3 of the CAP financing. This can be considered as a normal evolution, more and more requested by the MS. In the recent decades, the policy objectives have broadened significantly. Starting with the simple objective for providing enough and affordable food for people, now the policy is targeting environmental protection and climate change mitigation, food safety, human, animal and plant health and animal welfare, higher food quality and protection of national specificity in products and production processes. CAP contributes to gender equity, reduction of regional disparities, economic development and provision of income for people from remote regions, as well as for small and medium-sized producers. These wider objectives have different challenges and targets in the different regions and countries of the EU. To better meet the expectations and needs of producers and consumers, to get closer to farmers, to adapt to the huge variety of natural, environmental and climate specificities, the policy needs to become more flexible and adjustable. Although flexibility in the 2014 CAP reform is at a completely new level, the MS are still requesting additional possibilities for national adaptations. This is one of the basic reasons for the fully new approach in governance and implementation of the CAP after 2020, proposed by the EC.

3. THE NEW GOVERNANCE AND DELIVERY MODEL AFTER 2020

In the future CAP, the EC is proposing significant changes in the implementation modality of the agricultural policy. The new approach is named by the Commission as “refocusing from rules and compliance to results and performance”. Greater freedom will be given to the MS in shaping the policy on national levels as well as in deciding the governance and control system. Countries have to decide how to best meet the common objectives defined at EU level, together with responding to the specific needs of their farmers, rural communities and the society as a whole. The interventions and the set of measures will be identified in the EU legislation, together with indicators to assess progress. The MS will select which of the listed interventions will apply in order to meet the common objectives and respond to the national needs. It is the EC's responsibility to protect the single market while guaranteeing an even and fair playing field for all farmers throughout the Union.

The Member States will have to elaborate a comprehensive CAP Strategic Plan for a period of 7 years, which, based on an extensive analysis of their needs, should define a strategy on how these needs will be met, in line with the overall EU objectives, by using actions under both CAP pillars. The plans will also set the specific country targets for reaching the EU objectives. The progress towards achieving the objectives will be verified by the EC by means of yearly reporting. The financing of the national plan will come both from the European Agricultural Guarantee Fund (EAGF) and from the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD), co-financed by national funding where foreseen. As defined in the EU Regulation, Member States and the Commission shall cooperate to ensure effective coordination in the implementation of CAP Strategic Plans, taking account of the principles of proportionality and shared management.

Each CAP Strategic Plan shall contain a number of sections, including assessment of needs, intervention strategy, description of direct payments, sectoral and rural development interventions specified in the strategy, target and financial plans, a description of the governance and coordination system, evidence for policy modernization and simplification as well as for the diminution of the administrative burden for final beneficiaries.

After identifying the needs for each EU specific objective based on the SWOT analysis, all the needs shall be described, regardless whether they will be addressed through the CAP Strategic Plan or not. These must be prioritized and ranked and the options made to determine why certain identified needs are not addressed or partially addressed in the CAP Strategic Plan have to be justified.

The intervention strategy shall set out targets for each relevant common and specific result indicators and related milestones for the specific CAP objectives. The value of these targets has to be justified having in view the assessment of needs. The interventions must be designed to address the specific situation in the country or area, based on sound intervention logic, supported by the ex-ante evaluation, the SWOT analysis and the assessment of needs. It shall be well demonstrated how the interventions allow reaching the targets, how they are mutually coherent and compatible and why the allocated financial resources to the interventions are justified and adequate to reach the established targets.

The intervention strategy shall also provide an overview of the environmental and climate architecture of the plan, which describes the complementarities between the conditionality (the new and enhanced Cross Compliance requirements) and the different interventions addressing the specific environmental- and climate-related objectives under the First Pillar (direct payments) and the Second Pillar (Rural Development), as well as the way to achieve a higher overall contribution compared to the current programming period (2014–2020). In relation to the basic objective to attract young farmers and facilitate their business development, an overview of all relevant interventions and specific conditions must be presented as well as the interplay with national instruments with a view of improving the consistency between the EU and national actions in this area. An overview of the sector-related interventions, including coupled income support shall be included, an explanation referring to the interventions that will contribute to a coherent and integrated approach to risk management and a description of the interplay between national and regional interventions.

The intervention in the Strategic plan has to be described by type, territorial scope, specific design or requirements that ensure an effective contribution to the specific objectives, eligibility conditions, annual planned outputs, the unit amount with relevant justification, form and rate of support and annual financial allocation for the intervention.

Each Member State has to define and describe in the Strategic plan an efficient and functional Governance and coordination system, which must include the identification of all involved governance bodies, the role of delegated and intermediate bodies, if any, detailed information on the control systems and penalties, the integrated administration and control system, the control and penalty system for conditionality, the competent control bodies responsible for the checks and description of the monitoring and reporting structure.

In addition, the MS have to specify in the CAP Strategic Plan how it will contribute to fostering and sharing knowledge, innovation and digitalization through description of the organizational set-up of the AKIS[2], how advisory services will work together within the framework of the AKIS and how advice and innovation support services will be provided, as well as the description of the strategy for the development of digital technologies in agriculture and rural areas and for the use of these technologies to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the CAP Strategic Plan interventions.

The EC role in relation to the CAP Strategic Plans is to assess them on the basis of the completeness of the plans, the consistency and coherence with the general principles of the EU law, with the relevant regulations, with their effective contribution to the specific EU objectives, the impact on the proper functioning of the internal market and distortion of competition, the level of administrative burden

[2] The concept of Agriculture Knowledge and Innovation Systems (AKIS) is used to describe how people and organizations join together to promote mutual learning, to generate, share, and use agriculture related knowledge and information. AKIS can include farming practice, businesses, authorities, research, etc. and can vary a lot, depending on the country or sector. More information can be found on https://ec.europa.eu/eip/agriculture/sites/agri-eip/files/eip-agri_brochure_knowledge_systems_2018_en_web.pdf

on beneficiaries and administration. The assessment has to address the adequacy of the strategy of the CAP Strategic Plan, the corresponding specific objectives, targets, interventions and the allocation of budgetary resources to meet the specific CAP Strategic Plan objectives through the proposed set of interventions on the basis of the SWOT analysis and ex-ante evaluation. The Commission can approve the CAP Strategic Plan provided that the included information is satisfied, the plan is compatible with the general principles of the EU law and the relevant regulations. After approval and coming into force, the Member States can ask for amendments in the Plan once a year, which also need to be approved by the EC.

For the successful implementation of the CAP Strategic Plan, the Member States must ensure that a management and control system is set up to ensures a clear allocation and separation of functions between the Managing Authority and other involved bodies. The effective functioning of the system is full responsibility of the countries. The Member States have to designate a Managing Authority responsible for managing and implementing the CAP Strategic Plan in an efficient, effective and correct way. There shall be an appropriate electronic system with statistical information on the plan and its implementation necessary for monitoring and evaluation. The beneficiaries and other bodies involved in the implementation must be informed on their obligations resulting from the aid granted, the requirements concerning the provision of data to the Managing Authority and the recording of outputs and results as well as other relevant information, including the list of the statutory management requirements and the minimum standards of good agricultural and environmental conditions established.

Member States shall also set up a Monitoring Committee to oversee the implementation of the CAP Strategic Plan. The Monitoring Committee shall meet at least once a year and shall review all issues that affect the CAP Strategic Plan progress towards achieving its targets. There shall be a balanced representation of the relevant public authorities and intermediate bodies and of economic and social partners. Representatives of the European Commission will also participate in the work of the Monitoring Committee in an advisory capacity. The Monitoring Committee shall give its opinion on the draft CAP Strategic Plan, the methodology and criteria used for the selection of operations, the annual performance reports, the evaluation plan and any amendment of the plan. The Committee should also examine the progress in the plan implementation and in achieving the milestones and targets, progress made in carrying out evaluations, syntheses of evaluations and any follow-up given to findings.

Important part of the successful governance and implementation of the future CAP is the establishment of a good performance framework, which allows reporting, monitoring and evaluation of the performance of the plan during its implementation. The performance framework must include a set of common context, output, result and impact indicators, targets and annual milestones established in relation to the relevant specific objective using result indicators, data collection system, regular reporting on performance, monitoring and evaluation activities, mechanisms for rewarding good performance and for addressing low performance. The performance framework shall aim to assess the impact, effectiveness, efficiency and relevance of the interventions and monitor progress made towards achieving the targets of the plans.

Annual performance reports on the implementation of the CAP Strategic Plan have to be submitted to the EC. They must contain qualitative and quantitative information on the implementation of the plan by reference to financial data, output and result indicators and shall have information about obtained outputs, expenditure, results and distance to respective targets. On the basis of the provided information, the Commission will carry out an annual performance review and an annual performance clearance (payments). If the reported value of one or more result indicators reveals a gap of more than 25% from the respective milestone for the reporting year, the Commission may ask the Member State to submit an action plan describing the intended remedial actions and the expected timeframe. The annual performance reports must be made available to the public.

4. CONCLUSIONS

The CAP governance and delivery system after 2020 is planned to be completely different. The planning of the policy can be expected to be more coherent as all policy measures (under both pillars) will be programmed together within a single national plan. For the first time direct payments will be part of a programming process and linked with the general EU objectives and designed for meeting the identified national needs and targets. On the other hand, the programming process itself will become more complicated and demanding for the national administration, which will have to successfully combine all type of measures and interventions in a comprehensible system within the single document.

The implementation and control system will also be uniform, being set in the CAP Strategic Plan. The freedom and flexibility of the Member States in designing the eligibility conditions for the interventions, the implementation and control processes at national level are much greater. There will be no direct compliance control from the EC on beneficiary level, which should reduce the administrative burden for the national authorities. At the same time this will increase the responsibilities of the national bodies in the design and successful implementation of the governance system. We can see a real rebalancing of responsibilities between Brussels and the Member States, based on greater subsidiarity for the Member States, as these have requested many times in the recent years.

The future will show if the Member States will manage to cope with the challenges of the new governance system and delivery model, whether the disparities among the countries will not grow and most importantly, if the EU will manage to keep its agricultural policy common, as it has been the case, since its creation in the 1960s.

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