
Common Agricultural Policy Reforms Focused On Protecting the Environment, Challenging The Future

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Abstract – In the first 30 years of the Common Agricultural Policy, farmers benefited from particularly stable mechanisms to achieve their production according to food standards with guaranteed prices for most agricultural products with border protection against imports and financial aid to be able to export certain products, as well as market management measures for the storage of surpluses. Over time, however, the population grew and sustained agricultural production was needed, a situation that led to both large public stocks and massive exports. That is why European spending is rising sharply and tensions are emerging on the international stage where Europe is accused of contributing to lower world agricultural prices. In addition, European farms has been criticized for its health and environmental consequences. This article examines the future of the reform of the Common Agricultural Policy, which seeks to focus on a cleaner environment and biodiversity.

Keywords – Common Agricultural Policy, European Union, Ecology, Biodiversity.

I. INTRODUCTION

The Common Agricultural Policy for the next period will also be based on two pillars, but introduces a new way of governing with strategic national programs and new environmental and climate ambitions, through increased eco-regimes and conditionality. Another novelty is the establishment and monitoring by the European Commission of performance indicators for actions and aid allocated, in addition to compliance checks. It must be said that the new CAP, which will apply on January 1, 2023, resonates with the Green Deal, with its two variants, Farm to Fork and the Biodiversity Strategy.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) is a European Union policy dedicated to agriculture and rural development. It was provided for in the Treaty of Rome of 25 March 1957 and entered into force on 30 July 1962. It remains, even today, the most integrated policy of the European Union. It is organized over a seven-year programming period. The last reform is from 2014, and the next one was to enter into force in 2021. The common agricultural policy has an established budget of about 387 billion euros for 7 years.

Initially, the Common Agricultural Policy was mainly aimed at developing agricultural production in order to feed Europe's population at the end of World War II and to ensure the continent's food sovereignty. European countries also wanted to improve farmers' incomes, stabilize markets and ensure reasonable prices for consumers. Two main instruments for stimulating European agriculture were then implemented: import duties, which act as a deterrent, and price guarantees for farmers.

Clearly, no matter how much they produce, they are guaranteed to see their products bought by the European Union. This policy quickly paid off. European production has grown considerably to overproduction. And the European Union has had to reform the text of the CAP, but its fundamentals remain unchanged. Over the years,

other dimensions, such as sustainable development, the fight against climate change, diversification and the vitality of the rural economy have become as important as supporting food production.

The Common Agricultural Policy is divided into two pillars. The former concentrates more than two-thirds of the budget. It refers to the aid directly paid to farmers, regardless of what they produce, but depending on the area they cultivate, giving farmers a guaranteed minimum income. This aid may be combined with other types of aid, provided that the eligibility criteria are met. Young farmers under the age of 40 can receive, for example, “payment for young farmers”.

The second pillar concerns rural development policy. Its package, around 25% of the budget, finances a wide range of measures: farm modernization, promotion of rural tourism, farmer training and the development of organic farming.

III. THE FUTURE OF THE COMMON AGRICULTURAL POLICY

Two main objectives are stated: the simplification of the Common Agricultural Policy and its attribution to a real ecological form. With regard to simplification, the post-2020 Common Agricultural Policy should be accompanied by a strengthening of the “subsidiarity principle”. Clearly, Member States will have more room for maneuver in determining how to implement the Common Agricultural Policy in their territory. This reform is based on the observation that several types of agriculture coexist in the European Union and that the specificities of each territory must be taken into account in order to achieve the objectives set by the CAP.

In this context, the states were responsible for building the “National Strategic Plans”, in which an assessment of the state of agriculture in each Member State is developed. These plans also detail how the future reform will be implemented in a given territory. They will have to be approved by the Commission. In the absence of an agreement between Parliament, the Council and the Commission, however, there are uncertainties about the legal basis for these plans, such as the conditions for eligibility for aid for farmers.

The second major reform initiated by the Common Agricultural Policy will be green. Three of the nine major objectives assigned to the Common Agricultural Policy relate to the environment and climate.

One of the main novelties, which fuels the debate between Member States, is the establishment of the “eco-regime” system. The latter would remunerate the services provided to the environment by farmers. In theory, part of the first pillar budget should be allocated to them. But in practice, their quantity, definition and objectives have been the subject of debate.

Some Member States considered that this remuneration was to encourage organic farming, others to finance plant cover, soil throughout the year to increase carbon sequestration.

Similarly, states have failed to agree on the percentage of the first pillar dedicated to these cross-schemes. The compromise reached by the agriculture ministers of the European Union at the last meetings sets this percentage at 20%. Finally, this participation will be mandatory. Therefore, all farmers should be required to comply with much stricter environmental standards, a mandatory condition for receiving European financial aid. The aim is for farms to receive additional funding if they exceed basic climate and environmental standards.

Another tool that will be used to strengthen the ecological aspect of the Common Agricultural Policy is conditionality. This system establishes a link between the payment of Common Agricultural Policy aid and the f

-ulfillment of certain obligations.

These obligations should, in the framework of the post-2020 CAP, “contribute to the achievement of the CAP’s environmental objectives”, the European Commission states. If a farmer does not fulfill his obligations, payments may be reduced.

The implementation of this reform worries some states at European level. For some states, the reform will necessarily lead to a distortion of the competition term: if not all farmers are subject to the same rules, for example the environment, some would necessarily benefit.

As illustrated in the recent case of neonicotinoid insecticides in sugar beet fields in some parts of Europe (France, Belgium), greening production often comes at the expense of yields and production costs. In Romania, neonicotinoid insecticides are used to control corn duck (*Tanymecus dilaticollis*), by using treated seeds. This corn pest causes major problems, as it can lead to the complete destruction of a corn crop in a few days.

On the part of NGOs, this reform also raises questions. The reform, as conceived, will not make it possible to achieve the objectives of the European Green Agreement, says France Nature Environment. Forty-three environmental associations believe that the crucial discussions that need to be addressed in the European Parliament on the next Common Agricultural Policy should make it possible for Europeans to change their agricultural and food patterns.

With regard to the “green schemes” system, the “For another Common Agricultural Policy” platform calls for them to be mandatory in each of the 27 Member States and to be allocated 40% of the first pillar budget of the CAP. “The EU must stop the race for industrialization, especially for animals: it must not produce more, but produce differently,” says Greenpeace, which advocates greening food.

The new reform of the Common Agricultural Policy was due to enter into force in early 2021. The Commission adopted proposals on 1 June 2018. Since then, the Council and the European Parliament have amended the text. Parliament failed to reach an agreement, known as the negotiating mandate, before the 2019 European Parliament elections. From this stage, the adoption of the text began to change over time.

The newly elected Parliament needed time to reach an agreement and analyze the legal texts. The Commission has reached an agreement to extend the current system at least until the end of 2022.

Discussions on the transition text are currently ongoing, but its duration is uncertain. It is indeed linked to the discussion on the future budget of the European Union, which in itself is declining. Therefore, the future Common Agricultural Policy may not appear until January-February 2023.

The immediate priority was for the Council of European Ministers for Agriculture to try to find a qualified majority on a set of three crucial texts that will determine the next Common Agricultural Policy.

The Common Agricultural Policy 2021-2027 introduces a new form of governance and a new sharing of responsibilities between the European Union and the Member States. The aim is to preserve the common character of the Common Agricultural Policy, while reserving to the Member States the possibility of integrating their own specificities, linked to national particularities. This new governance is materialized for each of the Member States by developing a national strategic program that will diagnose the agricultural situation, define a strategy, priorities and funding criteria, in line with the strategic objectives defined by the Eu-

-ropean Commission.

IV. CONCLUSION

The European Union has adopted a biodiversity strategy aimed at improving environmental conditions. The strategy is based on legal protection measures (30% of land and sea) and the restoration of degraded ecosystems. The strategy interferes with agricultural policy, as it intends to expand organic farming (25% of Europe's agricultural area), increase the number of biodiversity-rich rural areas and requalify 10% of agricultural land with high biological diversity (ponds, buffer strips, hedges). It aims to stop the decline of pollinators and reduce the use and harmfulness of pesticides by 50% by 2030. Other objectives: reduce the use of chemical fertilizers by 20% and the use of antibiotics in animal husbandry and aquaculture by 50%.

Having made food a global standard in both quantity and quality, the EU wants sustainable agriculture to do the same. It thus sets itself the objective of reducing the climate and environmental footprint of its food system, including production, transport, distribution, marketing and consumption. It wants to reduce waste by 50% by 2030. Before the end of 2023, the European Commission will present a legislative proposal setting out the framework for this sustainable food system. In particular, labeling rules will be recorded, covering the nutritional, climatic, environmental and social aspects of food.

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