



# ‘Simplification measures for farmers’

*Taking stock and assessing impact of measures taken at EU level since the beginning of 2024*

European CAP Network  
CAP Strategic Plans Subgroup

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# Background and rationale

First year of implementation of the CAP Strategic Plans showed that:

- New support approach is working well
- But is not fully fitting the changing context and on-farm realities

Widespread farmers' protests of early 2024 reflected various challenges in agriculture and rural areas. But some concerns were common:

- Low and unpredictable revenues and incomes
- Market disturbances
- Administrative burden

European Council's call for action, Commission President's commitment to act (1 Feb 2024), Commission's **Simplification Package** announcing short- & medium-term measures (22 Feb 2024)

# Consultation Strategy (1)

=> To clarify the causes of the protests

=> To determine specific areas where practical improvements could be made to address the concerns

**Over 500 suggestions** fed the Commission's reflection on the scope and focus of the measures to be taken:

- responses from Member States
- consultation of farming organisations
- European Parliament's Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development

# Consultation Strategy (2)

The suggestions received fall under the **five broad areas**:

- **CAP strategic plans: management, administration and controls**  
e.g. procedures to amend CAP Plans, IACS, control and penalty system
- **CAP strategic plans: the green architecture**  
e.g. targeted changes to 'conditionality requirements', changing the financial management of environmental interventions
- **Farm income and competitiveness**  
e.g. provisions on risk management instruments, rules on investments
- **Other CAP instruments**  
e.g. promotion measures, the EU school scheme, marketing standards
- **Legislation outside the CAP**  
e.g. state aid, environment, animal and plant health, food safety, climate and energy.

# Consultation Strategy (3)

Commission's **considerations** when planning and designing **responses to the received suggestions**:

- Expectations of farmers and Member States for a simpler, less burdensome CAP
- The necessity to maintain the CAP's role in supporting the transition of the EU agriculture to sustainable farming
- The nature of the problems identified
- For legislative matters, the objective to quickly reach an agreement between the EP and the Council => so that farmers can already benefit in 2024.

The **resulting package of measures**:

- Takes up directly or indirectly a number of suggestions, while:
- A number of suggestions promoting greater flexibility for Member States can already be addressed within the current framework (e.g. organisation of controls and penalty systems)
- Suggestions that would hamper the achievement of the CAP objectives were not taken up
- Neither the suggestions that would alter the new delivery model of the CAP more fundamentally. Yet, many of such suggestions belong to the reflection on the post - 2027 CAP.

## Delivery of actions announced by the simplification package (1)

Action		Delivery
<b>A. Short term measures</b>		
A.1	Revision of GAEC 1 rules on the permanent grassland ratio.	Amendment of the Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2022/126 adopted on 12 March 2024 (Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2024/1235)
A.2	Review of guidelines for GAEC 6.	Obsolete <u>in light of</u> the Commission proposal of 15 March 2024 to amend the CSP and the Horizontal Regulations. (measure B.1)
A.3	Revision of the EU methodology for the area monitoring system quality assessment.	Revised methodology published on 21 March 2024.
A.4	Clarify the possibilities of using geotagged photos under existing legislation and review the requirements linked to geo-tagged photos in the implementing regulation.	A clarification note was discussed with Member States on 15 May 2024. Presentation and discussion of the draft amendment of the implementing regulation in the Committee on CAP Strategic Plans on 5 June 2024. The opinion of the Committee was obtained on 11 July. The act was adopted on 4 September 2024 (Commission Implementing Regulation (EU), C(2024)6069 final)
A.5	Explanatory note on the use of the <i>force majeure</i> and exceptional circumstances clause.	Communication of 30 May 2024 from the Commission to the Council on force majeure and exceptional circumstances (COM(2024)225 final)
A.6	Rationalising controls, including the right of error.	Discussed with Member States in the expert group meeting on 26 April 2024.
A.7	Organise the exchange of best practices with Member States to simplify interventions and minimise the administrative burden of conditionality, <u>eco-schemes</u> and rural development interventions.	Exchange of best practices in the Thematic Group on Green Strategies organised by the CAP Network on 11 April and 4 June 2024.
A.8	Encourage Member States to reinforce the role of, and budgetary support for, advisory services to assist farmers in complying with obligations and accessing CAP support.	Note sent to Member States on 12 April 2024.
A.9	Improve CAP Plans amendment procedure.	Note to Member State experts presented in the Expert Group on the CAP Strategic Plans on 9 April 2024.

## Delivery of actions announced by the simplification package (2)

Action		Delivery
<b>B. Mid-term/long term measures</b>		
<b>B.1</b>	Review of GAEC 8 and possible extension of the review to other GAECs, notably GAEC 6 and 7, for 2025-2027.	Addressed via the Commission proposal of 15 March 2024 to amend the CSP and the Horizontal Regulations. Adopted by the co-legislators and published on 24 May 2024. It entered into force on 25 May 2024 (Regulation (EU) 2024/1468, the Simplification Regulation).
<b>B.2</b>	Exemption of small farms (under 10 ha) from conditionality controls.	As above.
<b>B.3</b>	Exemption for organic farmers from GAEC 7 and GAEC 8 requirements.	Obsolete with the deletion of the first requirement of GAEC 8 (measure B1). Organic farmers are already deemed to be compliant with GAEC 7.
<b>B.4</b>	Exemption of farmers subject to conditionality from cross-compliance controls.	Addressed via the Commission proposal of 15 March 2024 to amend the CSP and the Horizontal Regulations. Adopted by the co-legislators and published on 24 May 2024. It entered into force on 25 May 2024 (Regulation (EU) 2024/1468, the Simplification Regulation).
<b>B.5</b>	Review the number of possible amendments of the CAP Plans.	As above.
<b>B.6</b>	Exchange of best practice to better coordinate the control systems of climate, environmental and animal welfare legislation with CAP conditionality controls, including through meetings of expert groups.	A first discussion with Member States took place in the expert group meeting on 26 April 2024.
<b>C. Evidence gathering</b>		
<b>C.1</b>	Study on simplification and the administrative burden on farmers under the CAP.	Survey addressed to farmers launched on 7 March and closed on 8 April 2024. First results published on Europa on 12 April 2024. In-depth follow-up interviews with selected respondents in spring 2024. Study to be completed by end 2024 / beginning 2025.
<b>C.2</b>	Study on the administrative burden and the new delivery model of the CAP.	Study launched and to be concluded in Q4 2025.

# Assessment of the impacts of the simplification package

- Focus on impacts for farmers
- Some impacts also for national administrations
- Economic, environmental, social, administrative and governance perspectives

# Assessment of the impacts of the Simplification package (economic, environmental, social).

- Calculation of the reduction of administrative costs for farmers
- Calculation of the enforcement costs for administrations
- More than 200.000 fewer on-site controls annually. Savings from reduced control burden of for farmers and administrations
- Additional income / avoided income loss by farmers due to removal of the obligation on non-productive areas (fallow/landscape features)
- Increased flexibility in day-to-day farm management
- Better feedback on fulfilling CAP support conditions
- Gained time and reduced paperwork
- Fewer stress factors
- Rebuilding trust
- No significant negative impact on environment/climate objectives. Certain localised impacts also depend on the uptake of voluntary measures (landscape features/fallow land).

# Next steps

- Continued work on **completing** the implementation of the measures set in the Package.
- **Other actions** to reduce the administrative burden under way for 2024 and beyond e.g., include **reducing reporting obligations**.
- **Outcomes of studies** on the administrative burden for farmers and the new delivery model will help identify further actions to simplify policies for farmers.
- **Parallel workstream** to improve the **position of farmers** in the agri-food supply chain is ongoing, to address the broader issues of farmers' remuneration
- Numerous suggestions from the consultation that were not taken up & other lessons learned from the CAP implementation will feed into the **reflection** on a wider policy review for **the post-2027 period**

# Conclusions

- Overall, the simplification package should help EU farmers to reduce paperwork, gain time and legal certainty, and increase flexibility in how their farms are managed.
- The targeted changes to CAP conditionality should have a limited impact on the policy's environment and climate objectives.
- Improved feedback mechanisms, better adapted policy tools, and more workable systems for monitoring and controls can help to strengthen trust and acceptance among EU farmers for CAP requirements.
- And the work will continue....

# Thank you