



COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

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99/0137 (COD)

Proposal for a

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND COUNCIL DECISION

amending Decision 96/411/EC on improving Community agricultural statistics

(presented by the Commission)

EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM

Council Decision 96/411/EC on improving Community agricultural statistics¹ has put at the Commission's disposal a flexible tool which allows it to adapt statistical applications to changes in information needs.

This tool has already been used and technical action plans adopted for the years 1996, 1997, 1998 and 1999.

This has helped to further the process of adapting the system of Community agricultural statistics to changes in the common agricultural policy.

This process has not yet been completed, however. Indeed, recent changes to the CAP will require an even greater effort in the coming years.

The Commission considers that the tool established by Decision 96/411/EC should be extended to the year 2002.

Under the current procedure, the Community contribution to costs incurred by the Member States in connection with implementation of actions covered by Decision 96/411/EC is paid in full after completion of the actions, which can entail considerable delays.

The proposed amendments to Article 6 of Decision 96/411/EC are intended to alleviate this difficulty, i.e. to bring forward payment of 30% of the Community contribution to the date of acceptance by the Commission of the work plan for the action in question.

The Commission proposal includes the deletion of certain provisions of Council Decision 96/411/EC which have been overtaken by events.

¹ OJ L 162 of 1.7.1996, p. 14.

Proposal for a

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND COUNCIL DECISION

amending Decision 96/411/EC on improving Community agricultural statistics

(Text of EEA relevance)

THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

Having regard to the Treaty establishing the European Community, and in particular Article 285 thereof,

Having regard to the proposal from the Commission²,

Acting in accordance with the procedure laid down in Article 251 of the Treaty³,

- (1) Whereas Council Decision 96/411/EC of 25 June 1996 on improving Community agricultural statistics, most recently amended by Decision 98/3/EC⁴, is designed to allow Community agricultural statistics to respond more satisfactorily to the information needs arising from the reform of the common agricultural policy;
- (2) Whereas the report by the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council on progress in implementing Decision 96/411/EC makes a positive assessment of the application of that Decision;
- (3) Whereas the process of adapting national statistical systems to the needs arising from the reform of the common agricultural policy has not yet been completed;
- (4) Whereas Council Decision 1999/126/EC of 22 December 1998⁵ on the Community statistical programme for 1998 to 2002 recommends continuation of the actions to improve existing agricultural statistics and to plan future developments with a view to responding more satisfactorily to the needs of the common agricultural policy;
- (5) Whereas the validity of Decision 96/411/EC needs to be extended;
- (6) Whereas certain provisions of Decision 96/411/EC need to be amended in the light of experience, so as, *inter alia*, to simplify their implementation,

² OJ ... of ..., p. ..

³

⁴ OJ L 1 of 3.1.1998, p. 9.

⁵ OJ L 42 of 16.2.1999, p. 1.

HAVE ADOPTED THIS DECISION:

Article 1

Decision 96/411/EC is amended as follows:

- 1) Article 2(a) is replaced by the following:

"a) define the priority statistical fields, including those set out in Annex II, which may be the subject of actions at Member State level for the following year;"

- 2) Article 3 is replaced by the following:

"Article 3

Application time frame and procedure

The process of adapting Community agricultural statistics provided for in Article 1 shall be continued during the period 2000-2002. It shall be coordinated by the Commission through technical action plans as provided for in Article 4. After this period, the Council may decide to extend the process in accordance with the Commission proposals provided for in Article 11."

- 3) Article 4(2) is deleted.

- 4) Article 5 is replaced by the following:

"Article 5

Member State reports

The Member States shall submit to the Commission:

- a) by 31 May of each year, a communication setting out their intention, if any, to participate in priority actions for the following year, accompanied by a summary of the plans for implementation and an estimate of costs;
- b) following adoption by the Commission of the technical action plan, a working plan for each action which concerns them;
- c) after completion of each action, a brief report on implementation of the action in which they have participated.

The documents to be submitted pursuant to points a), b) and c) should cover the planned amendments to the methodology of implementation, work to be carried out, difficulties identified and proposals for overcoming them, the national and Community resources to be mobilised and proposals for improvements at Community level. Actions for which Community financial support is required shall be identified as such.

Following the procedure laid down in Article 10, the Commission shall draw up simplified standard forms to facilitate the presentation of the above information."

5) Article 6(3) is replaced by the following:

"3. The contribution shall be paid to the Member States in two tranches, the first of which, equivalent to 30% of the cost of the action, shall be paid as an advance, after notification to and acceptance by the Commission of the working plan for the action in question. The balance shall be paid once the report on implementation of the action by the Member States has been submitted to and approved by the Commission. The Commission shall carry out any on-the-spot checks it deems necessary in cooperation with the competent authorities of the Member States".

6) In Article 11, the year "1999" is replaced by "2002".

Article 2

This Decision is addressed to the Member States.

Done at Brussels,

For the European Parliament
The President

For the Council
The President

FINANCIAL SHEET

1. TITLE OF THE ACTION

Amendment of Decision 96/411/EC on improving Community agricultural statistics

2. BUDGET HEADING(S) AFFECTED

B2-513 : Restructuring of agricultural survey systems.

3. LEGAL BASIS

Article 285 of the Treaty.

4. DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTION

4.1 General aim of the action

Council Decision 96/411/EC is aimed at ensuring that Community agricultural statistics more fully respond to the information needs arising from the reform of the common agricultural policy. To this end, the Member States are to take such measures as may be necessary to adapt their national agricultural statistical systems, taking account of the objectives, criteria and priorities referred to in this Decision. The actions to be taken by the Member States each year with a view to achieving these objectives are defined in technical action plans. This tool has already been implemented and technical action plans drawn up for the years 1996, 1997, 1998 and 1999, which has furthered the process of adapting the Community agricultural statistical system to changes in the common agricultural policy. This process has not yet been completed, however. The Commission believes that the validity of this tool should be extended to the end of the year 2002.

4.2 Period covered and arrangements for renewal or extension

2000-2002

5. CLASSIFICATION OF THE EXPENDITURE OR REVENUE

5.1 NCE

5.2 Differentiated appropriations

5.3 Type of revenue involved

6. TYPE OF EXPENDITURE OR REVENUE

The Community contribution is subject to a ceiling for each Member State.

7. FINANCIAL IMPACT

7.1 Method of calculating the total cost of the action (link between individual cost items and the total cost)

A total of EUR 3 million in appropriation and payment commitments, broken down according to the annual budget time frame set out in points 7.2 and 7.4.

The annual appropriations for this action will be decided on in the framework of the annual budget procedure.

This contribution will be paid to the national bodies responsible for collecting agricultural statistics as a function of work carried out under programmes which have been drawn up and approved.

7.2 Breakdown by component of the action

Commitment appropriations in EUR million (current prices)

Breakdown	Year n	n+1	n+2	n+3	n+4	n+5 and foll. fin. year	Total
	1.0	1.0	1.0				3.0
Total	1.0	1.0	1.0				3.0

7.3 Operating expenditure on studies, experts etc, included in part B of the budget

	Year n	n+1	n+2	n+3	n+4	n+5 and foll. fin. year	Total
– Studies							
– Meetings of experts							
– Conferences, etc.							
– Information and publications							
Total							

7.4 Due date of commitment/payment appropriations

	Year n	n+1	n+2	n+3	n+4	n+5 and foll. fin. year	Total
Commitment appropriations	1.0	1.0	1.0	-			3.0
Payment appropriations							
Year n	-	1.0					
n+1			1.0				
n+2				1.0			
n+3							
n+4							
n+5 and following financial year							
Total	-	1.0	1.0	1.0			3.0

8. PLANNED ANTI-FRAUD MEASURES

The Community contribution is granted to the Member States after presentation to and approval by the Commission of the annual report on implementation of the actions in question. The Commission will carry out such on-the-spot checks as it deems necessary, in cooperation with the competent authorities in the Member States.

9. COST/BENEFIT ANALYSIS

9.1 Specific and quantifiable objectives; target population

The implementation of annual technical action plans makes it possible to obtain earlier and more reliable statistical information in certain priority areas defined each year by the Commission, in consultation with the Standing Committee on Agricultural Statistics.

Beneficiaries:

- the Community institutions: Commission, Council, EP, Court of Auditors etc.;
- Member States.

9.2 Grounds for the action

The importance of the common agricultural policy led Eurostat to develop numerous statistical applications during the 1960s and 1970s. These applications respond to the considerable needs for statistical information for managing the CAP and steering and monitoring its development.

Each of these applications has been updated to take account of changes in the sector concerned. Nevertheless, the CAP reform requires a thorough review of the information which the statistical applications are intended to yield.

Eurostat and DG VI have performed a detailed analysis of the existing applications, taking current needs for statistical information into account. The results of this action, which has been supplemented by informal discussion with national officials responsible for agricultural statistics, have made it possible to identify:

- * fields where rationalisation measures are possible;
- * fields where there are new or growing needs;
- * general criteria for actions to be taken (flexibility, harmonisation, links with other statistical fields, new sources etc.).

The need for Community budgetary support, with regard, in particular, to the principle of subsidiarity

The Community contribution is subject to a ceiling for each Member State. The Member States will bear the remainder of the cost of the actions.

Choice of support measures: derived effects and anticipated multiplier effects

- * The results of the action will contribute to an improvement in the statistical information used by the Member States in their work and for the use of agricultural statistics in the Community Statistical System.
- * The action will help to construct a European Statistical Area and hence greater integration of national statistical systems at Community level.

9.3 Monitoring and evaluation of the action

Every year, the Commission draws up a technical action plan after consulting the Standing Committee on Agricultural Statistics (CPSA). The annual technical action plan is implemented by the national statistical institutes, which are required to submit to the Commission a report on its implementation and the statistics obtained as a result.