

The President

Mr Bronis ROPÉ
Member of the European Parliament
ASP 08H156 - LOW T03.036
BRUSSELS - STRASBOURG

D 302744 19.02.2020

Dear colleague,

Thank you for your letter of 2 December 2019, in which you raise the problem of the lack of convergence of the CAP direct payments, especially putting farmers of Baltic States in a disadvantaged position as compared to farmers in Western European countries.

As you are aware, the sensitive matter of the external convergence of the CAP direct payments has been raised repeatedly within the EU institutions. Most recently, Parliament's Committee on Petitions has received a petition signed by 52 359 Lithuanian citizens ("Petition 0160/2018 on inequality in CAP payments in Lithuania"). The Committee on Petitions referred it to the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development (AGRI), asking for its opinion. The opinion of the AGRI committee was adopted on 5 November 2019 and I understand that the Committee on Petitions is currently continuing its examination of this petition.

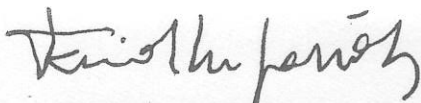
I would like to point out that, as the AGRI Committee also stressed in its opinion, future allocations for the CAP directly depend on the outcome of the negotiations between the EU legislators on the package presented by the Commission on the CAP post-2020 and the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) for the period 2021-2027. The question of convergence of direct payments between Member States also depends on the outcome of those discussions and Parliament is therefore not in a position to give a clear response as long as the legislative procedures on the CAP post-2020 and the MFF for 2021-2027 are pending.

Furthermore, I understand that the Commission, in its own reply to the above-mentioned petition, has maintained that the implementation of the convergence of direct payments is currently ongoing to the benefit of Lithuanian farmers. Referring to its proposal on the CAP, the Commission pointed out that it is proposing a significant continuation of the convergence of direct payment levels per hectare between Member States. Namely, the Commission is proposing that for all Member States with direct payments below 90% of the EU-average, the gap between their current level and 90% of the EU average shall be closed by 50% during the next MFF.

I would like to inform you that the Committee on Petitions, based on several petitions on the situation of farmers in view of the negotiations on the CAP post-2020, will organise a public hearing on the subject "*How to treat farmers in a fairly and equitable manner across Europe*". This hearing is scheduled for the end of May and it will be jointly organised by the Committee on Petitions and the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development.

I can assure you that Parliament, in the framework of the interinstitutional negotiations on the CAP post-2020 and the MFF for 2021-2027, will give its utmost consideration to the issue of a fair distribution of direct payments between farmers in different Member States.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David Maria SASSOLI', written in a cursive style.

David Maria SASSOLI