

Management of expenditure relating to the food chain, animal health, animal welfare, plant health and plant reproductive material, 2014-2020

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The Commission presented a mid-term evaluation report of Regulation (EU) No 652/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council, which set a common financial framework (CFF) in the areas of the food chain, animal health and welfare and plant health and plant reproductive material (CFF Regulation).

The report covers the following spending measures:

- **veterinary eradication, control and surveillance programmes** implemented by the Member States, which aim to progressively eliminate animal diseases and zoonoses and to implement disease control measures;
- **phytosanitary survey programmes** concerning the presence of pests in the Union territory;
- **veterinary and phytosanitary emergency measures;**
- **European Union Reference Laboratories (EURLs) activities;**
- **Better Training for Safer Food (BTSF) programme**, which is a training initiative addressing national authority staff.

To achieve its objective, a maximum total ceiling for expenditure of **EUR 1 891 936 000** for the seven-year period 2014-2020, covered by the present MFF was set aside for the CFF Regulation.

The CFF expenditure primarily consists of direct co-financing to the Member States, which are the almost exclusive beneficiaries of the EU spending in this area.

The main findings of the report are as follows:

- the EU framework on food safety, animal and plant health has been generally recognised as **uniform and largely consistent** in its application and enforcement in all the Member States. This ensures in turn that both citizens and businesses are confident that this framework is fair and effective in promoting high safety standards in a key sector of the EU economy;
- the EU investment in surveillance, disease and pest control and eradication, **contributes to the safety and trade** in the entire food chain;
- the **present financial framework is functioning well** within its policy context: all activities receiving EU financial support in this area serve the CFF Regulation general and specific objectives;
- the **CFF Regulation financial instrument has also proven to be flexible** to address emerging needs for co-financing especially in the occurrence of outbreaks.

Achievement of objectives: the evaluation focuses on the efficiency and added value in achieving the four specific objectives of the CFC Regulation: (i) animal health, (ii) public health, (iii) official controls and (iv) food safety.

1) Animal health: payments for veterinary programmes in 2014 amounted to EUR 136 million and EUR 148 million in 2015 (**75% of the total spending** in 2014 and 2015). The analysis of these indicators for the period 2014-2016 reveals a positive epidemiological trend for all priority diseases receiving EU financial support under the veterinary programmes, with a growing number of Member States or regions

becoming free from animal diseases. A significant example is represented by the EU programmes addressing **Rabies**: this disease has been almost eradicated in the EU in wildlife. Another good example is the increased number of Member States free from **bovine brucellosis**.

Thanks to early detection and to immediate application of EU co-funded emergency measures, all recent epidemics have been successfully contained. The report cited a recent example is the fight against the epidemic of Lumpy Skin Disease (LSD), an infectious viral disease of cattle transmitted via infected saliva or through insects, introduced in the EU from Turkey.

Obtaining a **higher animal health status** is the result of the legal measures put in place at Union level, with the technical and financial support provided by the EU to the Member States. When a disease is suspected or confirmed, various preventive and control measures are immediately put in place under the emergency measures system.

2) Plant health: survey programmes were established for the first time in 2015; the **evaluation of their results has therefore been limited**. Nevertheless, the EU Member States have welcomed their introduction since the very first year, with 17 EU countries presenting a programme in 2015 and 22 in 2016. In 2015, the implementation of surveys programmes has allowed the detection of a number of new emerging risks in the Union territory such as the plant bacterium *Xylella fastidiosa*.

In 2014, spending to implement emergency measures amounted to EUR 7.7 million and in 2015 to EUR 12.2 million while spending on surveys programmes amounted to EUR 4.2 million in 2015.

Overall, the report noted that the implementation of EU-funded forward-looking programs and contingency measures in the Union contributes to **preserving agricultural production by protecting plant health**, as well as protect biodiversity, forests and agricultural competitiveness.

3) Official controls: the testing activities carried out by the network of 43 EURLs contributed to the continuous update of diagnostic tools for the timely identification of pathogens. This is critical to **uniform implementation of controls** throughout the EU as it ensures confidence in the reliability of test results.

The BTSF programme has also proven to be helpful in responding to new needs, notably during crisis events, when it contributed to both prevention and crises-preparedness. The trainings have provided support to a **common understanding across Member States of their obligations**.

4) Food safety: during the period covered by the evaluation, the Commission services carried out around 200 audits and inspections per year. These audits and inspections have contributed to several key Commission priorities, including: (i) a **regulatory environment** which facilitates jobs, growth and investment by ensuring high levels of safety supported by sound control and enforcement systems; (ii) a **deeper and fairer internal market** by providing a level playing field where citizens and businesses can be confident in uniform and high levels of safety and transparent information on the state of implementation of controls in Member States and non-EU countries.