

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-001486/24
to the Commission
Alexander Bernhuber (PPE)
(7 August 2024)**

Subject: Promoting sustainable farming practices

Austrian agriculture is increasingly turning to sustainable farming practices to reduce its impact on the environment.

1. What new specific measures is the Commission planning to promote sustainable farming practices in the Member States?
2. How will these measures support Austrian farmers who are already investing in sustainable technologies?
3. How will the Commission ensure that the promotion of sustainable farming practices is also economically viable for farmers?

Submitted: 8.8.2024

**Answer given by Mr Wojciechowski on behalf of the European Commission
(13 September 2024)**

1. The Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) 2023-2027 ⁽¹⁾ provides a range of tools to boost the uptake of sustainable farming practices across Member States through the combination of minimum obligations (enhanced conditionality) and voluntary interventions (e.g. eco-schemes, agri-environment management commitments...). In their national CAP Strategic Plans (CSP) Member States have opted to make use of such possibilities in many ways with a potential to reduce negative pressures and to benefit climate, natural resources, and biodiversity.
2. Via eco-schemes, the Austrian CSP ⁽²⁾ supports farmers to adopt sustainable farming practices such as catch crops, year-round soil cover on at least 85% of a farm's arable land and the greening of tramlines on vineyards, orchards and hop fields, which have a positive impact on soil fertility. Support is also foreseen for grassland management practices promoting animal welfare through grazing and the establishment of agro-forestry strips. The Plan also includes support for other environmentally sustainable practices, such as species-rich agricultural areas.
3. The CAP supports farmers in adopting more sustainable farming practices while ensuring their economic viability through direct payments (notably eco-schemes), market measures and rural development interventions. The latter also support investments beneficial for the environment and the climate as well as advisory services, training and knowledge exchange. The Commission promotes research and innovation in agriculture, notably through Horizon Europe ⁽³⁾, to help develop new technologies and practices for farmers that are both environmentally friendly and economically viable.

⁽¹⁾ Regulation (EU) 2021/2115 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 2 December 2021 establishing rules on support for strategic plans to be drawn up by Member States under the common agricultural policy (CAP Strategic Plans) and financed by the European Agricultural Guarantee Fund (EAGF) and by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) and repealing Regulations (EU) No 1305/2013 and (EU) No 1307/2013 — <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32021R2115>

⁽²⁾ https://agriculture.ec.europa.eu/cap-my-country/cap-strategic-plans/austria_en

⁽³⁾ Regulation (EU) 2021/695 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 28 April 2021 establishing Horizon Europe — the framework Programme for Research and Innovation, laying down its rules for participation and dissemination, and repealing Regulations (EU) No 1290/2013 and (EU) No 1291/2013 — <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32021R0695&qid=1724174560865>