

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-001817/24
to the Commission
Ioan-Rareş Bogdan (PPE)
(25 September 2024)**

Subject: Support for rural areas and the agricultural sector

The impact of the rise in energy prices across the European Union is being particularly hard felt by the agricultural sector and rural areas, given the great dependence that farming, food processing and transport have on energy. High energy costs affect not only farmers' competitiveness but also food security and the economic sustainability of rural communities.

In these circumstances, could the Commission state:

1. What concrete measures it is considering to mitigate the impact of high energy prices on the EU agricultural sector and rural areas?
2. Whether there are plans to support investment in sustainable energy solutions such as renewable energy, farms and rural infrastructure, so as to reduce dependence on conventional energy sources and the associated costs?
3. How it plans to support Member States in implementing specific measures to protect farmers and rural communities that are vulnerable to energy price volatility, including through the use of EU funding?

Submitted: 25.9.2024

**Answer given by Mr Wojciechowski on behalf of the European Commission
(14 November 2024)**

1. Energy prices have significantly surged in 2021 and 2022, affecting farmers directly and through energy-intensive inputs like fertilisers. While energy prices remain higher than before the war in Ukraine, energy costs have decreased substantially since 2023. To mitigate the impact of high energy prices on the agricultural sector and rural areas the EU adopted a Temporary Crisis and Transition Framework that allows Member States until 31 December 2024 to provide financial support. The EU also adopted two exceptional support packages in 2022 and 2023 of EUR 850 million for farmers.

2. The Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) ⁽¹⁾ aids farmers and rural areas in transitioning to sustainable production and energy use. Investments in the production of renewable energy and in energy efficiency can be supported under the CAP. The CAP also includes support to reduce mineral fertiliser use, including through the use of organic fertilisers. The EU heavily invests in increasing industrial interest in areas such as organic fertilisers produced from recovered residues and by-products. The Cohesion policy also dedicated EUR 45 billion to the energy transition up to 2027, focusing on less developed regions, vulnerable groups and territories.

3. Under the CAP, Member States can and do plan in their CAP Strategic Plans interventions to increase sustainable generation and use of renewable energy and reduce energy consumption. Other support instruments exist for energy efficiency and renewable energy production, both at EU level (e.g. Cohesion Funds) and at national level. Looking ahead, the Commission will set up a Citizen Energy Advisory Hub to support rural communities to set up sustainable energy projects and will establish an Energy Communities Action Plan.

⁽¹⁾ https://agriculture.ec.europa.eu/common-agricultural-policy_en