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DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

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**FACTUAL SUMMARY
OF THE PUBLIC CONSULTATION ON THE
EVALUATION OF THE EU COMMON AGRICULTURAL POLICY'S
IMPACT ON KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE AND ADVISORY ACTIVITIES**

Disclaimer: This document should be regarded solely as a summary of the contributions made by stakeholders to the online public consultation on the evaluation of the EU common agricultural policy's impact on knowledge exchange and advisory activities. It cannot, in any circumstances be regarded as the official position of the Commission or its services.

INTRODUCTION

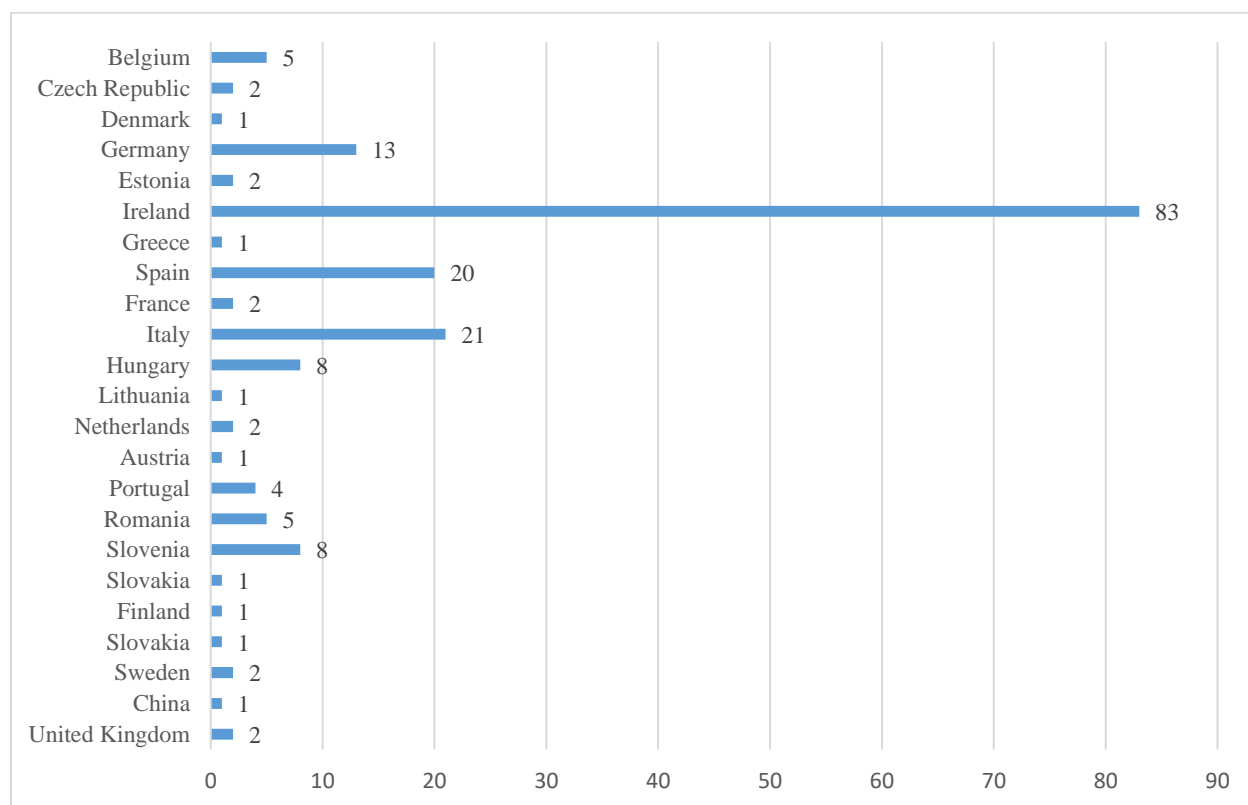
The public consultation aimed to seek information and feedback from the relevant stakeholders and the wider public (notably farmers, foresters, farm advisers, training organisers, managing authorities and researchers) to contribute to the evaluation of the common agricultural policy's (CAP) impact on knowledge exchange and advisory activities.

The public consultation was conducted from 10 November 2020 to 2 February 2021 using EU Survey, via the European Commission's website, in all official EU languages.

1. OVERVIEW OF RESPONSES

A total of 187 contributions (and 11 documents annexed to contributions) were received from 21 EU Member States, the United Kingdom and China¹.

Figure 1. Number of respondents to the public consultation by country of origin



Companies and business organisations provided the most contributions to this consultation accounting for 34% of all respondents (number of responses 'N'=63), followed by EU citizens for 22% of all respondents (N=42), business associations for 12% of all respondents (N=23) and academic and research institutions for 7% of all respondents (N=14). Of all the respondents, public authorities accounted for 5% of the total responses (N=10), NGOs for 5% (N=9), trade unions 1% (N=2) and non-EU citizens, environmental organisations accounted for less than 1% (N=1) each. The remaining 12% (N=22) of respondents identified themselves as 'others'.

¹ There were no contributions from Croatia, Cyprus, Latvia, Luxembourg, Malta and Poland.

On the stakeholder type represented by the respondents, ‘farm advisers’ is the most common, with 92 respondents (49%), followed by ‘farmers or foresters’, 33 (18%), ‘researchers’, 22 (12%), ‘managing authorities’, 10 (5%), ‘training organisers’, with 6 responses (3%). From the remaining respondents 21 indicated ‘other’ (11%) and 3 did not give a reply (2%).

A total of 58 respondents (31%) chose to make their full personal details (i.e. name, organisation name and size, transparency register number, country of origin) available for publication with their contribution whereas 129 respondents (69%) opted for anonymity.

2. ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

In general, a clear majority of the respondents (184, 98%) claimed awareness that the EU tries to foster knowledge exchange, advisory activities, and innovation in the agricultural and forestry sector and in rural areas by providing Member States with financial support for rural development measures via the CAP. Additionally, 163 respondents (87%) showed awareness that the CAP has required national administrations to set up a Farm Advisory System (FAS) to help farmers and other beneficiaries find advice to better understand and meet EU rules.

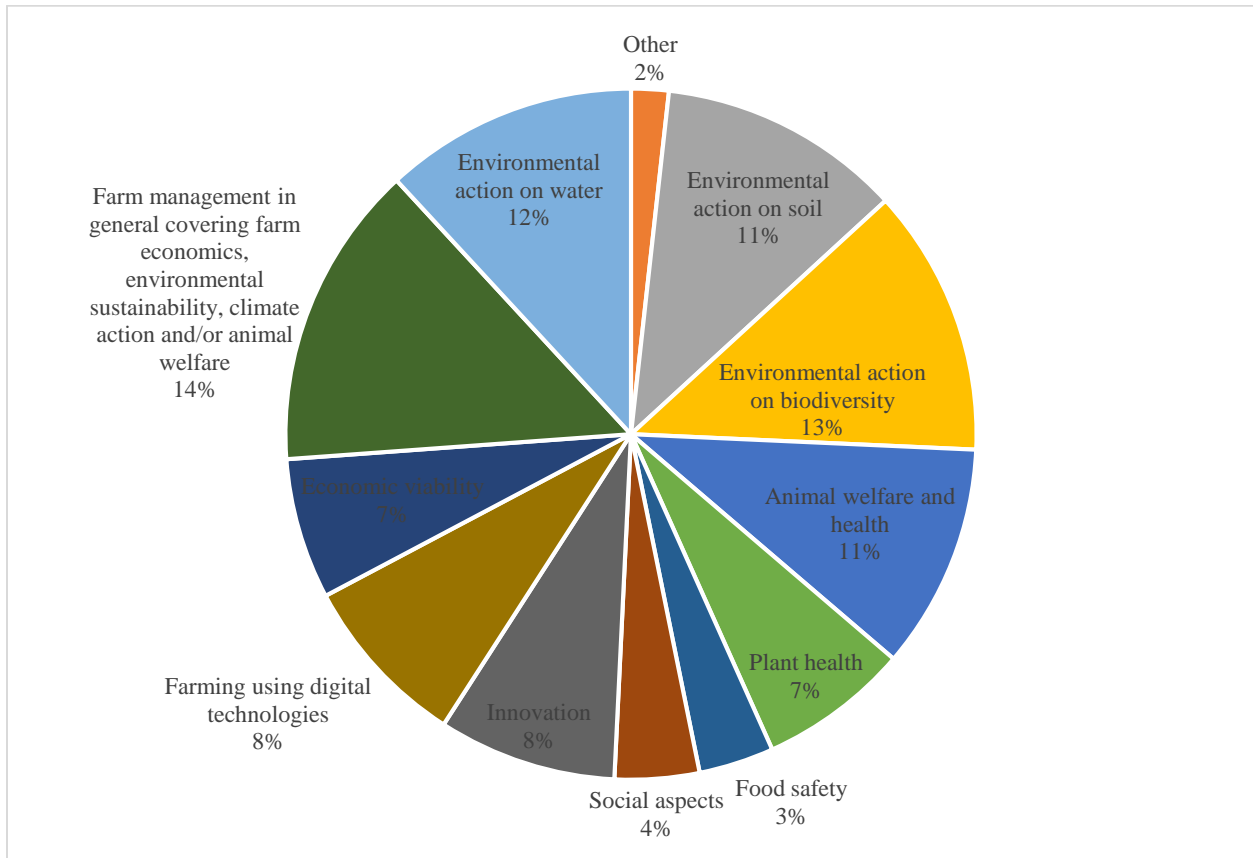
Regarding the areas on which the CAP should focus its support for knowledge transfer and innovation, responses were very equally distributed among the options given. ‘Farm management in general covering farm economics, environmental sustainability, climate action and/or animal welfare’ received the highest rate of responses (12%), followed by:

- ‘Environmental action on biodiversity’ and ‘climate action’ (10%)
- ‘Environmental action on water’ and ‘environmental action on soil’ (9%)
- ‘Innovation’, ‘farming using digital technologies’ and ‘economic viability’ (8%)
- ‘Animal welfare and health’ and ‘plant health’ (7%)
- ‘Food safety’ and ‘social aspects’ (6%)
- ‘Other’ (1%)

Most of the respondents (122, 65%) benefited from knowledge exchange, advice or innovation projects supported by the CAP in the last five years, of whom an absolute majority (115) found the advice to be useful (‘very’ or ‘to some extent’). Figure 2 shows more detail into the fields respondents received advice on.

Out of 185 respondents, a majority of the respondents (87, 46%) consider that the advice provided to farmers and foresters is independent to a ‘large’ or ‘very large’ extent, in comparison with those who found that it was ‘not at all’ independent (9, 5%), or only ‘to a very small extent’ (19, 10%). A large percentage of the respondents replied ‘to some extent’ (63, 34%), while the rest had no opinion (7, 4%) or did not reply (2, 1%).

Figure 2. Fields in which the respondents received advice

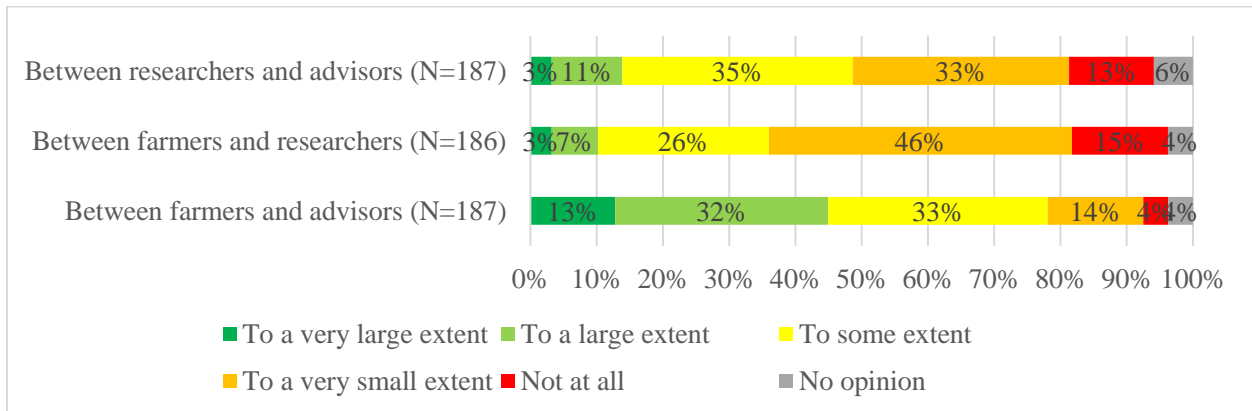


Note: 187 respondents

2.1. Effectiveness

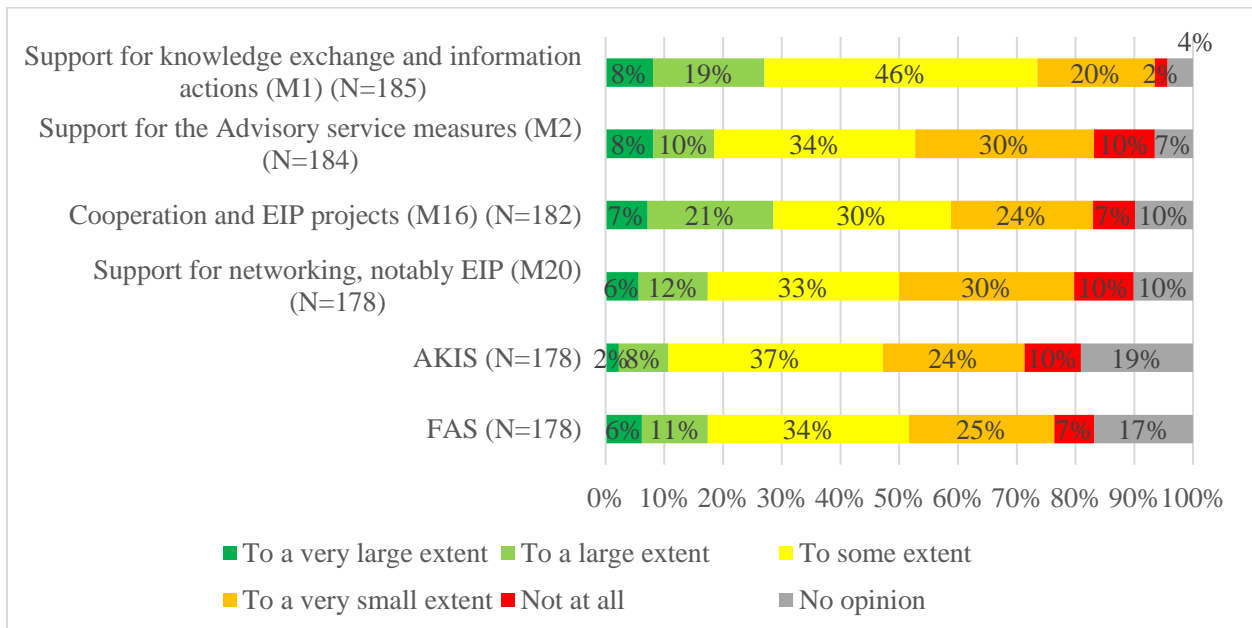
Concerning the question on the effectiveness of current CAP measures and instruments on fostering the flow of information between researchers, advisors and farmers, there seems to be a common perception by respondents that current measures and instruments are not very effective on fostering information between researchers and the other two stakeholder groups. On fostering information between researchers and advisors, 46% of the respondents found it not very effective (sum of ‘to a very small extent’ and ‘not at all’), and 60% of the respondents passed the same verdict between farmers and researchers. On the other hand, 45% of respondents found the information flow between farmers and advisors effective (sum of ‘to a very large extent’ and ‘to a large extent’).

Figure 3. Effectiveness of current CAP measures and instruments on fostering the flow of information between:



On the question of the effectiveness of CAP measures and instruments in fostering knowledge exchange, advisory activities and innovation in the agricultural and forestry sector and in rural areas, respondents pointed, in general, towards limited effectiveness, as it can be seen in Figure 4. The only exception is ‘Support for knowledge exchange and information actions (M1)’, which 27% found to have positive effectiveness, in comparison with 22% who found it very limited or ineffective.

Figure 4. Effectiveness of CAP instruments in fostering knowledge exchange, advisory activities and innovation in the agricultural and forestry sector and in rural areas



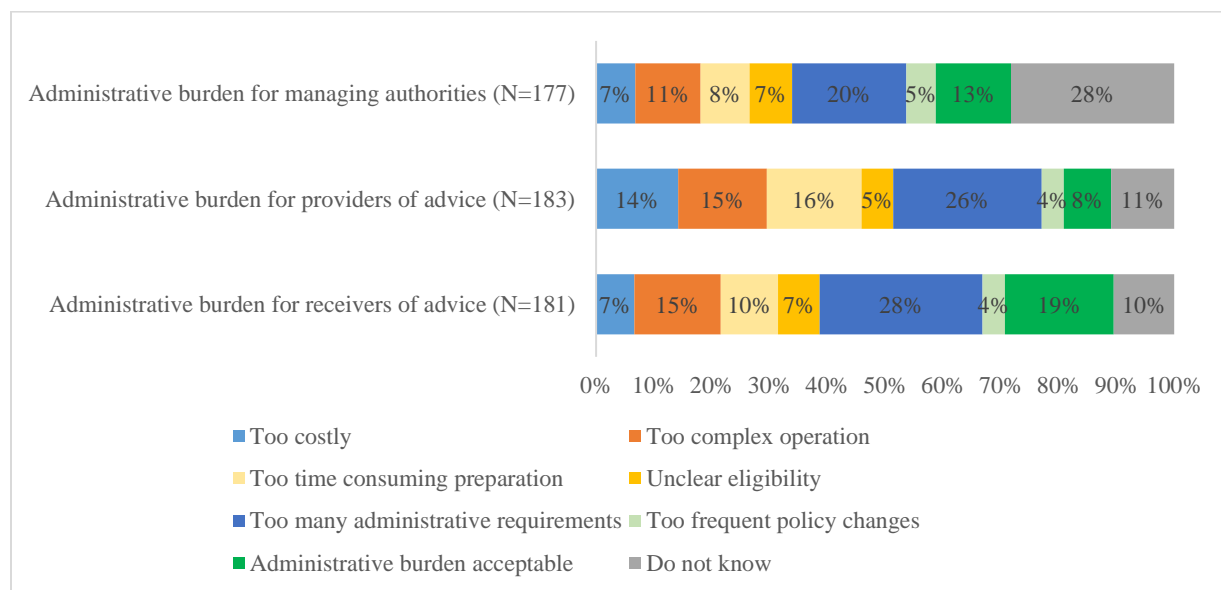
2.2. Efficiency

Respondents have a generally neutral perception about the efficiency of the CAP instruments and measures in fostering knowledge exchange, advisory activities and innovation in the agricultural

and forestry sector and in rural areas. Most of the respondents found the instruments and measures to be efficient ‘to some extent’ (88, 47%). On the other hand, a clear majority find that not all farmers have equal access to knowledge exchange, advice or innovation supported with the CAP (135, 73%).

On the issue of administrative costs and burdens in the implementation of the current CAP measures and instruments, the ‘amount of administrative requirements’ is considered as the most important aspect for managing authorities, providers of advice and receivers of advice, alike (Figure 5).

Figure 5. Most important aspects of administrative cost and/or burden in the implementation of the current CAP measures and instruments fostering knowledge exchange, advisory activities and innovation in the agricultural and forestry sector and in rural areas



2.3. Relevance

On the question of relevance, most respondents have a neutral perception (103, 55%) of the relevance of CAP instruments and measures to address the need to foster knowledge exchange, advisory activities, and innovation in the agricultural and forestry sector and in rural areas. It is followed by negative perception (47, 25%) and positive (33, 18%). The remaining had no opinion (2, 1%) or did not reply (2, 1%).

2.4. Replies to open questions

Respondents had the possibility to indicate improvements to increase the uptake of knowledge exchange, advisory services and innovation fostered through the CAP (156 replies), and complement their answers with further observations (125 replies). Replies to these ‘open questions’ will be assessed in the synopsis report that will form part of the evaluation staff working document concluding the evaluation of the EU common agricultural policy’s impact on knowledge exchange and advisory activities.